

**Select Board Meeting**  
**Monday, September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023, 6:15 p.m.**  
**Nowak Room, Town Offices**  
**10 Front Street, Exeter NH 03833**

Virtual Meetings can be watched on Ch 22 or Ch 98 and YouTube.

To access the meeting, click this link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81410996451>

To access the meeting via telephone, call: +1 646 558 8656 and enter the Webinar ID: 814 1099 6451

Please join the meeting with your full name if you want to speak.

Use the "Raise Hand" button to alert the chair you wish to speak. On the phone, press \*9.

More instructions for how to access the meeting can be found here:  
<https://www.exeternh.gov/townmanager/virtual-town-meetings>

Contact us at [extvg@exeternh.gov](mailto:extvg@exeternh.gov) or 603-418-6425 with any technical issues.

**AGENDA**

1. Call Meeting to Order
2. Board Interviews – Stephanie Marshall, Energy Committee
3. Public Hearing – Conservation Commission re: Tax Map 113, Lots 3 & 5
4. Public Comment
5. Proclamations/Recognitions
  - a. Proclamations/Recognitions – Officer Swearing In – Caleb McClure
6. Approval of Minutes
  - a. Regular Meeting: September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023
  - b. Special Meeting: September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023
7. Appointments
  - a. Housing Advisory Committee
  - b. Energy Committee
8. Resignations
  - a. None
9. Discussion/Action Items
  - a. Tree Committee Update
  - b. FY24 Preliminary Operating Budget
10. Regular Business
  - a. Tax Abatements, Veterans Credits & Exemptions
  - b. Permits & Approvals
  - c. Town Manager's Report
  - d. Select Board Committee Reports
  - e. Correspondence
11. Review Board Calendar
12. Non-Public Session
13. Adjournment

Niko Papakonstantis, Chair  
Select Board

Posted: 9/22/23 Town Office, Town Website

Persons may request an accommodation for a disabling condition in order to attend this meeting. It is asked that such requests be made with 72 hours notice.

AGENDA SUBJECT TO CHANGE

## Board Interviews



**Town of Exeter**  
Town Manager's Office  
10 Front Street, Exeter, NH 03833

Interview  
9/25 6:15 pm  
confirmed

## Statement of Interest Boards and Committee Membership

Committee Selection: Energy Committee

New  Re-Appointment  Regular  Alternate

Name: Stephanie Marshall Email: stephmarshall@myfairpoint.net  
Address: 7 Nelson Drive, Exeter Phone: 603-491-3712

Registered Voter: Yes  No

Statement of Interest/experience/background/qualification, etc. (resume can be attached).

\* Member of Electric Aggregation Committee 2021-2023  
\* Initiated and supported citizens petitions relative to limiting fossil fuel infrastructure development & supporting renewable energy.  
\* Owned Human Resources consulting business in Exeter for 11 years  
I want to work to continue growing Exeter Community, power and offering more ideas & support for renewable energy, climate change mitigation etc.

If this is re-appointment to a position, please list all training sessions you have attended relative to your appointed position.

I understand that: 1. this application will be presented to the Exeter Select Board only for the position specified above and not for subsequent vacancies on the same board; 2. The Town Manager and Select Board may nominate someone who has not filed a similar application; 3. this application will be available for public inspection.

After submitting this application for appointment to the Town Manager:

- The application will be reviewed and you will be scheduled for an interview with the Select Board
- Following the interview the Board will vote on your potential appointment at the next regular meeting
- If appointed, you will receive a letter from the Town Manager and will be required to complete paperwork with the Town Clerk prior to the start of your service on the committee or board.

I certify that I am 18 years of age or older:

Signature: Stephanie Marshall Date: 8/29/23

To be completed by Select Board upon appointment:

Date Appointed: \_\_\_\_\_ Term Ending: \_\_\_\_\_ Full: \_\_\_\_\_ Alternate: \_\_\_\_\_

**Public Hearing: Conservation Commission re: Map 113, Lots 3 and 5**



## TOWN OF EXETER, NEW HAMPSHIRE

### *Planning and Building Department*

10 FRONT STREET • EXETER, NH • 03833-3792 • (603) 778-0591 • FAX 772-4709

[www.exeternh.gov](http://www.exeternh.gov)

**TO:** RUSS DEAN, TOWN MANAGER AND NIKO PAPAKONSTANTIS, SELECT BOARD CHAIR  
**FROM:** KRISTEN MURPHY- CONSERVATION & SUSTAINABILITY PLANNER  
**SUBJECT:** PROPOSED CONSERVATION LAND – POWDERMILL ROAD  
**DATE:** SEPTEMBER 22, 2023

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The Exeter Conservation Commission has an opportunity to collaborate with the Towns of East Kingston and Kensington in partnership with Southeast Land Trust (SELT), to protect approximately 156 acres through conservation easement. SELT would hold a conservation easement and each town would be granted Executory Interest in lands within their jurisdiction. In Exeter this includes lands at Tax Map 113-3 and 113-5. SELT is applying for a \$500,000 Drinking Water Trust Fund (DWTF) grant and the Exeter Conservation Commission wishes to contribute \$100,000 in Conservation Funds. The full project budget is available on the attached reference document.

The Exeter Conservation Commission requests to hold a joint public hearing on 9/25 at 6:30 pm in the Nowak Room with the Select Board. This public hearing is required of the Conservation Commission in order to expend funds from the Conservation Fund for land acquisition. As land acquisition also requires Select Board authorization, they request the Select Board's consideration of this acquisition. It is hoped positive results from the Public Hearing and positive authorization from the Select Board would be presented to the Drinking Water Trust Fund grant review board via a joint letter of support.

Should the Board be supportive, I have drafted a motion below:

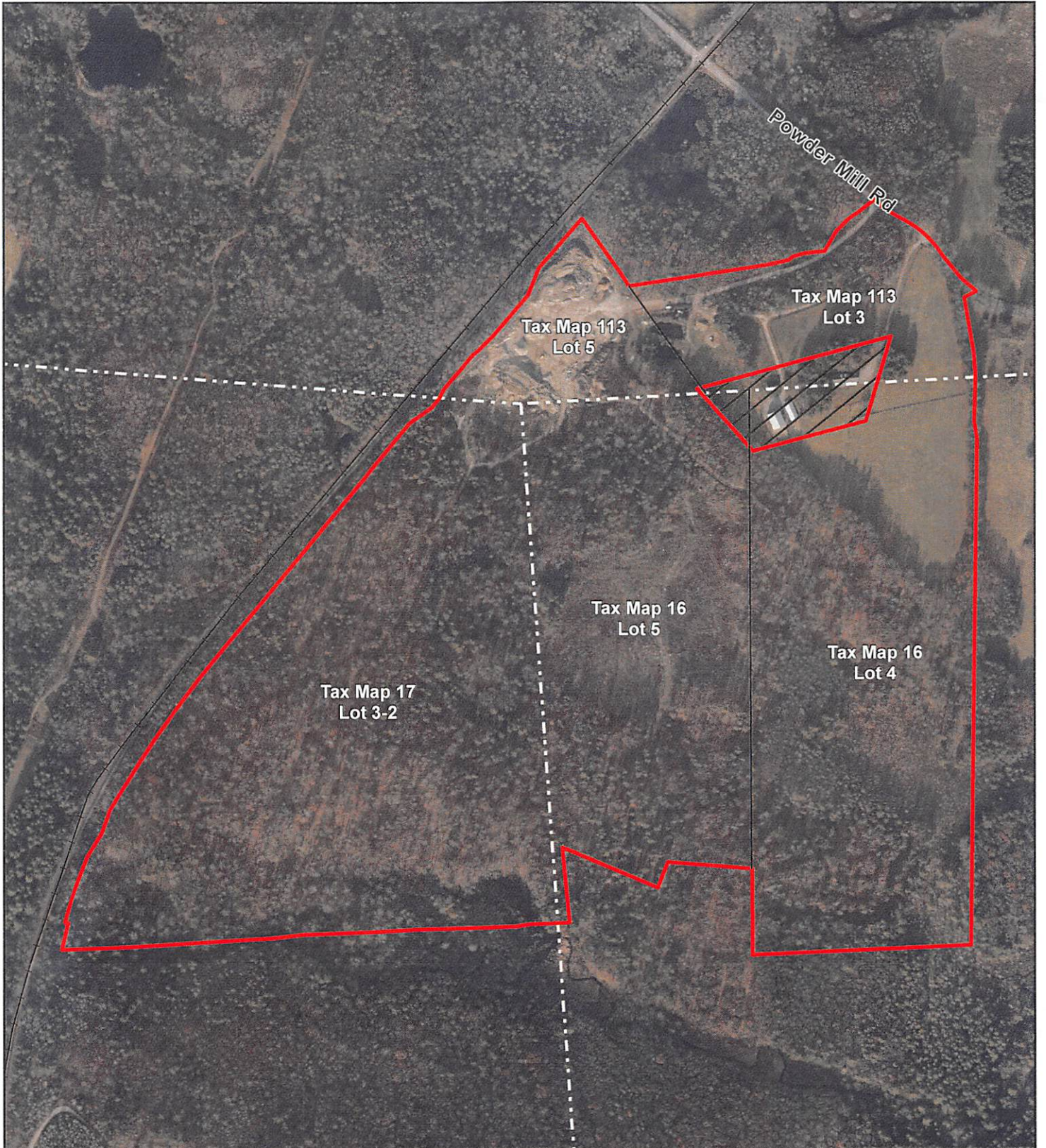
*To authorize the acquisition of real property interests through Executory Interest at Tax Map 113-3 and 113-5 in the name of the Town by the Conservation Commission pursuant to RSA 36-A:4 contingent on Southeast Land Trust signing a binding Purchase & Sales Agreement with the landowner and raising the additional funds needed to complete the project.*

*And to Further authorize the Chair to sign a letter of support for the application of a Drinking Water Trust Fund grant as part of this project.*

#### **Resources Protected**

This project is of interest to the Conservation Commission of all 3 towns for the protection of surface and groundwater resources through protection of a significant portion of Great Brook, a major tributary to the Exeter River - the source for a portion of Exeter's municipal drinking water; protection of prime and important agricultural soils; protection of lands ranked highest ranked habitat in the state and biological region by NH Fish and Game; and protection of a large intact forest system and wildlife corridor. This land is ranked as a conservation priority in the 2012 Exeter Natural Resource Inventory and the 2021 regional Coastal Conservation Plan.

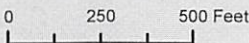
1/1/2023



- Proposed Easement Boundary (~156 acres)
- Proposed Excluded Area (~4 acres)
- Railroad
- Taxparcel
- Town boundary



1:6,000



**Rider Project  
Aerial Map**  
Kensington, East Kingston  
& Exeter, NH

Map prepared by  
Southeast Land Trust of NH  
May, 2023



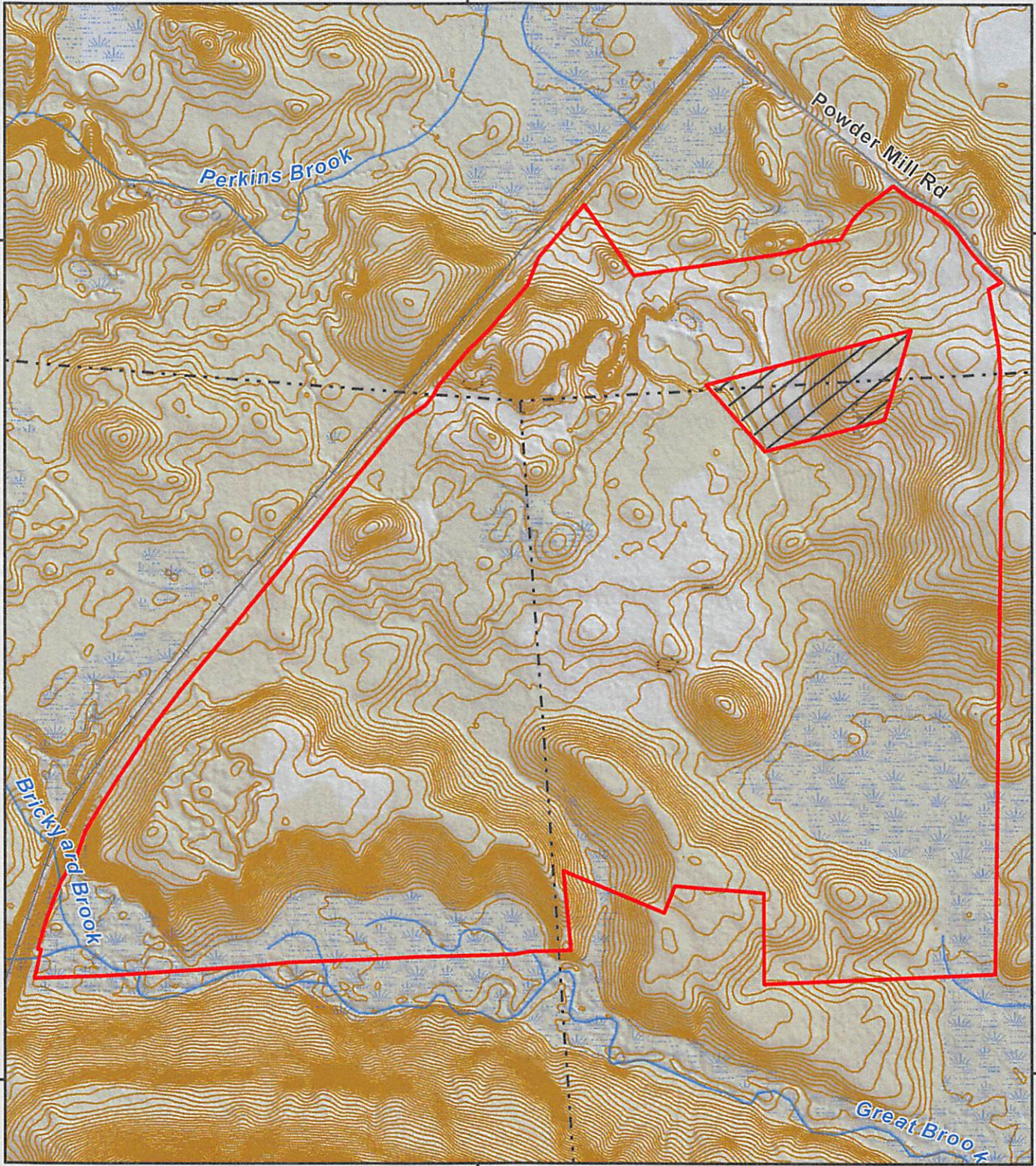
**SELT**

Boundary and feature locations are approximate.

70°59'0"W

42°57'30"N

42°57'30"N



42°57'0"N

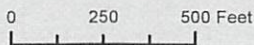
42°57'0"N

70°59'0"W

- Proposed Easement Boundary (~156 acres)
- Proposed Excluded Area (~4 acres)
- 2-ft. Contour
- Town boundary



1:6,000



**Rider Project  
Topo Map**  
Kensington, East Kingston  
& Exeter, NH

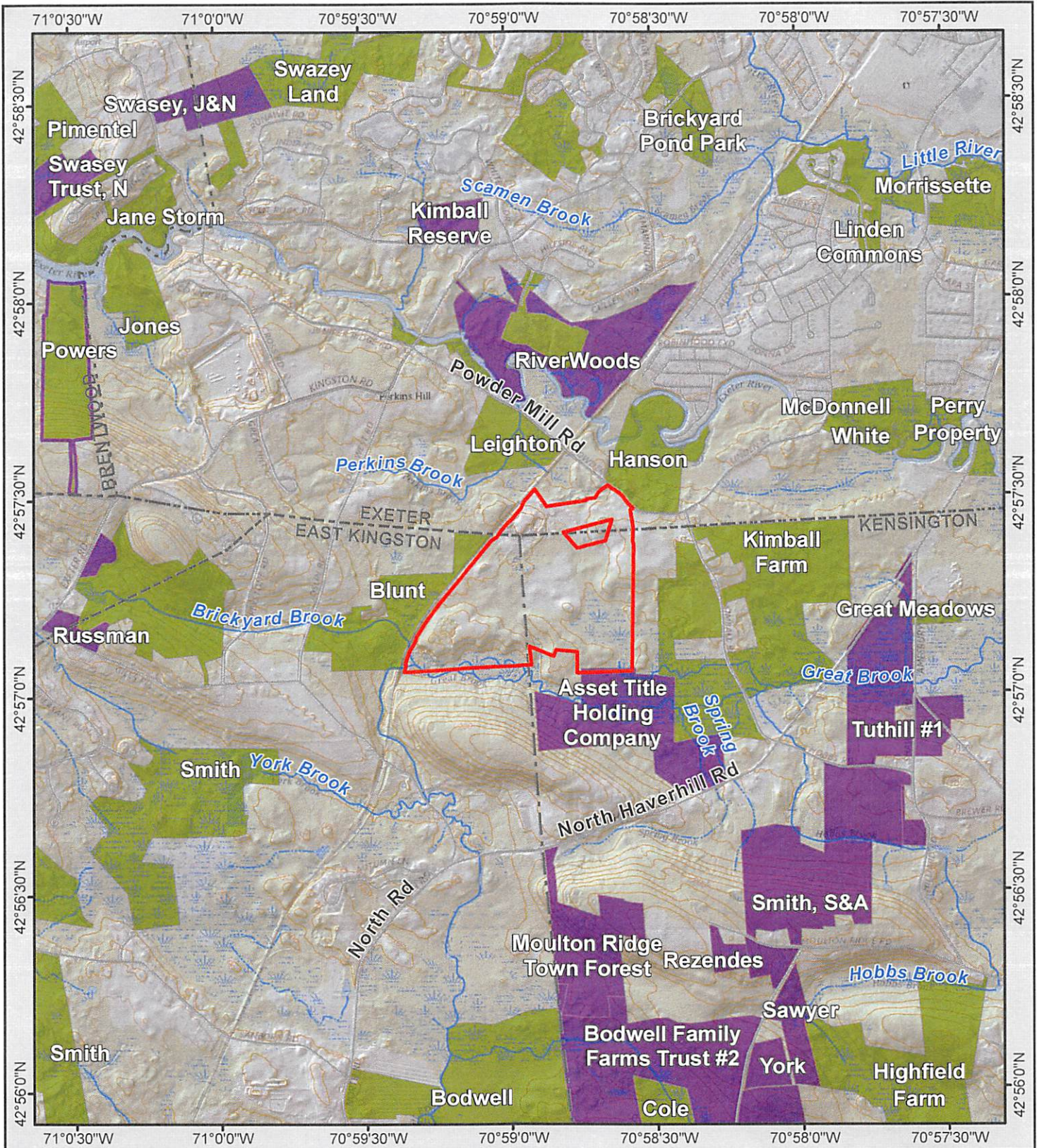
Boundary and feature locations are approximate.  
Conservation lands from NH GRANIT. USGS topographic base  
map (published 1970-1998) processed by NH GRANIT;  
coordinate system is NAD83 UTM Zone 19N meters.

Map prepared by  
Southeast Land Trust of NH  
May, 2023

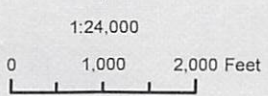


**SELT**





- Project Boundary
- SELT Conservation Land
- SELT EI
- Conservation & Public Land
- Town boundary



## Rider Project & Nearby Conservation Lands

### Kensington, East Kingston & Exeter, NH

Boundary and feature locations are approximate. Conservation lands from NH GRANIT. USGS topographic base map (published 1970-1998) processed by NH GRANIT; coordinate systems NAD83 UTM Zone 19N meters.

Map prepared by  
Southeast Land Trust of NH  
May, 2023



**SELT**



## Rider Conservation Easement Estimated Budget (9/12/2023)

### EXPENSES

<u>Transaction Costs</u>	<u>Estimated</u>	<u>Notes</u>
<b>Acquisition Costs</b>		
Easement Purchase Price	\$735,000	Per initial appraisal (\$1,265,000 FMV CE)
Easement Bargain Sale	\$530,000	Pending P&S Agreement
<b>Due Diligence Costs</b>		
Legal	\$8,930	
Attorney Fees	\$5,000	Estimate
Title insurance policy	\$2,930	Estimate
Title examination	\$1,000	Estimate
Survey	\$25,000	Estimate
Hazardous Waste Assessment	\$2,000	Estimate
Appraisal(s)	\$7,800	
Initial Appraisal	\$3,900	Stark & Webster Valuations, LLC (Paid directly by parties)
Second Appraisal	\$3,900	Estimate
<b>Closing Costs</b>		
Recording fees	\$500	Estimate
<b>Project Management Expenses</b>		
SELT Project Management	\$25,000	Flat Fee
Travel	\$500	Flat Fee
Printing & Postage	\$100	Flat Fee
<b>Contingency</b>	\$17,570	Reserve fund for unexpected costs (~1.5%)
<b>Subtotal, Transaction Costs</b>	<b>\$1,352,400</b>	
<b>Stewardship Costs</b>		
	<b>Estimated</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Easement Stewardship Fund	\$18,800	Estimate for Conservation Stewardship Fund
Legal Defense Fund	\$1,800	Flat rate contribution for legal defense of CEs
<b>Subtotal, Stewardship Costs</b>	<b>\$20,600</b>	
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$1,373,000</b>	total Transaction Costs + Long Term Stewardship Costs

### REVENUES

<u>Revenue Sources</u>	<u>Estimated</u>	<u>Notes</u>
<b>Government</b>		
East Kingston Conservation Fund	\$100,000	E. Kingston Conservation Commission
Exeter Conservation Fund	\$100,000	Exeter Conservation Commission
Kensington Conservation Fund	\$103,000	Kensington Conservation Commission
NHDES DWGTF	\$500,000	\$500K request
NHDES Local SWP Grant	\$25,000	Apply concurrent with DWGTF
<b>Private Fundraising</b>		
GBRPP	\$15,000	Transactional grant
Landowner Bargain Sale-CE	\$530,000	Pending P&S Agreement
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>	<b>\$1,373,000</b>	

**Proclamations/Recognitions**

10/13/2011

## Minutes

Select Board Meeting  
Monday September 11, 2023  
6:50 PM  
Nowak Room, Town Offices  
Draft Minutes

1. Call Meeting to Order

Members present: Chair Niko Papakonstantis, Vice-Chair Molly Cowan, Dan Chartrand, Nancy Belanger, Town Manager Russ Dean, and Assistant Town Manager Melissa Roy were present at this meeting.

Members Absent: Clerk Julie Gilman

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Papakonstantis at 6:52 PM. The Board went downstairs to the Wheelwright Room for an interview.

2. Board Interviews

- a. EC Heath for the Historic District Commission

The Board reconvened in the Novak Room at 7:04 PM.

3. Public Comment

There was no public comment at this time.

4. Proclamations/Recognitions

Mr. Papakonstantis thanked and recognized Public Safety and first responders and asked for a moment of silence for the victims of September 11, 2001.

5. Approval of Minutes

- a. Regular Meeting: August 21, 2023

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve the regular meeting minutes of August 21, 2023 as presented. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

- b. Special Meeting: August 29

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve the special meeting minutes of August 29, 2023 as presented. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

- c. Special Meeting: September 1, 2023

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve the special meeting minutes of September 1, 2023 as presented. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

6. Appointments

**MOTION:** Ms. Cowan moved to appoint E. Carrington Heath to the Historic District Commission, term to expire in April 2025. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

## 7. Discussion/Action Items

### a. ADA Capital Reserve Funds (Changing Table for Public Restrooms)

Mr. Dean said this is a request to put an adult changing table in the public bathroom at Town Hall. This idea came from Amanda Kelly and would use ADA funds. We've been working with Doug Eastman in his role as ADA Coordinator as well.

Amanda Kelly of 24 Prospect Street said this issue affects up to 4% of the population over age 3, and nearly 100% of those under 3 would use it. It's a "universal" changing station and would be safe for infants. The specifications comply with NH law for new construction, although this building is not required to address those requirements. This provides a place for visitors to any downtown shops and restaurants whose restrooms are too small for this. This is a resource businesses can tell their patrons about, and it's centrally located. The placement will allow any gender to use it and we'll only need to have one station for minimum fiscal impact.

Maureen Rashidifard of 4 Fox Chapel Court, the Co-Chair of the NH Chapter of the Changing Spaces campaign to get universal changing tables for all communities. She's in support of using the ADA revolving fund. It's important that Exeter shows they care about the health and safety of this community and to be an accessible and welcoming place to residents and visitors. This will allow for more families to participate in downtown events. Right now, they have to change on floors or in the backs of cars, with no privacy and dignity. Exeter would be one of the first places in NH and across the country with these facilities.

Mr. Papakonstantis said it's exciting and rewarding to become welcoming to everyone and for Exeter to be in a leadership position on that.

Mr. Chartrand asked how much we're proposing. Mr. Papakonstantis said up to \$11,000 out of the ADA Fund.

Ms. Belanger said there is a choice of manual vs electric, is electric more user friendly? Ms. Kelly said yes, the hydraulic power allows it to lower down to the height of a wheelchair for the transfer. Ms. Belanger asked if the power goes out there, is a hand crank so it can still be used? Ms. Kelly said that's her understanding.

Ms. Belanger suggested putting signs up around town. Ms. Kelly said there's pre-approved signage that shows the restroom has a universal changing table. Ms. Belanger said she would also like to see signs around town and on the Parkway.

Mr. Dean said it's \$8,000 for the purchase and up to \$3,000 for the installation. He thanked Jeff Beck and the Maintenance team who got the space set up for this.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to authorize the use of up to \$11,000 from the ADA Capital Reserve fund for the purchase and installation of a powered folding changing table in the public restroom located at 9 Front Street. Mr. Chartrand seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

b. Town Clerk Funding Request: Voting Machines

Town Clerk Andie Kohler said we're requesting funds for four new ballot counting machines from LHS and 35 new voting booths from Franklin. We started a fundraising program by selling the copper plates and collected \$1,550, enough for one voting booth. We're also requesting 36 curtains, 35 for the new booths and one for the older voting booth in the lobby. Each booth will hold 4 voters. They're circular and one section is for the handicapped, although anyone can use them. They will accommodate 144 voters instead of 77 as now. We could put out the voting booths we have now to other towns, but they're falling apart and there are no replacement parts. The total is \$46,943.97 for 35 booths and 36 curtains. The voting machines are \$25,200 for 4 machines. There's also a maintenance plan of \$300 per year, which is what we pay now. Mr. Papakonstantis said ARPA funds. Mr. Dean said there is \$254,751 in ARPA funds available. That does not include the cost of the Swasey turnaround, which is TBD.

Ms. Cowan said she's in support of new ballot counting machines. Are these the ones recommended by the Secretary of State? Ms. Kohler said he has not approved either one of these machines. It comes down to whether the Ballot Law Commission will approve one or both, but this would likely be the one that will be approved. The other company is from out of State and hasn't been tested in a town election beyond a pilot. Mr. Chartrand said there's a minimal risk related to the approval and we need time to get these up and running before the 2024 general election. Ms. Kohler said we're hoping that by the end of this month the State will approve, but maybe in October. She added that we would wait for their approval before purchasing.

Mr. Chartrand asked if the Town Moderator is in support of this, and Ms. Kohler said yes.

Mr. Papakonstantis said regarding the TBD cost for the turnaround, is there any estimate? Mr. Dean said no, we don't have one yet. Mr. Chartrand said he thinks this is a higher priority than the turnaround. Voting is the foundation of everything we do.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to authorize \$25,200 from ARPA funds for 4 ImageCast Precinct ballot counting machines and \$46,700 for 35 Franklin Voting Booths and 36 Franklin Booth Curtains. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

c. Public Hearing on Water/Sewer Rates

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to open the public hearing on Water/Sewer rates. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

Keith Pratt and Megan McCowan of Underwood Engineers were present to discuss the findings of their update of the 2016 Water/Sewer Rates study.

Mr. Pratt said the new study looked five years ahead to support the Water & Sewer Budgets and Capital Improvement programs (CIPs). Costs are increasing, but there's some decrease in consumption. The existing rate structure has three tiers, which promotes conservation.

They recommend implementing AWWA meter ratios for meter charges. As meter sizes increase, charges would increase. They cost more to buy and maintain.

They also recommend increasing the General Fund contribution to the Water Fund for fire suppression. This can range from 5% - 40% of the Water Fund Budget. Exeter would fall in the 31% category but we're recommending 15%. This would mean \$100,000 in 2024 increasing \$50,000 annually to \$300,000 by 2028, which is not yet 15%. For sewer, they're not proposing a General Fund contribution.

They recommend a recalculated assessment fee, and to rebrand it as a "system development charge." There were about 30 minor fees that they recommend adjusting or adding.

They recommend a Water rate increase of 20% and a Sewer increase of 4% ASAP. The average Exeter user uses 111 gallons per day, so they would go from a current charge of \$550 to \$640 in 2024. A large commercial user might go from 19,412 to \$23,401.

They recommend that the rates be reviewed every two years with a major overhaul every five years. Future considerations are looking at irrigation and deduct meters, additional or accelerated General Fund contributions to offset Water rates, and a Surface Water Treatment Plant which is not built into the proposed rates.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked for Public Comment.

John Grueter of the Sterling Hill Condominium Association said that Sterling Hill has one meter per building with 32 units. Even though the average per unit is 67 gallons, and in the last few years we have reduced usage, we're in the third tier. He doesn't know how we would do a meter retrofit; it would cost a fortune to put in 128 separate meters. He would like a break on the rates.

Mr. Pratt said the town asked us to look at multiple units. We said if you look at the alternative method and put meters in there, because they have so little consumption they are currently paying less than the potential meter charges. He recommends continuing to treat everyone the same but to pay more attention going forward.

Mr. Papakonstantis said it doesn't make sense for the town to put in separate meters. Mr. Dean said in the overall study, the consulting team is suggesting coming back every few years to look at this. We feel like we treat everyone equally in the system. Mr. Chartrand said he's reluctant to start pulling apart the recommended model now. Mr. Grueter said he doesn't want to wait another two years to review this again.

Bob Kelly, Chair of the Water/Sewer Advisory Committee, said we haven't changed rates in two years. Up until recently, it hasn't been a problem, since our reserves have been strong. He recommends not making such a large increase right away. The Water/Sewer Committee was not able to discuss this because they didn't have a quorum in August; they have a meeting on Wednesday and can give recommendations following that. In view of what the voters and rate



payers have had to deal with in the last few months, it seems worthwhile to give people a break.

Mr. Papakonstantis suggested a second public hearing to hear what the Water/Sewer Committee recommends.

**MOTION:** Mr. Chartrand moved to close the public hearing. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

Ms. Belanger said she'd also like to have a second hearing to hear the Water/Sewer Committee weigh in.

Mr. Chartrand said he's reluctant to ignore professional advice. He's going to be skeptical of other recommendations. Mr. Papakonstantis said we owe it to the Committee to hear their recommendations.

Mr. Dean said these rates wouldn't be scheduled to go into effect until the first billing in January 2024, so there's time to figure out the direction we want to go in.

d. CMP Station Equipment Replacement

Interim Public Works Director Paul Vlasich and Interim Water and Sewer Supervisor Steve Dalton were present to discuss the Court Street Pump Station Upgrade. Mr. Vlasich said the town approved \$400,000 for replacement of pump equipment. The Department received three vendor quotes. He recommends awarding the bid to Advanced Pump Company in the amount of \$221,583.06. They were the lowest bidder and had the most inclusive package.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked if we've worked with this company before. Mr. Dalton said we've bought parts from them before, but they haven't done actual work for us.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to award the pump replacement project from Article 8 of the 2023 Town Warrant to Advanced Pump Company in the amount of \$221,583.06. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

e. Septage Receiving Station Update and Construction Proposal

Mr. Vlasich said last year, the Department of Labor visited the septage receiving operation and said there was the potential of unauthorized personnel entering into the building. We had to shut down that operation. In Dec 2022, a contract was awarded to Wright-Pierce to design upgrades to septage receiving. We were getting over \$200,000 a year of revenue for the septage. The plan was to design the project and use Sewer Reserve Funds to finance it; that was before the siphons project. We applied for SRF Funding for this project but were not awarded so we're looking at the Sewer Reserves again. We'd go to bid in early 2024 with completion in October 2024.

Mr. Dean said the projected end of year balance in the Sewer Reserve Funds is \$4.5M.

Mr. Chartrand said getting this project done would allow us to begin accepting septage and getting the revenue. This is a source of funds. Mr. Vlasich

said it will be a four or five year payback for the project. Mr. Dean said we'll be looking at septage rates when the facility is close to coming online.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to authorize up to \$802,000 from Sewer Reserves for the purpose of renovations and upgrading the septage facility at 13 Newfields Road. Mr. Chartrand seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

## 8. Regular Business

### a. Tax Abatements, Veterans Credits and Exemptions

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve an abatement for 64/105/82 in the amount of \$504.96 for tax year 2019, \$596.31 for 2020, \$588.82 for 2021, \$605.36 for 2022, and \$537.08 for 2023. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve an intent to cut for 5/1 for one year. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

### b. Permits & Approvals

#### i. MS232 - Siphons Additional Funding

Mr. Dean said this is the amended form of the appropriation that includes the recent vote on the Sewer Siphons.

#### ii. MS535 - End of Year Report for NHDRA

Mr. Dean said this was a report prepared by the Finance Department for 2022.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to accept the MS535 financial report on the budget for the period ending Dec 31, 2022. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to accept the MS232 for the year 2023. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

- iii. Mr. Papakonstantis said there's a special event application for Parks and Rec Murder Mystery Dinner at Town Hall which involves alcohol. Ms. Roy said all Parks and Rec permits go before the Board because they can't approve their own permits.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve the special event application for the Murder Mystery Dinner to be held at Town Hall October 27 from 5 PM to 11 PM held by the Exeter Parks and Rec Department. Mr. Chartrand seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

Mr. Dean said regarding the tennis courts, Parks and Rec would like to table this request as they are reworking the estimated costs.

### c. Town Manager's Report

- i. He's working on the pedestrian and traffic analysis work. He's had two online meetings with the consultants and they were out last week doing traffic counts.

- ii. There's a Department Head meeting August 30 and a smaller group meeting September 5.
- iii. New fuel contracts are in place: \$3.09 for unleaded, \$3.49 for diesel.
- iv. Budget meetings continue.
- v. The Trustees of Trust Funds held a meeting this morning which he attended. There was discussion about defining capital improvements.
- vi. He attended a Housing Advisory meeting where the subject was 79E. There is a recommendation forthcoming from staff. We're talking about suggesting it be repealed.
- vii. We had to execute one tax collector deed, on 78 Old Town Farm Road. It's rare, but when it happens you're looking at a buy-back agreement. They have 90 days to redeem the property. The Deputy Tax Collector is doing a great job.
- viii. He's meeting with Paul Vlasich tomorrow regarding Pickpocket Dam. There's a grant opportunity from NOAA if we move forward with dam removal. VHB is doing work on the options.
- ix. Exeter Town Hall will have political events October 9 - 15. This will be a primary-type exercise where candidates have roundtable-style events.
- x. The Powderkeg Festival still needs volunteers.
- xi. At Town Hall, we have some railings that have been put up. We're working closely with Ms. Gilman on that. The new chairs are in and the dollies have been ordered. Mr. Chartrand asked if the balconies are now usable. Ms. Roy said a single railing was installed as a test, but it had to be removed to bring it back to the fabricator. We're hoping to have them all installed by the end of the month. At that point, the balcony can be used.

d. Select Board Committee Reports

- i. Ms. Belanger had a Planning Board meeting with their second CIP public hearing. They stressed their support for the facilities for the Police Station and Fire Department substation. Subdivisions were approved for 24 Powdermill Road, 18 Beech Hill road subdivision, and 45 Pine Street. . There was a Public Hearing to amend section 9.9 on wetland shoreland buffers by eliminating the wetland waiver process, which was duplicative. The company Glerups, which decided not to build, asked for a year extension which is a positive sign. The Planning Department is working on returning unspent funds for projects such as Sterling Hill. Mr. Sharples talked about the Facility Assessment report, which he felt was invaluable. There's a Planning Board sitewalk in Dover this week.

The Housing Advisory Committee discussed the pros and cons of 79E. It was originally put there in 2014 to develop a downtown that was struggling, but ours is no longer struggling. There are other ways to incentivize development. The Department heads will come up with a presentation on ways to do better for the taxpayers, such as the MUND.

The Historical Society has a presentation on past to present until Mid-November, including the Select Board photo.

- ii. Ms. Cowan had a Parks and Rec Advisory meeting. They talked about field rental usage rates, which have not been increased in at least 20 years. Nothing to report yet but there was a robust discussion. They also talked about tennis court repair, but it sounds like that's on pause now.
- iii. Mr. Chartrand had a Facilities Committee meeting. He encouraged Ms. Gilman to continue attending as an alternate because of her expertise. They received the report on Facilities Assessment, which is incredibly informative.

At the Sustainability Advisory Committee meeting, there was further conversation about their idea of rotating Chairs in meetings. He discouraged that idea and suggested meeting quarterly or six times a year instead. They discussed voluntary composting initiatives, such as collecting pumpkins at Laney & Lu; the response was overwhelming last year so they're going to see whether Laney & Lu wants to do it again. The Committee is also sourcing composting buckets for those who would like to take their compost to the transfer station.

- iv. Mr. Papakonstantis attended a Swasey Park Trustee meeting. They talked about doing tree work and lawn care now that the siphons project is paused. There was a proposal where a citizen offered a piece of art to be displayed on the Parkway. The Trustees were open to accepting it, but it could be construed as a bench, and the Trustees have a "no additional benches" policy. They found a place outside Swasey Parkway for it. It will come before the Select Board to accept.

e. Correspondence

- i. A letter from DES for alleged violations on a property.
- ii. An advertisement for the Powderkeg Beer and Chili festival
- iii. A program of meetings for Exeter Historical Society
- iv. A letter from resident Rob Ficara regarding traffic, which has been forwarded to Mr. Sharples
- v. A letter of thanks from Exeter Historical Society for the pictures of the Select Board.

9. Review Board Calendar

- a. September 18 at 5 PM is the public hearing for the Procedural Defect Meeting. The Defect Meeting itself is September 29 from 9 AM - 9:30, with voting from 9:30-10:30. The next Select Board meetings are September 25, October 2, Oct 16, and Oct 30. Mr. Dean and Ms. Roy will not be present on October 2 as they are attending ICMA.

10. Non-Public Session

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to enter into non-public session under RSA 91-A:3II(a). Ms. Cowan seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 4-0, and the meeting entered non-public at 8:47 PM.

**MOTION:** Mr. Chartrand moved to exit non-public session. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

**MOTION:** Mr. Chartrand moved to seal the non-public minutes indefinitely. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

11. Adjournment

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to adjourn. Mr. Chartrand seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Joanna Bartell  
Recording Secretary

Select Board Special Meeting  
Monday, September 18, 2023  
5:00 PM  
Nowak Room, Town Offices  
Draft Minutes

1. Call Meeting to Order

Members present: Chair Niko Papakonstantis, Nancy Belanger, Dan Chartrand, Town Manager Russ Dean and Assistant Town Manager Melissa Roy were present at this meeting. Absent: Vice-Chair Molly Cowan, Clerk Julie Gilman. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Papakonstantis at 5:00 pm.

2. Public Hearing

**MOTION:** Mr. Papakonstantis requested a motion to open the Public Hearing regarding the Deliberative Session of Friday, September 29, 2023. Ms. Belanger moved to accept the motion and Mr. Chartrand seconded. The motion passed 3-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis read the Special Town Meeting Warrant 2023: To the inhabitants of the Town of Exeter, in the County of Rockingham, in said State, qualified to vote on Town affairs first session, you are hereby notified that the first session of Deliberative Session of the Special Town Meeting will be held on Friday, September 29, 2023, beginning at 9:00 am at the Exeter Town Offices, 10 Front Street. The first session will consist of explanation, discussion and debate of each of the following warrant articles and will also afford voters who are present the opportunity to propose, debate and adopt amendments to warrant articles, except those articles in which wording is prescribed by State law. The second session of the Special Town Meeting to vote on all warrant articles as they may have been amended at the first session, will be held on September 29, 2023 in the Nowak Room at the Town Offices at 10 Front Street in Exeter. Polls for voting by official ballot will open at 9:30 am and close at 10:30 am.

Article 1: To see if the Town will vote in accordance with RSA 31:5-b to cure and legalize procedural defects leading to the Special Town Meeting Vote taken on August 15, 2023. The defects were created by a delay in the scheduling of the required budget hearing on the proposed article. Delays in the required posted notices by RSA 31:5 IV regarding the Select Board's vote to proceed with the petition to the court and the scheduling of this hearing on the Town's petition for the Special Town Meeting and any other procedural defects that may exist. Majority vote required.

Mr. Papakonstantis opened discussion to the public for any comment. In seeing, for the record, there was no public in the room, Mr. Papakonstantis requested a motion to close Public Hearing.

**MOTION:** Mr. Papakonstantis requested a motion to close the Public Hearing. Ms. Belanger moved to accept the motion. Mr. Chartrand seconded. The motion passed 3-0.

**MOTION:** Mr. Papakonstantis requested a motion to adjourn. Ms. Belanger moved to adjourn. Mr. Chartrand seconded. The Motion passed 3-0 and the meeting was adjourned at 5:10 pm

Respectfully submitted,  
Pamela McElroy  
Senior Executive Assistant

## Appointments



**Board and Committee Appointments**  
**September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

**Housing Advisory Committee**

Emily Heath, term to expire 4/30/26

**Energy Committee**

Stephanie Marshall (no term)

## Tree Committee Update

**FY24 Preliminary Operating Budget**

## **2024 Exeter Preliminary Town Budget**

**September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

To the Exeter Select Board,

Attached you will find the Town of Exeter preliminary budget request for Fiscal Year 2024. The fiscal year addressed in this budget begins on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024 and ends December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024. I would like to acknowledge the efforts of all Town departments, and in particular, the Finance Department, for their assistance in preparing this preliminary budget. This budget represents the beginning of the FY24 budget process that will conclude approximately 5 ½ months from now, on Tuesday, March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

### **Overview**

The FY24 Operating Budget Request covers three major funds (General, Water, Sewer) plus warrant articles and any proposed bond issues. Items that propose funding by warrant articles and bonding are described in the Town's Capital Improvement Program FY24-29, as adopted by the Planning Board.

### **TOWN GOVERNMENT BUDGET PROCESS, VALUES AND TAX RATES**

Exeter functions under the SB2 form of government. The Town adopted this form of government in 1996. The operating budget, including any bonds and warrant articles, is prepared by the Town Manager and Town Departments in August, and submitted to the Select Board the third week of September. This preliminary budget is then referred to the Budget Recommendations Committee, who hold budget meetings with Town Departments through their subcommittee process in late September and early October. The full Budget Recommendations Committee meets in October and November, and presents final recommendations on the budget to the Select Board in late November. The budget is then reviewed and finalized in December by the Select Board in preparation for the annual budget and bond hearings required by RSA 40:13. The public hearing on the 2024 operating budget and bonds (including the default budget) is scheduled for January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024. After the budget and bond hearings, the budget and bonds (in the form of the Town Warrant) is sent to Deliberative Session for discussion and possible amendment by voters. The Deliberative Session takes place Saturday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024 at the Exeter High School Auditorium. The final budget, including any bonds and warrant articles, is voted on the second Tuesday in March as part of the Town election. The 2024 Town Warrant will contain the total Town fiscal plan for the 2024 fiscal year.

If the operating budget does not pass at the Town and school elections, a default budget goes into effect and becomes the operating budget for the fiscal year. The combination of the operating budget and approved warrant articles, less anticipated revenues, drives the ultimate tax levy required for the year.

At the time of budget adoption, the Town’s fiscal year is already two and a half months old as the new fiscal year begins on January 1<sup>st</sup>. Prior to March voting, the Town operates on a “base budget” for the first 2 ½ months of the fiscal year until the voters approve the new budget.

The Water and Sewer Fund operating budgets are approved separately from the Town operating budget as their own articles, and like the general fund operating budget, the Water and Sewer operating budgets have their own default budgets.

The Town’s Capital Improvement Program (CIP) includes all non-recurring capital requests in excess of \$25,000. These items can be funded through the budget, warrant articles, or bond articles, depending on the request, and the recommendation of the Select Board and Town Manager. Any bond article proposal over \$100,000 requires 60% voter approval (3/5) and requires a public hearing under RSA 33-8-a. The bond hearing is advertised in December of each year and is held the third Tuesday in January under RSA 40:13, concurrent with the hearings on the Town operating budgets.

**Overview – Five Year Tax Rate Trend**

The table below shows the last five years of the Town share of the tax rate versus the overall tax rate. At this time, Town spending represents 23.30% of the total tax rate. The rest of the tax rate is made up of local schools (Lincoln and Main Street School budgets), the Exeter Region Cooperative School District assessment (Grades 6-12), and the Rockingham County tax.

**Property Tax Rate – Town Share – Last 5 years**

Year	Municipal Tax Rate	Overall Property Tax Rate per 1,000 value	Town as % of Total Rate
2023	TBD	TBD	TBD
2022	\$5.96/1,000	\$24.75/1,000	23.30%
2021	\$5.79/1,000	\$24.01/1,000	23.29%
2020	\$5.91/1,000	\$24.49/1,000	24.13%
2019	\$5.71/1,000	\$23.27/1,000	24.54%
2018	\$7.25/1,000	\$27.50/1,000	26.36%

The 23.30% percent share of the total rate does not include the cost of overlay (reserve for property tax abatements) or the veteran’s credit program, which represent approximately 29 cents of the overall \$5.96/1,000 rate. The cost of the veteran’s credits program (\$500 per eligible property) and overlay for abatements is added to the Town side of the operating tax levy to generate the total Town share of tax rate. The New Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration sets the Town’s new tax rate in late October /early November each year.

**Net Taxable Value – Last 5 years – Town of Exeter**

Year	Net Taxable Value	% Increase over Prior Year	\$ Value increase over prior year
2023	2,242,007,713	.17%	\$3,844,870
2022	2,238,162,843	.89%	\$19,741,949
2021	2,218,420,894	1.01%	\$22,213,212
2020	2,196,207,682	.98%	\$21,217,258
2019	2,174,990,424	24.25%	n/a

Exeter's tax base consists of over 6,600 residential and commercial properties representing over 2.7 billion dollars in value. The Town has 383.7 million of value in non-taxable value in land and buildings (federal government, non-profits, conservation land), and exempts another 40 million annually in various property tax value exemptions (disabled, elderly, blind). Exeter's three largest taxpayers, Riverwoods, Phillips Exeter Academy, and Exeter Hospital, each have a non-taxable component. Of note is 2024 is scheduled to be a revaluation year for the Town, and with a current assessment ratio close to 60%, property values will increase significantly in 2024. This value increase will result in a tax rate decrease for the Town share of the rate.

**Community Snapshot – Population Estimates, Values & Tax Rates**

City/Town	Population 2022 Estimate	2022 Net Taxable Value w/utilities	2022 Total Tax Rate	Municipal Rate
Exeter	16,263	2,238,162,843	\$24.75/1,000	\$5.96/1,000
Durham	14,695	1,244,023,342	\$29.04/1,000	\$8.13/1,000
Dover	33,234	5,066,056,620	\$19.84/1,000	\$7.22/1,000
Laconia	17,103	3,441,276,113	\$14.85/1,000	\$6.17/1,000
Newmarket	9,459	995,277,048	\$26.99/1,000	\$6.27/1,000
Hampton	16,482	3,922,072,100	\$15.84/1,000	\$5.95/1,000
Bedford	21,203	4,812,726,855	\$17.60/1,000	\$3.80/1,000
Portsmouth	22,175	6,493,196,779	\$15.20/1,000	\$7.59/1,000
Londonderry	26,793	5,134,057,785	\$18.48/1,000	\$4.22/1,000

**Sources: NH Department of Business and Economic Affairs, August 2023; NHDRA Completed Public Tax Rates, 2022**

In conclusion, it can be stated that Exeter has similar service needs to many of the communities listed in the above table, but generally less of a valuation base to support these services.

## GENERAL FUND BUDGET

The FY24 General Fund preliminary budget is a 7.94% increase, or \$1,693,413, over the FY23 budget. This budget increase is due to several factors including wage increases, benefit increases, expense increases, and debt service increases. Inflationary factors are influencing the FY24 budget as well. All of these items are discussed in greater detail in this budget document.

### Town General Fund Budgets – Last 5 years

Year	Town Budget	% Increase over Prior Year	\$ Increase over Prior Year
2024	\$23,019,693	7.94%	\$1,693,413
2023	\$21,326,280	4.61%	\$939,278
2022	\$20,387,002	2.49%	\$495,920
2021	\$19,891,082	1.46%	\$285,545
2020	\$19,605,537	2.83%	\$538,680
2019	\$19,066,857	2.25%	\$420,213

The Town General Fund budget provides services to the community and is organized by Department function. These services include General Government, Finance, Planning & Development, Public Safety, Public Works, Welfare & Human Services, Parks & Recreation, Other Culture & Recreation, and the Exeter Public Library. The General Fund also contains the Debt Service & Capital budget, and the Benefits & Taxes budget.

Exeter has an active and engaged population that interacts with Town government, facilities, and programs in many different ways. In addition, many volunteer boards support the Town government structure and are responsible for many key decisions of the Town in areas of general government, land use, sustainability, water supply, sewerage treatment and disposal, economic development, and capital improvements. The Town does not have a charter. The Town website ([exeternh.gov](http://exeternh.gov)) shows the large number of boards, committees, and commissions that make up a part of Town government, whether acting in a formal statutory role, or in an advisory capacity to the Select Board. Staff time and resources are dedicated in many instances to supporting the Town committee structure, in areas of land use, budget, general governance, and public works.

The total FY24 General Fund preliminary budget is \$23,019,693, an increase of 7.94%, or \$1,693,413, over the FY23 approved budget of \$21,326,280.

### Three Year Budget Comparison

The table below shows the three year trend for Town departments by function.

<b><u>Function</u></b>	<b><u>FY22 Approved</u></b>	<b><u>FY23 Approved</u></b>	<b><u>FY24 Request</u></b>	<b><u>\$ change '24/'23</u></b>	<b><u>% change '24/'23</u></b>
General Government	1,239,834	1,320,922	1,476,712	155,790	11.79%
Finance	711,863	710,155	760,116	49,961	7.04%
Planning/Building/Econ Dev	721,789	751,237	744,699	-6,539	-.87%
Police	3,530,920	3,710,098	3,872,453	162,355	4.38%
Fire/EMS/Emergency Mgmt.	3,883,095	4,091,172	4,290,984	199,813	4.88%
Dispatch	429,319	436,862	448,400	11,538	2.64%
Health	149,663	154,260	157,431	3,172	2.06%
Public Works – General Fund	4,494,655	4,577,216	4,736,806	159,591	3.49%
Maintenance - Garage	1,249,359	1,294,634	1,230,729	-63,904	-4.94%
Welfare/Human Services	180,930	183,587	249,199	65,612	35.74%
Parks/Recreation	640,116	614,506	682,230	67,724	11.02%
Other Culture/Recreation	34,000	34,000	34,500	500	1.47%
Public Library	1,124,643	1,172,320	1,244,151	71,832	6.13%
Debt Service/Capital	1,784,835	1,772,346	2,324,260	551,914	31.14%
Benefits and Taxes	474,975	502,966	767,021	264,055	52.50%
<b>Total General Fund</b>	<b>20,650,723</b>	<b>21,326,280</b>	<b>23,019,693</b>	<b>1,693,413</b>	<b>7.94%</b>

## **General Budget Discussion**

### **FY24 Budget – Wages and Benefits**

**Wage Discussion.** The FY23 General Fund budget included \$80,000 for wage adjustments for non-union and SEIU employees based on the outcome of a compensation study update. This wage update was implemented in August, 2023. Non-Union employees had received a wage adjustment of 4.5% prior to the implementation of the new classification plan. Town wages have struggled to keep pace with the marketplace (see attached article from Seacoastonline.com regarding the City of Portsmouth wage adjustments). The newest compensation plan seeks to help this situation by the implementation of a new non-union wage scale that reflects the Town remaining competitive to the 75% percentile of comparable communities. Police and Fire contracts are settled; however, in another attempt to remain competitive in the marketplace, the Select Board authorized \$2,000 bonuses to police and fire union personnel, to be paid for out of ARPA funds if needed. These bonuses were paid in August of 2023. The Town will pay these bonuses again in FY24. The FY24 wage budget includes adjustments for SEIU (2 step increases in 2023) plus a step in July of 2024. Non-Union wages are budgeted at a 3.0% step increase plus a 2.0% COLA effective July, 2024. Again, Town wages have struggled to keep pace with the market and these adjustments are all reflected in the FY24 budget increases. Inflation is impacting wages on a state-wide basis. Unfortunately, even with these wage adjustments, the Town is experiencing a harder than normal time filling positions in this labor market.



**Health Insurance** – The Town offers family, 2-person and single plan health insurance to eligible full-time employees. The Town is a member of HealthTrust. The Trust is a pooled risk program covering over 50,000 public employees (including school districts) statewide. For the purposes of the FY24 budget, a 10% increase over FY23 has been included in the preliminary budget. FY24 health rates will be set in October 2023 by the HealthTrust Board of Directors. Rates are determined based on claims experience and the overall pool rating. Exeter is in the over 50 member group, and like each community and school district, the Town receives an individual rating. The Town’s rating for FY23 was a 1.5% decrease for all plan offerings. Health insurance contributions by plan vary by bargaining unit. Current contributions for non union employees are 79/21% for Blue Choice POS plan, and 86/14% for the Access New England HMO Plan. Police Union contribution effective July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024 is 80/20 for Blue Choice POS plan, and 83/17% for Access Blue New England. Fire Union contribution effective July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024 is 79/21 for Blue Choice POS plan, and 85/15 for Access Blue New England. SEIU contribution effective July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024 is 85/15 for Access Blue New England plan. The Blue Choice plan will be phased out by the HealthTrust effective December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024.

**Dental Insurance** - Dental insurance for eligible employees is provided through HealthTrust. An increase of 2.0% has been forecast for the FY24 budget. The rating for dental insurance is done at the same time as the health insurance rating, and budgets will be adjusted accordingly when rates are known.

**Retirement** – The Town’s full-time employees participate in the New Hampshire Retirement System. The system classifies employees as either Group 1 (administrative and public works) or Group 2 (Police/Fire). Rates applied to payroll are: Group 1 employees – 13.53%, Group 2 employees - Police 31.28%, Fire 30.35%. Group 1 employees participate in Social Security (6.2% of payroll), while Group 2 employees do not.

**FY24 Budget Notes**

Below is a summary of FY24 General Fund budgets by Department. These budgets will be adjusted once FY24 costs for health insurance, dental insurance, long term disability insurance, life insurance, worker’s compensation, property/liability, and unemployment are known for FY24.

**GENERAL GOVERNMENT**

**Select Board - (5 Elected) – FY24 Budget Request \$22,468, increase of \$1,500 or 7.15% over FY23 budget.** The Select Board are the Town’s elected governing body. The role of the Select Board is to manage the prudential affairs of the Town, including recommending the final budget to go before the Town deliberative session. Each Board member is compensated \$3,000 per year, and the Chair is compensated \$4,000 per year. The special expense line item has been increased by \$1,500 to \$5000.

**Town Manager - (2.0 FTEs) – FY24 Budget Request \$302,125, increase of \$34,890, or 13.06% over FY23 budget.** The Town’s executive and day to day chief administrative functions are exercised through the Town Manager. The Town Manager’s Office also provides administrative support to the Town's many boards and committees created by RSA, Town Meeting, or the Select Board, including the Budget Recommendations Committee, Swasey Parkway Trustees, Transportation Committee, Facilities Committee, Communications Advisory Committee, Housing Advisory Committee, and Water/Sewer Advisory Committee, among others. The Town Manager’s Office produces all packets and information for the Select Board, oversees preparation of the annual Town budget, and supervises all Town departments.

The Town Manager’s budget includes two (2) FT personnel, the Town Manager and Senior Executive Assistant. FY24 budget changes include an allocation change – the Senior Executive Assistant is now charged 100% to the Town Manager budget, instead of being split 84% Town Manager, 16% Welfare/Human Services. The FY24 budget proposes a part-time position of 30 hours per week to handle an ever increasing workload for welfare and human services. The Senior Executive Assistant position will devote full time duties to the Town Manager’s Office including support of various Town committees. The Senior Executive Assistant will also back up the new PT Welfare Administrator.

**Human Resources – (2.5 FTE) – FY24 Budget Request: \$205,103, increase of \$18,719 or 10.04% over FY23 budget.** The Human Resources office is staffed by 1 FT Assistant Town Manager/Human Resources Director, a FT Human Resources Generalist, and a PT Human Resources Assistant. The Human Resources office is primarily responsible for coordinating interviewing, hiring and on boarding of all Town employees, administering union contracts and Town benefit programs, and performing general personnel administration. This includes administration of health, dental, and life insurance programs, retirement benefits, evaluations, leave accruals and payroll, compensation changes, and benefit changes. The Human Resources Department also participates in collective bargaining. FT and PT wage increases total \$28,114, with \$9,310 in wages allocated to the water/sewer fund. Department expenses have been level funded for FY24 at \$10,897.

**Transportation – (assessment only) – FY24 Budget Request: \$1, increase of \$0 over FY23 budget.** The transportation account includes \$1 as a placeholder for FY24. In FY19, the budget for COAST was moved to the transportation fund (COAST FY24 request is \$25,760, an increase of \$5,760 over the FY23 approved amount of \$20,000). This placeholder of \$1.00 has remained in the event any transportation expenses are charged to the general fund in FY24.

**Legal – (Contracted Services) – FY24 Budget Request: \$100,000 – \$0, 0.00% increase over FY23 budget.** The Town is represented by Mitchell Municipal Group (MMG) for general counsel. The Town contracts with attorney Tom Closson (nhlaborlaw.net) for collective bargaining, labor and personnel issues. McLane Middleton is utilized for environmental issues, and DTC Lawyers are special counsel in cable TV matters. Each firm charges various rates and

the FY24 budget has been proposed for funding at \$100,000 for general legal work throughout the year. Each fund is charged for legal services based on work done in those areas (general, water, sewer, CATV, TIF fund).

**Information Technology – (2.0 FTEs) – FY24 Budget Request: \$342,653, increase of \$3,524, or 1.04% over FY23 budget.** The IT Department is staffed by two full time personnel: the IT Coordinator and Network Administrator. The IT Department oversees IT issues Town wide and manages the Town’s IT infrastructure. The Department is also responsible for managing the Town wide phone system. In addition, the Department updates and upgrades Town software, manages the IT security platforms, manages credit/debit card acceptance, permitting software, and GIS needs. FY24 budget changes include an increase of \$4,087 in wages, offset by a payroll taxes/benefits reduction of \$7,613. General expenses are increased \$5,484 or 4.5%. Changes include increases in internet services - \$1,050, and increases in the phone utilization account of \$10,200. Computer software is decreased by \$4,800 and network supplies are decreased by \$4,000. The capital outlay account has been increased by \$9,920 for increased PC replacements.

**Media Communications – (1.0 FTEs) – FY24 Budget Request: \$64,366 (New Department), increase of \$64,366, or 100.00% over FY23 budget.** This new budget has been created to support Town communications. The position of Media Communications Coordinator was established during the reclassification process of FY23. Bob Glowacky is the incumbent in the position. The Media Communications Coordinator’s salary and benefits are split 50/50 with the Cable TV Access Fund. The initial expense budget of \$4,177 includes \$1,740 for MailChimp and Canva programs, \$1,000 for marketing on social media, \$160 for membership in the National Association of Government Communicators, and \$887 for digital marketing classes at UNH for personnel.

**Trustees of Trust Funds - (3 Member Board, Elected) – FY24 Budget Request: \$891, increase of \$0, or 0.00% over FY23 budget.** The Trustees of Trust Funds are an elected three-member board that oversees all Town and school trust funds created under RSA 31 and capital reserve funds created via RSA 35. The Chair of the Trustees is paid a stipend of \$828 each year. This stipend is part of the general government budget.

**Town Moderator – (2 PT Elected) – FY24 Budget Request: \$1,351, increase of \$597, or 79.18% over FY23 budget.** The Town Moderator is an elected position charged with elections oversight and Town Meeting oversight. The Moderator acts as the Chair of the Town Meeting. The Moderator budget is increased for FY24 due to there being four elections in the year to oversee.

**Town Clerk - (4.0 FTE including 1 FT Elected) – FY24 Budget Request: \$412,982, increase of \$22,955, or 5.89%, over FY23 budget.** The Town Clerk’s Office services include registering motor vehicles, ORVs, and boats, performing vital records research, dog licensing, records retention, Town Meeting coordination and ballot preparation, and elections oversight

(working with the Checklist Supervisors, Select Board, and the Town Moderator). The Town Clerk's Office also sells stickers to residents for the transfer station, including bulky stickers, electronics stickers, as part of the Town's solid waste program. FY24 budget increases include \$16,974 in wages, and \$3,248 in general expense increases. General expense increases include education training - \$1,000, postage - \$1,000, and conferences/rooms/meals - \$1,000.

**Elections/Registration – (0 FTE, PT Elected) – FY24 Budget Request - \$24,771, increase of \$9,238, or 59.48%, over FY23 budget.** The Elections/Registration budget covers election and Town Meeting costs outside the Moderator's wages. The Elections budget covers wage costs for poll workers, checklist supervisors, as well as expenses of postage, printing, coding, collating, and voting machine maintenance. There will be four elections in FY24 – and the Town continues to budget for 1 special election each year.

NOTES:

## FINANCE

**Finance - (3.0 FTE) – FY24 Budget Request: \$366,637, increase of \$26,238, or 7.71% over FY23 budget.** The Finance Department executes day to day budget implementation and fund accounting, payroll processing, accounts payable, Town audit preparation, single audit act compliance, state and Town financial reporting, general ledger management, and cash management. The Finance Department manages several different Town funds: General, Water, Sewer, EMS revolving, CATV revolving, Parks/Recreation revolving, Police Detail Fund, Planning Fund, Heritage Fund, and many other capital reserve, expendable trust, and escrow funds. The FY24 budget includes changes in wage lines of \$19,917, an increase in audit fees of \$1,410, an increase in contracted services of \$5,600 to cover GASB 74/75 reporting, a dues increase of \$525, and an increase in the Munis software agreement of \$2,154 to account for cost increases passed on to the Town by Munis.

**Treasurer - (1 Elected) – FY24 Budget Request: \$9,692, increase of \$0, 0.00% over FY23 budget.** The Town Treasurer is paid a stipend of \$8,864 per year. The Treasurer works closely with the Finance Department performing cash reconciliations and managing cash flow, weekly cash disbursements, and bank account management. The Town Treasurer is a statutory position required by RSA 41:29. The Treasurer will become an appointed position in February 2024 per the Town vote to approve appointing the position at the March 2023 Town Meeting.

**Tax Collection - (2.0 FTE) – FY24 Budget Request: \$119,656, increase of \$2,499, or 2.13%, over FY23 budget.** The Tax/Water/Sewer Office is located in the Town Offices at 10 Front Street, and collects all property tax revenue and water/sewer revenue for the Town, including property taxes for the local school district and SAU16. In addition, the tax/water/sewer office administers all property tax deeding and lien issues, coordinates bankruptcy filings, creates payment plans for residents with delinquent water and sewer accounts, coordinates the semi-annual tax billing process in May and November, and compiles the MS-61 report of the Tax Collector required by the NHDRA. FY24 budget changes for the Tax Department include increase of \$15,521 in wages due to a reclassification of the Deputy Tax Collector. Benefits are reduced by \$7,901 based on health plan options taken, expenses are reduced in conferences/rooms/meals (\$260); dues (\$10), and education/training - \$1,000. These decreases are offset by increases in supplies - \$100; postage - \$1,500, and tax lien/deeded researches - \$1,500. Overall general expenses are increased by \$1,924, or 6.7%, over the FY23 budget.

**Assessing - (1.0 FTE, plus contracted services). FY24 Budget Request: \$264,131, increase of \$21,223, or 8.74%, over FY23 budget.** The Assessing Department has 1 FT position, of Tax Assessor. The office is supported by a contracted services agreement with MRI. The MRI contract primarily performs measuring and listing services, covers the office when the Assessor is not present, and processes various applications for abatements and credits as required. The Assessing Department is responsible for administering the assessment of all real and personal property (over 6,400 parcels residential and commercial), processing abatements, all credit and

exemption programs, map/lot/building database management, and deed management/recording. The Assessing office acts as a resource to local real estate agents and property owners, and performs a variety of functions regarding land use for other Town departments such as Planning, Economic Development and Public Works. FY24 budget changes include an inflationary increase for the MRI contract of \$2,100 (2.2% increase); an increase in the mapping budget of \$700; a decrease in the postage budget of \$700, and an increase in the revaluation budget of \$9,999 to \$10,000 total budget to fund the independent appraiser required by the Riverwoods tax settlement of 2023.

## PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

**Planning - (2.4 FTE) – FY24 Budget Request \$301,590, increase of \$16,130, or 5.65%, over FY23 budget.** The Planning Department is staffed by two FT and one PT personnel including the FT Town Planner, who provides technical support and guidance to the Planning Board, including overseeing the Town's technical review committee, site plan review process, lot line adjustments, and conditional use permit issuance. FY24 budget changes in Planning include an increase in wages of \$13,399, benefits increase of \$2,231 and expense increases in education/training of \$500. Overall the budget is increased by 5.7%, or \$16,130, over the FY23 budget.

**Economic Development - (1.0 FTE) – FY24 Budget Request \$165,217, increase of \$4,291, or 2.67%, over FY23 budget.** Economic Development's primary responsibilities include working with current and prospective businesses and property owners to expand and improve upon the Town's commercial tax base and enhance overall economic development within the Town. The Department administers the TIF District on Epping Road, oversees RSA 79-E applications for qualifying districts, and works to promote Exeter as a business destination. This Department also interacts frequently with Federal, State and other local officials to further the goals of economic development for Exeter. FY24 budget changes in Economic Development include an increase of \$6,727 in wages, and \$1,164 in payroll taxes/benefits. Expenses for FY24 are decreased by \$3,600 as the Economic Development Director will complete his training/certification through the University of Oklahoma. Office supplies have been increased by \$100, to \$500 total budget for FY24.

**Inspections/Code Enforcement – (2.0 FTE) – FY24 Budget Request \$260,927, decrease of - \$25,790, or -8.99%, under FY23 budget.** The Building Department has a full time Building Inspector/Code Enforcement Officer, plus a full time Deputy Code Enforcement Officer. The Deputy CEO also supports the Planning Department. The Electrical Inspector part-time position has been defunded in the FY24 budget as it has been vacant for over three years. The Building Inspector is currently receiving a stipend for performing these duties. FY24 budget changes include a reduction in wages of \$25,054, a reduction in payroll taxes/benefits of \$436, an increase in the fuel budget of \$200, and a reduction in travel reimbursement of \$500. Overall the FY24 budget is decreased by \$25,790, or an 8.99% decrease from FY23.

### **Land Use Boards and Committees**

The Planning/Building Department also supports several volunteer land use boards, committees and commissions in their missions including the Zoning Board of Adjustment, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Historic District Commission, and Heritage Commission. This support comes in the form of processing applications, making zoning determinations, reviewing site plans, and attending committee meetings.

**Zoning Board of Adjustment, Historic District Commission, Conservation Commission, Heritage Commission - (0 FTE, Recording Secretary assistance) – FY24 Budget Requests: ZBA \$4,376, increase of \$50, or 1.16% over FY23 budget; HDC \$1,923, decrease of -\$902, or -31.93% under FY23 budget; Conservation Commission \$9,555, decrease of -\$534, or -5.29%, under FY23 budget; Heritage Commission \$1,109, increase of \$216, or 24.19% over FY23 budget; Renewable Energy Expense, \$1, or 0% over FY23 budget.** These budgets pay for recording secretaries for each board and committee, along with grant matching funds (Historic District Commission), land administration (Conservation Commission), public notices (all). The Conservation Commission budget also includes funds for conservation land management, including mowing and trail maintenance.



## PUBLIC SAFETY

### **Police Department – (29.15 FTE) – FY24 Budget Request - \$3,872,453, increase of \$162,355, or 4.38%, over FY23 budget.**

The FY24 budget for the Police Department reflects continued funding of 29 FT and 2 PT personnel. The Police Department budget is broken out into four divisions: Administration, Staff, Patrol, and Animal Control. FY24 budget changes in the Police Department include wage increases of \$54,885, an increase in shift differential of \$5,200, personal leave replacement increase of \$18,825, overtime increases of \$80,522. A step increase of 2.5% and COLA adjustment of 2.0% are granted to all union members as of July, 2024. The Department has had the current police prosecutor retire from the Department as a detective. He has since been hired as the department's PT prosecutor via a contract. This shift has resulted in a net increase to the prosecutor budget of \$45,022 as the position is now dedicated to prosecution and the Department is paying for this service. The detective position previously occupied will be backfilled by the Department. Payroll taxes/benefits increases are \$12,481 for the FY24 budget. General police expenses are decreased by \$23,304 in the FY24 budget. This is due mainly to a reduction in the prosecutor budget of \$35,000 while that position transfers to the regular Police wage budget. The comfort dog has been paid for and that budget is reduced by \$6,000. The software agreement budget is increased \$5,944 to fund increases in the IMC public safety data management program. Equipment purchase is increased by \$4,654, fuel is increased by \$1,686, and the service contract for computer maintenance is increased by \$3,818. Department general expenses are increased by \$1,500. These expenses include psychological testing for new employees.

### **Fire/Emergency Management Department -- (33 FTE) – FY24 Budget Request - \$4,290,984, increase of \$199,812, or 4.88%, over FY23 budget.**

The FY24 budget request for the Fire Department/EMS Department represents funding of 28 firefighters, 7 per shift, available for call response. The Department administrative structure includes a Fire Chief, an Assistant Chief, two Deputy Chief positions, and an Office Manager. FY24 budget changes include an increase of \$83,343 in FT wages, an increase of \$9,939 in PT wages to appoint an Emergency Management Director upon the current Fire Chief's retirement. A step increase of 2.5% and COLA adjustment of 2.0% are granted to all union members as of July, 2024. Overall salaries and wages are up \$99,045, or 4.1% over FY23. FY24 expense budget increases include an increase in command supplies of \$1,500, an increase in the Department IT contract of \$3,753 (shared with Police), an increase in fire prevention supplies of \$1,157, an increase in fuel of \$1,199, an increase in hazmat supplies of \$1,161, an increase in hose replacement of \$152, an increase in mobile communication of \$637, an increase in protective equipment of \$9,700, an increase in travel reimbursement of \$1,195, and an increase in vehicle maintenance of \$2,338. The hydrant maintenance fee, which is addressed in the 2023 water/sewer rate study conducted by Underwood Engineers, has been increased \$30,000 to

\$50,000 overall budget. This budget will need to be revisited in subsequent years. Overall the expense budget of the Fire Department is increased by \$54,290, or 16.7%. \$30,000 of this increase is the hydrant maintenance fee.

### **PUBLIC SAFETY SHARED SERVICES**

**Dispatch – (6.0 FTE) – FY24 Budget Request - \$448,400, increase of \$11,538, or 2.64%, over FY23 budget.**

The Town's Dispatch center functions 24 hours per day and 7 days per week. The general phone number 772-1212 connects to Dispatch. The Department fielded over 8,246 calls in 2020 plus over 2,900 E911 calls. Dispatch is responsible for dispatching E-911 calls, as well as non emergency calls for both Fire and Police. The Department employs 6 full time dispatchers including a Dispatch Supervisor. One Dispatcher is charged to the EMS Fund. The General Fund Dispatch budget includes 5 FT personnel. FY24 budget changes in dispatch include an overall wage decrease of \$1,585 due to a wage decrease in overtime of \$9,764, a decrease in vacation replacement overtime of \$1,456, and a reduction in sick replacement overtime of \$1,261. Overall FT wages are increased by \$3,375 or 1.5%. Personal leave replacement overtime is increased by \$4,505 or 100% as a reallocation/breakout from other overtime categories. FY24 payroll taxes/benefits are increased by \$13,123, or 10.2%, to account for benefit changes. Dispatch expenses are level funded at \$31,675 for FY24.

**Health – (1.0 FTE) – FY24 Budget Request - \$157,431, increase of \$3,172, or 2.06%, over FY23 budget.**

The Health budget includes funding for 1 FT Health Officer who works out of the Fire Department. This position is responsible for all food licensing, enforcing sanitary codes, and all public health issues under state law and local ordinance. FY24 wage increases total \$6,056 or 9.1% increase. Payroll taxes/benefits are increased \$1,116 or 2.6% over FY23. FY24 Health expenses include a decrease in mosquito control of \$5,500 due to renegotiation of the mosquito control contract. Expenses are increased by \$1,500 in education/training. The net result of all budget changes is a \$4,000 expense budget decrease for Health in the FY24 budget.

### **PUBLIC WORKS – GENERAL FUND**

The Public Works General Fund budget includes eight separate functions: Administration & Engineering, Highways & Streets, Snow Removal, Solid Waste, Street Lights, Stormwater, Maintenance/Garage, and Town Buildings (utilities, maintenance, projects).

**Administration and Engineering (6.0 FTE) – FY24 Budget Request: \$569,012, increase of \$110,287, or 24.04%, over FY23 budget.** This Division provides primary oversight and administrative and engineering support to the other Public Works divisions and also oversees all capital projects which originate through DPW, including water/sewer projects. The Division

also manages the overall Department including DPW contracts, personnel management, payroll, customer service, sticker sales, etc.. The Division also supports various committees such as the River Advisory Committee, Water/Sewer Advisory Committee, and works closely with State and Federal agencies on a variety of different regulatory issues. The division also provides staff support to the Planning Board and Planning office as part of the Town's Technical Review Committee. This Committee reviews all development projects under the purview of the Planning Board. The FY24 Administration & Engineering budget includes \$75,989 in wage increases – primarily due to the full year funding of the GIS technician position approved in the FY23 budget. Expenses are level funded at \$23,503, same as the FY23 budget.

**Highways/Streets - (12.0 FTE) – FY24 Budget Request: \$2,103,384, decrease of \$37,281, or 1.74% under FY23 budget.** The FY24 Highways & Streets budget includes FT wage increases of \$30,921, or 4.3%, over FY23. Payroll taxes/benefits are reduced by \$60,001 due to plan changes. On the expense side, FY24 expenses total \$217,701. This is a decrease of \$3,000, or -1.4%, from FY23 budget. Reductions were made in asphalt reclamation - \$5,000; culvert repairs/replacement - \$1,000; fuel - \$3,000. This was offset by an increase of \$5,000 in the tree maintenance budget to continue to support the Tree Committee efforts in planting trees in public rights of way throughout Exeter. The Highway FY24 capital outlay budget was reduced by \$5,000 for a reduction in culvert replacement funds. The overall FY24 capital outlay budget for Highway is forecast at \$750,000. In this scenario the paving budget would be level funded at \$700,000 for FY24.

**Snow Removal - (0 FTE, Overtime plus Contracted Services) – FY24 Budget Request: \$314,696, increase of \$1,680, or .54% over FY23 budget.** The FY24 snow and ice budget is an increase of \$1,680, or .54% over FY23. This budget is generally difficult to predict based on winter weather each year. The Town has a snow/ice deficit fund which it pulls from to offset general fund deficits related to the snow/ice removal operations budget. Changes in the FY24 snow/ice budget include \$1,733 increase for PT snow removal/shoveling activities.

**Solid Waste - (1 PT Employee, plus OT for Highway employees assigned to the transfer station on weekends) – FY24 Budget Request: \$1,488,354, increase of \$84,905, or 6.05%, over FY23 budget.** The Solid Waste program includes a collections and disposal contract with Waste Management, and the operation of the transfer station at Cross Road in Exeter. Revenues from blue bag sales and recycling bins, as well as stickers and transfer station permits, offset a portion of the Solid Waste budget. Current rates are \$2.50 for a large blue bag.

FY24 changes include an inflation increase in the solid waste contract totaling \$73,500 or 6.5%. In addition, PT wages have been increased by 3,085 or 14.8%. This was a result of the Town's reclassification efforts on positions. On the expense side, a reduction is made in the brush grinding budget of \$5,000, while the budget for landfill monitoring has been increased \$11,671 or 28.4%. The overall solid waste budget is increased \$84,905 or 6.05%, over the FY23 budget.

**Street Lights (0 FTE, expenses only) – FY24 Budget Request: \$169,000, increase of \$0, or 0.00%, over FY23 budget.** The Town has 695 street lights in the street light account and is responsible for paying the electric bills for these lights under a tariff system. In FY19, the Town successfully converted the inventory of street lights to LED and completed a purchase of the system from Unitol. This was expected to result in a level budget for a period of 5 years and savings thereafter once the system cost is paid off. FY24 will be the last year of the payoff. The traffic light maintenance line item is level funded at \$9,000. This account pays for emergency repairs of traffic lights.

**Stormwater - (0 FTE, contracted services) – FY24 Budget Request: \$92,360, increase of \$0, or 0.00% over FY23 budget.** The Stormwater budget includes primary expenses related to MS4 permit compliance as well as the Town's LTCP (Long Term Control Plan) for nitrogen. The expenses itemized in this budget include contracted services paid to engineering firms for reports due to the EPA on MS4 and AOC compliance issues. The FY24 budget is level with FY23.

### **PUBLIC WORKS – MAINTENANCE**

**Maintenance - General - (4.8 FTE) – FY24 Budget Request - \$531,698, decrease of \$72,983 or 12.07% under FY23 budget.** The Town Maintenance General Division is part of the Public Works Department. The Maintenance Superintendent oversees general Town building maintenance. The FY24 budget includes defunding of the HVAC/Plumber Technician position as this position has been vacant for over three years. Going forward, the plan would be to use contracted services to perform the functions of the position. This results in a net decrease in wages for the FY24 Maintenance budget of \$41,879. Payroll taxes/benefits are decreased by \$28,105, or 19.1%. FY24 general expenses have been reduced by \$3,000 in the new category of fire safety. The reduction is being made based on revisions from initial budgets for this function. Overall, the General Maintenance budget is decreased \$72,983, or 12.1% under FY23.

**Town Buildings – (0 FTE, Utility and Maintenance Expenses) – FY24 Budget Request - \$303,611, increase of \$4, or 0.00%, over FY23 budget.** The FY24 Town Buildings budget includes expenses for maintenance, electricity, natural gas, and water/sewer bills for all town buildings. Facilities include Town Hall, Town Office, DPW Complex, Public Safety Complex, Senior Center, Parks/Recreation Building, 4 Hampton Road, and 10 Hampton Road. This budget also includes the Swasey Parkway, Swasey Bandstand, 47 Front Street building, and Train Station expenses. Town electric rates will remain favorable for FY24 as the Town is in a locked in contract paying .0747 per kwh. Natural gas rates have been increasing in recent years – the current rates are 9.84 per MMBTU. This pricing is good through October 2024. Water/sewer billing is based on current water/sewer rates.

**Maintenance Projects – (0 FTE, Maintenance Projects) – FY24 Budget Request - \$100,000, increase of \$0, or 0.00% over FY23 budget.** The FY24 Maintenance Projects budget is

proposed to be level funded at \$100,000. The Maintenance Projects budget supports projects outside the regular building maintenance budget. Projects are typically smaller capital outlay projects and involve multiple Town facilities.

**Maintenance - Garage - (3.0 FTE) – FY24 Budget Request - \$295,421, increase of \$9,075, or 3.17% over FY23 budget.** The FY24 Garage budget includes funding for wage increases of \$8,140, or 5.0%. Overall this budget is up \$9,075, or 3.2%, over FY23 budget.

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### WELFARE/HUMAN SERVICES

**Welfare/Human Services (.75 FTE) – FY24 Budget Request - \$249,199, increase of \$65,612, or 69.57%, over FY23 budget.** The FY24 Welfare and Human Services budget proposes modifying the current structure of Welfare administration. Currently, the Town Manager’s Senior Executive Assistant handles Welfare administration. This budget request would replace the Senior Executive Assistant as the primary Welfare administrator and creating a part-time position to handle same. The Senior Executive Assistant position is budgeted at 100% in the Town Manager’s budget for FY24. Previously, 16% of that salary was allocated to Welfare/Human Services. The net wage change in the Welfare budget with this proposal is \$28,364.

## PARKS/RECREATION

**Recreation - (4.0 FTE) – FY24 Budget Request \$431,667, increase of \$40,275, or 10.29%, over FY23 budget.** The Recreation budget includes 4 full-time positions of Recreation Director, Assistant Director, Recreation Coordinator, and Office Manager. FY24 budget changes include \$27,399 in wage changes, primarily due to reclassification of positions within the Department. Total wage increases are 10.0%. Payroll taxes and benefits have been increased by \$12,876, or 11.6%, over FY23 – due primarily to health plan changes. Expenses for Recreation have been level funded at \$7,450 for FY24.

**Parks - (2.0 FTE) – FY24 Budget Request - \$250,563, increase of \$27,449, or 12.30% over FY23 budget.** The Parks budget includes 1 full-time Parks Foreman and 1 full-time Laborer. The FY24 Parks wage budget is increased by \$6,717, or 7.01%. This is due to the two step increase for SEIU employees. FY24 payroll taxes/benefits are increased by \$9,393 to account for a health insurance plan change. FY24 expenses are increased by \$11,340 to support a greater amount of parks maintenance in the Town than is currently being provided.

The overall Parks/Recreation budget for FY24 is \$682,230, an increase of \$67,724, or 11.0%, over the FY23 budget.

## OTHER CULTURE/RECREATION

**Other Culture/Recreation.** The Other Culture and Recreation FY24 budget is \$34,500. This budget includes the following requests. Many of these budgets support traditional community events held in Exeter:

1. **Christmas Lights:** \$5,000. These funds go to offset costs related to hanging lights, Unitil electric bill, garlands, and holiday decorations associated with the annual holiday season light display.
2. **Holiday Parade:** \$4,500. These funds support the Town's annual Holiday Parade. The funds represent an annual Town contribution and go to offset parade costs including bands, police details, etc..
3. **Summer Concerts** - Sponsored by Parks/Recreation on Swasey Parkway. Thursdays in the summer : \$9,000 requested. The budget has been level funded for FY24.
4. **Exeter Brass Band.** These are payments to members of the band for their summer concert series held each Monday in July: \$4,000.
5. **Veterans Activities** - This budget supports the annual Memorial Day Parade and Veterans Activities: \$4,000 (increase of \$500).
6. **Parks/Recreation Fireworks** - \$8,000. The Parks/Recreation Department sponsors a fireworks display each year to coincide with the American Independence Festival. Cost of the display is estimated at \$8,000 for FY24.

## LIBRARY

**Library (11.0 FT, 14 PT Employees) – FY24 Budget Request - \$1,244,151, increase of \$71,832, or 6.13% over FY23 budget.**

The FY24 Library budget reflects funding for 11 FT employees and 14 part time employees. The budget also includes funds for purchasing books, maintenance contracts, utilities, technology, and supplies. The FY24 budget is put forward by the Library Trustees. Main activities at the Library in FY24, in addition to their broad amount of regularly offered programs to all ages, will include the third year operation of the newly renovated library. Public services are decreased by \$354 for a new total budget of \$187,500. This account pays for all operating expenses at the library including utilities and book purchases.

## DEBT SERVICE AND CAPITAL

**Debt Service - General Fund – FY24 Budget Request \$2,069,272, an increase of \$571,684, or 38.17%, over FY23 budget.** The General Fund carries debt service on long term bonds for large capital projects. Principal payments on debt service in FY24 include the first year payments on Westside Drive Design/Engineering, Solar Array at Cross Road, Pine Street/Front Street/Linden Street roundabout, and Westside Drive construction. Debt service principal is increased by \$310,832, or 27.6%. Debt service interest is increased \$260,853 or 70.2%.

**Vehicles Replacement/Leases – FY24 Budget Request - \$248,495, a decrease of \$19,771, or - 7.37%, under FY23 budget.** The Vehicles/Replacement and Leases budget includes all current leases on heavy equipment. See CIP page 80 for the most recent lease/purchase schedule. The lease/purchase schedule includes replacements of Engines 4 and 5 in the Fire Department, Fire Department SCBA replacements, Sidewalk Tractor replacement in the Highway Department, and the Police Department lease on the patrol motorcycle.

## BENEFITS AND TAXES

**BENEFITS AND TAXES – FY24 Budget Request \$767,021, increase of \$264,055, or 52.50% over FY23 budget.**

The FY24 Benefits and Taxes budget includes the health insurance reserve (10.0% estimated cost increase totaling \$250,194), the health insurance buyout program (employees taking the buyout receive 30% of the Town's savings), dental and life insurance reserve (2.0% increase), and flexible spending fee reserve (the Town pays the administrative fee to encourage enrollment in the program). The unemployment budget is proposed at \$2,436, worker's compensation budget proposed at \$243,768, and property/liability insurance budget proposed at \$81,361 are also part of this budget. The Town participates in the Primex CAP program which caps increases in property/liability insurance and worker's compensation to not more than 6%. The Library budget is apportioned the Library share of the worker's compensation, property/liability,

and unemployment budgets. In addition, allocations are made for these budgets to the Water and Sewer Funds.

Total General Fund Budget: \$23,019,693, increase of \$1,693,413, or 7.94%, over FY23 budget.

**BOND ARTICLES - GENERAL FUND**

**New Police Station with Fire Substation - \$17,522,500** – This project is described on Page 1 of the 2024-2029 CIP. The project did not pass the ballot with a 57% approval in 2023. 60% is required for passage. The project fell 45 votes short.

**School Street Area Reconstruction -- \$6,510,000** – This project is described on page 22 of the CIP. The project is eligible for 35% principal forgiveness on the sewer portion of the project, which totals \$2347,700. Forgiveness amount would be \$821,695.

**WARRANT ARTICLES – CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CIP)**

ADA Capital Reserve Fund - \$25,000. See page 7 of the CIP for explanation.

Great Bay Total Nitrogen General Permit - \$75,000. See page 17 of the CIP for explanation.

Parks Improvement Fund - \$50,000. See page 14 of the CIP for explanation.

Water Street Planning Grant - \$100,000 (SRF 100% Principal Forgiveness). See page 27 of the CIP for explanation.

**WARRANT ARTICLES – FUND BALANCE (CIP)**

Planet Playground Redevelopment - \$297,500. This is recommended only if the Town receives a Land Water Conservation Fund grant in the amount of at least \$297,500. It is recommended fundraising be conducted by Parks/Recreation as well for this project.

If a grant cannot be obtained for this project, it is recommended it be deferred to 2025. It would be recommended to fund the Sidewalk Replacement Program at a level of \$200,000, from fund balance, in its place.

Snow & Ice Deficit Fund - \$50,000

Sick Leave Trust Fund - \$100,000

**DEFERRALS**

Public Safety Communications Repeater System - \$100,000

DPW Fuel Island - \$460,000

Sidewalk Replacement Program - \$200,000



Pickpocket Dam Modification - \$50,000

Raynes Barn Improvements Phase 2 - \$76,200

Sidewalk Tractor #58 Replacement – Lease/Purchase - \$225,000

Street Sweeper Replacement – Lease/Purchase - \$370,000

Fire Car 1 Replacement - \$60,606

Fire Replace Utility 1 - \$72,455

Replace Jeep Patriot #51 - \$31,500

Dump Truck #33 Replacement - \$120,000

## **BUDGET SUMMARY**

### **Total General Fund Appropriations**

FY24 Preliminary Budget - \$23,019,693

FY24 Warrant Articles (Non Fund Balance General Fund) - \$150,000

Total FY24 Preliminary: \$23,169,693

Total FY23 General Fund Appropriations: \$21,622,983

Total \$ Appropriations over FY23: \$1,546,710

Total % Appropriations over FY23: 7.15%

Tax Impact: 69 cents per 1,000 of valuation

<b>FY24 GENERAL FUND REVENUES</b>
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The Town has limited revenues to apply to offset the general fund budget. The main categories of revenue include vehicle registration revenues, the cable television franchise fee, building permits, interest on taxes and penalties, and intergovernmental revenue (highway block grant aid, and meals and rooms tax distributions). A table summarizing FY24 budget revenue estimates is below:

Description	Actual Revenue FY22	Estimated Revenue FY23	Estimated Revenue FY24
Interest and Penalties	\$128,019	\$125,000	\$125,000
Current Use Tax	25,000	60,150	275,000
Yield Tax Revenue	6,630	5,000	5,000
Payment In Lieu Of Taxes	42,500	43,000	43,000
Excavation Tax	71	500	500
Jeopardy Tax Revenue			
Motor Vehicle Permits	3,201,289	3,150,000	3,150,000
Building Permits & Fees	297,458	550,000	350,000
General Town Clerk Revenue & Franchise Fees	216,361	137,000	137,000
General Revenue Sharing	0	0	0
Meals and Rooms Tax Revenue	1,416,148	1,400,000	1,400,000
State Highway Block Grant	301,980	310,825	310,825
State Grant Revenues	117,922	24,910	25,000
FEMA Reimbursements	88,064	0	0
Income From Departments	1,035,556	1,145,720	1,150,000
Sale of Town Property – Other	0	0	0
Interest Income	25,087	245,000	245,000
Total Rental/Misc Income	83,791	22,250	22,000
Transfers In EMS Fund	178,094	261,570	261,570
Excess Bond Revenues	0	0	0
Use of Fund Balance	\$1,000,000	\$600,000	\$600,000
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$8,163,971</b>	<b>\$8,080,925</b>	<b>\$8,099,895</b>

## ENTERPRISE FUNDS

### Water and Sewer Funds

The total Water Fund budget request is 5,020,552 an increase of \$471,182, or 10.36%, over FY23. The total Sewer Fund budget request is \$7,567,340, an increase of \$48,038, or 0.64% over FY23.

The Water and Sewer Fund budgets fund all operations, maintenance, capital and debt service for the Town's water and sewer systems. Approximately three quarters of the Town's population are on the public water and sewer system.

The Water and Sewer Funds receive all revenue through water and sewer fees, not the property tax. Residents are billed quarterly for water/sewer services. There are three districts throughout the system, resulting in one bill being issued each month (4 bills x 3 districts = 12 bills per year).

#### Budget Overview

**Water** – Major budget drivers in the FY24 Water Fund budget include the addition of one FT operator to the Water Treatment budget; additional funds of \$50,000 for a PT Water Treatment Supervisor; the establishment of an employee wellness program - \$2,500; a \$5,000 increase in the water chemicals budget; an increase in the debt service budget of \$209,475 representing three capital improvement projects that were bonded; and an increase in the capital outlay budget of \$114,920 over FY23.

**Sewer** – Major budget drivers in the FY24 Sewer Fund budget include the establishment of an employee wellness program - \$2,500; and the addition of 1 FT operator for 7 months in the Sewer Treatment budget (per NHDES guidance). The sewer collection and debt service budgets are reduced for FY24 compared to FY23 budget.

### Water and Sewer Funds – FY24 Budget Request

Fund	FY23	FY24	% Increase/Decrease
Water Fund	\$4,549,370	\$5,020,552	10.36%
Sewer Fund	\$7,519,302	\$7,567,340	0.64%
Total Water-Sewer Funds	\$12,068,672	\$12,587,892	4.30%

## WATER FUND

### WATER FUND

<u>Program Area</u>	<u>FY22 Budget</u>	<u>FY23 Approved Budget</u>	<u>FY24 Preliminary Budget</u>	<u>\$ Differential</u>	<u>% Differential</u>
Administration	\$445,520	\$506,236	\$527,233	\$20,997	4.15%
Billing/Collections	192,092	195,191	209,208	14,017	7.18%
Water Distribution	894,623	1,007,816	1,000,433	-7,383	-0.73%
Water Treatment	851,625	933,759	1,052,916	119,157	12.76%
Debt Service	1,323,021	1,431,038	1,640,513	209,475	14.64%
Capital Outlay	553,550	475,330	590,250	114,920	24.18%
Approp. Reserves					
Totals	\$4,260,431	\$4,549,370	5,020,552	\$471,182	10.36%

**Water Administration – FY24 Budget \$527,233, increase of \$20,997, or 4.15%, over FY23 budget.** The Water Fund administration budget includes indirect and direct support from general municipal departments (Town Manager, IT, Human Resources) along with DPW administrative overhead (Director, Town Engineer, Assistant Engineer, Engineering Technician, GIS Technician, Office Manager). It also includes the Water/Sewer Assistant Manager position, and temporary wages for seasonal personnel who serve the Water/Sewer Department. FY24 budget changes in Water Administration include an increase of \$27,654 in wage allocations; an increase of \$12,999 in payroll taxes/benefits changes; a reduction of \$25,000 in consulting services; an increase of \$2,824 in property and fleet insurance; and the establishment of an employee wellness program budgeted at \$2,500. Overall general expenses in Water Administration are reduced by \$19,656 under the FY23 budget.

**Water Billing – FY24 Budget \$209,208, increase of \$14,017, or 7.18%, over FY23 budget.** The Water Billing budget includes administration of the billing and collections program from the Collections Department located at the Town office, and the billing program managed by the DPW Water Department. This budget includes allocations for the DPW Utilities Clerk, and DPW Billing Clerk. It also includes financial support allocations of the Finance Director, Senior Accountant, Human Resources and Accounting Specialist, Deputy Tax Collector, and Collections Specialist. FY24 Water Billing changes include an increase of \$10,609 in wage allocations, a reduction of \$1,029 in payroll taxes/benefits, and an increase of \$4,437 in general expenses. General expense increases are related to GASB compliance - \$1,150 increase; phone utilization - \$1,700 increase; and the Munilink software agreement - \$1,082 increase. Audit fees have been increased by \$705 due to a fee increase from the Town's audit firm.

**Water Distribution – FY24 Budget \$1,000,433, decrease of -7,383, or -0.73%, under FY23 budget.** The Water Distribution budget covers operating costs related to the distribution system,

meter replacements, pump station maintenance, and storage tanks. FY24 budget changes in Water Distribution include \$5,134 in wage changes, and \$5,494 in payroll taxes/benefits changes. Water Distribution general expenses are decreased by \$7,383 or 0.7%. This decrease is driven by reductions in the tank maintenance line item of \$13,011, and reductions in the GIS software line item of \$5,000.

**Water Treatment – FY24 Budget \$1,052,916, increase of \$119,157, or 12.76%, over FY23**

**budget.** The Water Treatment budget covers operating and maintenance costs for the groundwater facility on Lary Lane (GWTP), and the surface water treatment plant on Portsmouth Avenue (SWTP). The FY24 Water Treatment budget includes funds for a fifth water treatment plant operator (additional 1 FTE), and an increase in the consulting budget of \$50,000. The \$50,000 increase will fund a PT Water Treatment Supervisor working on a contract basis. This funding is being requested as part of succession planning within the Department. Overall general expenses are increased by \$55,950 including the \$50,000 in consulting services.

**Water Debt Service – FY24 Budget \$1,640,513, increase of \$209,475, or 14.64%, over FY23**

**budget.** – FY24 changes to Water Debt Service include an increase in principal payments of \$179,173 and interest payments of \$30,302, primarily representing three projects: Westside Drive Design and Engineering, Groundwater Source Development Phase 2, and Westside Drive Construction.

**Capital Outlay – FY24 Budget \$590,250, increase of \$114,920, or 24.18%, over FY23**

**budget.** The Water Capital Outlay account includes funds for capital projects and vehicles/equipment in the system that are funded through the budget. The FY24 capital outlay budget includes the second year of the clarifier/filter replacement and maintenance contract - \$441,000; Stadium Well Rehabilitation/Repairs - \$60,000; River Pump Station pump replacement - \$40,000. Replacement of the air compressor for water/sewer is included in the water budget at 50% of the total - \$22,500. Replacement of the Crown Victoria #13 and replacement with a truck and plow package - \$53,500 at 50% in water - \$26,750.

**WATER FUND BOND ARTICLES AND OTHER APPROPRIATIONS**

The following projects would be included in the 2024 Town Meeting warrant as SRF (State Revolving Fund) loans.

School Street Area Design - \$533,600 (\$181,400 General Fund, \$213,400 Sewer Fund, \$138,800 Water Fund)

Surface Water Treatment Plant Design - \$2,500,000

## SEWER FUND

### Sewer Fund

<u>Program Area</u>	<u>FY22 Budget</u>	<u>FY23 Approved Budget</u>	<u>FY24 Preliminary Budget</u>	<u>\$ Differential</u>	<u>% Differential</u>
Administration	\$477,909	\$515,470	\$555,918	\$40,447	7.85%
Billing/Collections	188,867	191,614	205,633	14,019	7.32%
Sewer Collection	747,297	810,564	786,922	-23,642	-2.92%
Sewer Treatment	1,436,471	1,639,664	1,655,393	15,729	0.96%
Debt Service	4,305,495	4,209,659	4,192,569	-17,090	-0.41%
Capital Outlay	240,955	152,331	170,906	18,575	12.19%
Totals	7,396,994	7,519,302	7,567,340	48,038	0.64%

**Sewer Administration – FY24 Budget \$555,918, increase of \$40,447 or 7.85%, over FY23 budget.** The Sewer Fund Administration budget includes indirect and direct support from general municipal departments (Town Manager, IT, Human Resources) along with DPW administrative overhead (Director, Town Engineer, Assistant Engineer, Engineering Technician, GIS Technician, Office Manager). It also includes the Water/Sewer Assistant Manager position, and temporary wages for seasonal personnel who serve the Water/Sewer Department. FY24 budget changes in Sewer Administration include \$27,654 in wage increases from General Fund allocations, and \$12,999 in payroll taxes/benefits increases from General Fund allocations. The overall general expense budget in sewer is a reduction of \$206, or -0.2%. Consulting services have been decreased by \$7,000, while property/fleet insurance has been increased \$4,294. The new employee wellness program is proposed for funding at \$2,500 from the sewer fund.

**Sewer Billing – FY24 Budget \$205,633, increase of 14,019, or 7.32%, over FY23 budget.** The Sewer Billing budget includes administration of the billing and collections program from the Collections Department located at the Town office, and the billing program managed by the DPW Water/Sewer Department. This budget includes allocations for the DPW Utilities Clerk, and DPW Billing Clerk. It also includes financial support allocations of the Finance Director, Senior Accountant, Human Resources and Accounting Specialist, Deputy Tax Collector, and Collections Specialist. The FY24 Sewer Billing budget includes an increase of \$10,609 in wages, and a reduction of \$1,029 in payroll taxes/benefits. General expenses are increased by \$4,439 or 9.1%. The increases include allocations for audit fee increases, GASB compliance increase, and phone utilization increases.

**Sewer Collection – FY24 Budget \$786,922, decrease of 23,642, or -2.92%, under FY23 budget.** The Sewer Collection budget covers operating costs related to the collections system, pumping stations, inflow/infiltration abatement, and manhole maintenance. The Sewer Collection budget includes wage increases of \$5,134 or 2.0%. Payroll taxes/benefits are

increased by \$5,494 or 3.7%. Overall general expenses in Sewer Collection are decreased by \$34,270. This is due to reductions in manhole maintenance - \$20,000, pump & control maintenance - \$19,450. These decreases are partially offset by increases in CSO monitoring - \$5,000, and Mobile Communications - \$180.

**Sewer Treatment – FY24 Budget \$1,655,393, increase of \$15,729, or 0.96%, over FY23 budget.**

The Sewer Treatment budget includes all facility costs of treatment at the WWTF. FY24 budget changes include an increase of \$46,910 in wages – this increase would fund a sixth operator position at the Wastewater Treatment Facility, as required by the NHDES. A recent audit of duties at the WWTF revealed the Town should be staffing to six operators instead of five. Payroll taxes/benefits changes in the Sewer Treatment budget total a \$22,821 increase. General expenses are reduced by \$54,000 or a 4.8% reduction. These reductions are due to changes in the equipment maintenance account - \$27,500 reduction; chemicals - \$30,000 reduction; and electricity - \$30,000 reduction. These decreases are partially offset by increases in outfall dredging - \$3,000; Alarm Communications - \$500; Lab Testing - \$15,000; and Solids Handling - \$15,000.

**Sewer Debt Service – FY24 Budget \$4,192,569, decrease of \$17,090, or 0.41%, under FY23 budget.**

In FY24, the Sewer Fund Debt Service budget will include the fifth payment on the new Wastewater Facility. The FY24 debt service budget includes principal and interest payments on three separate issues – Westside Drive Design/Engineering, Westside Drive Construction, and the Court Street Pump Station pump replacement project. The total Debt Service principal increase is \$24,818, while interest is reduced by \$41,908 for a net decrease in the overall Debt Service budget of \$17,090.

**Sewer Capital Outlay – FY24 Budget \$170,906, increase of \$18,575, or 12.19%, under FY23 budget.**

The Sewer Capital Outlay FY24 budget includes \$106,655 for a payment on the new Sewer vector truck. It also includes \$15,000 coating repairs to the WWTF UV basin walls and flume walls. Replacement of the air compressor for water/sewer is included in the water budget at 50% of the total - \$22,500. Replacement of the Crown Victoria #13 and replacement with a truck and plow package - \$53,500 at 50% in water - \$26,750.

**SEWER FUND BOND ARTICLES AND OTHER APPROPRIATIONS**

School Street Area Design - \$533,600 (\$181,400 General Fund, \$213,400 Sewer Fund, \$138,800 Water Fund)

Sewer Capacity Rehabilitation Construction - \$3,420,000

Webster Pump Station – Additional Funding - \$884,000



## REVOLVING FUNDS

The Town has three Revolving Funds which are non-appropriated funds. This means the funds are managed by the respective departments with revenues coming from fees. The Town uses each revolving fund to support the specific service associated with the fund. The three funds are Recreation Revolving Fund, EMS Revolving Fund and Cable Television Access Fund. These funds provide funding for various programs and services outside the general fund and therefore have no impact on property taxes. The primary revenues for the Recreation Revolving Fund are program revenues and special events (including the annual Powder Keg Festival). The EMS Fund primary revenue is ambulance charges for services. The Cable Television Access Revolving Fund primary revenue is cable franchise fees.

The current cable franchise fee generates approximately \$280,000 per year in gross revenues, with a portion of those revenues allocated to the general fund. In FY24, revenues are estimated at \$212,200 for the CATV fund, and \$813,499 for the EMS Revolving Fund. Recreation Revolving Fund revenues for FY24 have been estimated at \$675,000. Offsetting expenses are budgeted at \$203,922 for the CATV fund, \$533,727 for the EMS fund, and \$624,613 for the Recreation Revolving Fund.

As always, I would like to thank the Town Departments for their efforts and diligence on their FY24 budget submittals. I look forward to working with the Select Board and Budget Recommendations Committee in the coming months.

Respectfully submitted,



Russell Dean  
Town Manager

## **Tax Abatements, Veterans Credits & Exemptions**

## Intent to Cut

<u>Map/Lot/Unit</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Yrs of Cut</u>
M54/5,6,7	Forest Street	1
M63/205	Forest Street	1

NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE ADMINISTRATION  
**NOTICE OF INTENT TO CUT WOOD OR TIMBER**

FORM  
**PA-7**

(Assigned by Municipality)

YR TOWN OP#  
**23-153-04-T**

PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT (If filling in form on-line; use TAB Key to move through fields)

For Tax Year April 1, 23 to March 31, 24

- Town/City of: Exeter
- Tax Map/Block/Lot or USFS Sale Name & Unit No.  
154 Lots 5, 6, 7 M43 10+205
- Intent Type: Original  Supplemental  (Original Intent Number)
- Name of Access Road: Forest St
- 5a. Acreage of Lot: 50 Acreage of Cut: 2
- 5b. Anticipated Start Date: Sept 10, 2023
- Type of ownership (check only one):
  - Owner of Land and Stumpage (Sole Owner)
  - Owner of Land and Stumpage (Joint Tenants)
  - Owner of Land and Stumpage (Tenants in Common)
  - Previous owner retaining deeded timber rights
  - Owner/Purchaser of stumpage & timber rights on public lands (Fed., State, municipal, etc.) or Utility Easements

**REPORT OF CUT / CERTIFICATE TO BE SENT TO:**

OWNER  OR LOGGER / FORESTER

BY MAIL  OR E-MAIL

7. I/We hereby accept responsibility for reporting all timber cut within 60 days after the completion of the operation or by May 15, whichever comes first. I/We also assume responsibility for any yield tax which may be assessed. (If a corporation, an officer must sign.)  
 Attach a signature page for additional owners.

SIGNATURE (in ink) OF OWNER(S) OR CORPORATE OFFICER(S) DATE SIGNED

PRINT CLEARLY OR TYPE NAME OF OWNER(S) OR CORPORATE OFFICER(S)

Todd Baker Sept 8, 2023  
 SIGNATURE (in ink) OF OWNER(S) OR CORPORATE OFFICER(S) DATE SIGNED

Todd Baker for Exeter Rose Farm LLC  
 PRINT CLEARLY OR TYPE NAME OF OWNER(S) OR CORPORATE OFFICER(S)

03 Main St., 953 Islington #2301  
 MAILING ADDRESS

New Castle, Portsmouth NH 03801  
 CITY OR TOWN STATE ZIPCODE

Todd@bakerprop.com  
 E-MAIL ADDRESS

603 425 8598  
 HOME PHONE (Enter number without dashes) CELL PHONE (Enter number without dashes)

**FOR MUNICIPAL ASSESSING OFFICIALS ONLY**

The Selectmen/Municipal Assessing Officials hereby certify that:

- All owners of record have signed the Intent;
- The land is not under the Current Use Unproductive category;
- The form is complete and accurate; and

4. Any timber tax bond required has been received.

- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_
- The tax collector will be notified within 30 days of receipt pursuant to RSA 79:10.
  - This form to be forwarded to DRA immediately after signing.

SIGNATURE OF MUNICIPAL ASSESSING OFFICIAL DATE SIGNATURE OF MUNICIPAL ASSESSING OFFICIAL DATE SIGNATURE OF MUNICIPAL ASSESSING OFFICIAL DATE  
[Signature] 9/17/23 [Signature] 9/17/23

8. Description of Wood or Timber To Be Cut

Species	Estimated Amount To Be Cut
White Pine	.5 MBF
Hemlock	MBF
Red Pine	MBF
Spruce & Fir	MBF
Hard Maple	MBF
White Birch	MBF
Yellow Birch	MBF
Oak	MBF
Ash	MBF
Soft Maple	MBF
Beech/Pallet/Tie & Mat Logs/ Pine Box	MBF
Other (Specify)	MBF
<b>Pulpwood</b>	<b>Tons</b>
Spruce & Fir	
Hardwood & Aspen	
Pine	
Hemlock	
Biomass Chips	200
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	
High Grade Spruce/Fir	Tons
Cordwood & Fuelwood	30 Cords

9. Species and Amount of Wood or Timber For Personal Use or Exempt. See exemptions on back of form.

Species	Amount

10. By signing below, the Logger/Forester or person responsible for cutting hereby accepts responsibility for verifying the volumes of wood and timber to be reported by the owner, and certifies that they are familiar with RSA 227-J, the timber harvest laws.

[Signature] 9-8-23  
 SIGNATURE (in ink) OF PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR CUT DATE

David Burl Burl Land clearing  
 PRINT CLEARLY OR TYPE NAME OF PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR CUT

150 Londonderry Tpk  
 MAILING ADDRESS

Hooksett NH 03106  
 CITY OR TOWN STATE ZIPCODE

603 235 2441 BURRLANDCLEARING@GOL.COM  
 PHONE NUMBER E-MAIL ADDRESS

## Permits & Approvals

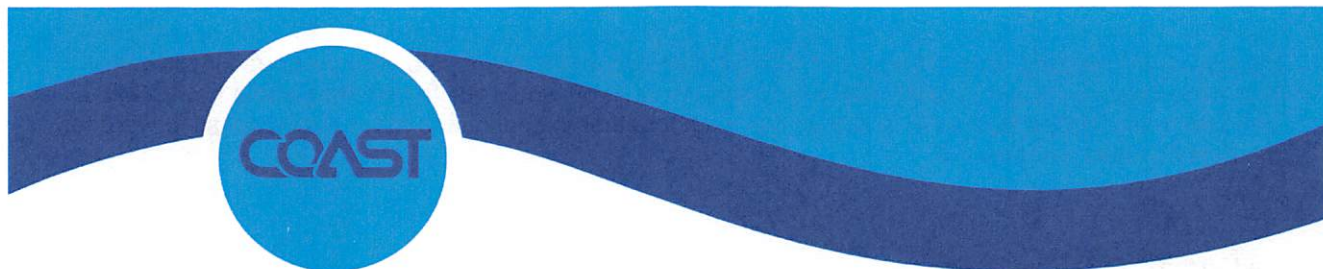
## Correspondence

## COAST 3rd Quarter 2023 Update

1 message

Rad Nichols, COAST <rnichols@coastbus.org>  
Reply-To: "Rad Nichols, COAST" <rnichols@coastbus.org>  
To: Pam McElroy <pmcelroy@exeternh.gov>

Fri, Sep 22, 2023 at 7:31 AM



Cooperative Alliance For Seacoast Transportation



## From the Executive Director

Dear Transportation Advocate,

During the third quarter, we at COAST have been working on multiple fronts to advance our mission to champion and provide customer-focused public transportation on the Seacoast.

First, our day-to-day operations continue to connect people and places, providing access and opportunity to a steadily growing number of riders. A confluence of staff absences at the end of August prompted several new service suspensions, but the solution is in progress as four new drivers are now undergoing training.

Second, the project review process for our new facility is progressing. Our top priority is to secure the remaining matching funds needed to tap into the federal money that will fund the bulk of the project, which

is targeted to begin construction in Spring 2025. If your business is interested in purchasing a portion of the remaining tax credits we have available to support this project, or you know a business owner this could benefit, please contact me.

Lastly, we are working diligently with the communities we serve and our partners to identify and diversify our revenue sources for the coming fiscal years. Since 2009, a variety of one-time Federal grants has allowed us to build our capacity to provide hundreds of thousands of additional trips for riders in New Hampshire. However, as we head into FY24 and FY25, these will come to a predicted end presenting both the urgency and the opportunity to broaden and strengthen our collective investment in public transportation.

It's a busy, but exciting, time to be part of COAST. I welcome and appreciate your continued involvement and encourage you to get in touch with any questions or if you would like to talk more about how COAST and your organization, business, or district can work together to continue to move public transit forward for the next 40 years and beyond.

Rad Nichols, Executive Director

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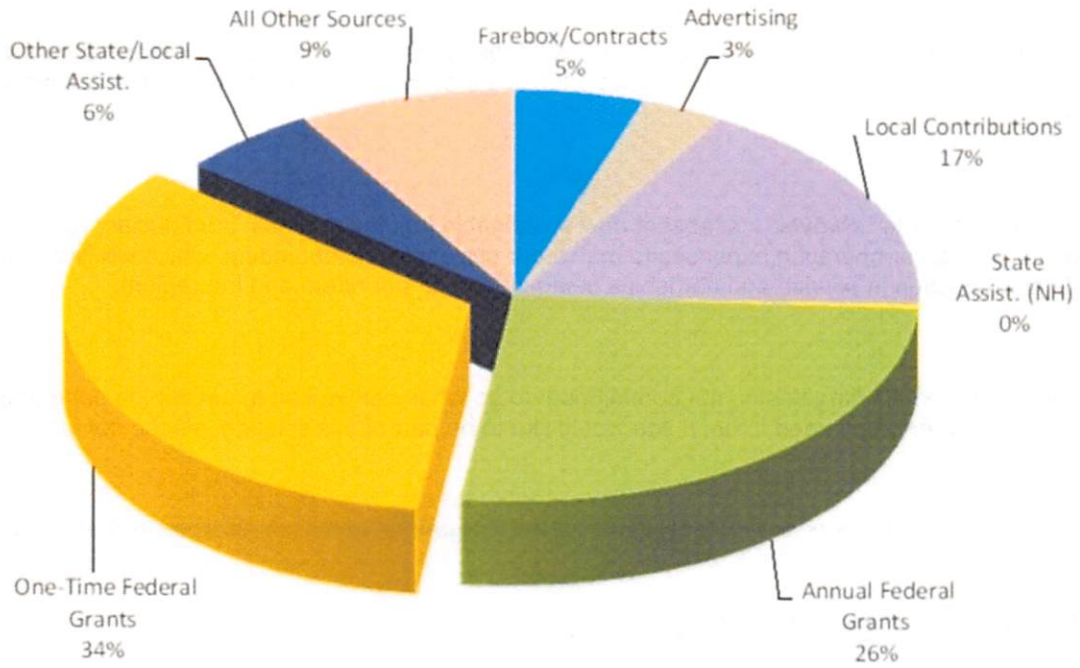
## Shift in Federal Funding Sources to Cause New Near-Term Fiscal Challenges

Over the last 14 years, COAST has received a series of one-time Federal grants, that we paired with our traditional Federal funding, to support our growth. The particular grants we received were additionally attractive in that they offered higher federal participation rates. This meant that for every dollar in eligible expenses, the grants typically paid 80 cents to all of the expenses. Traditional Federal funding awards only cover 50 cents.

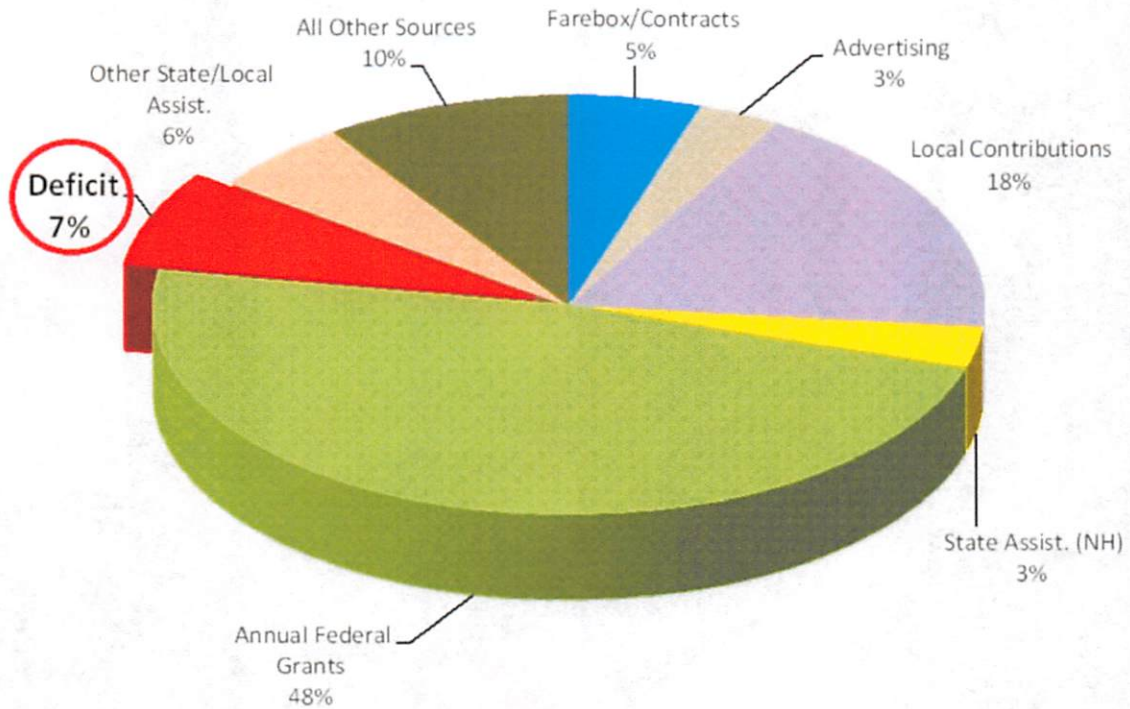
In our upcoming FY24, one-time Federal grants (gold in the FY24 chart below) will make up 33% of our operating budget. By FY25, these will all be fully expended, requiring us to rely more heavily on our traditional FTA funds for the operation (the lighter green wedge in the FY25 chart below). We had been building up a balance of our traditional FTA funds during the pandemic because of emergency relief grants we received. As a result, we are currently projecting spending significantly more traditional federal FTA funds that we will be allocated in FY25, and going from having a small gain in FY24 to a nearly \$450K deficit (in red) in FY25 — the first one in years. The deficit is being created by the one-two punch of one-time funding streams drying up and the amplified impact of those disappearing funds having had a much lower local match fund requirement.



## FY24



## FY25



This shift has been a predicted event on the horizon and we have been moving towards a solution for several years. This process, however was complicated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent economic shockwaves.

We are optimistic about being able to sustain a system that looks very close to what we have today. Over the years at COAST, we have learned that urgency can often be the mother of invention in terms of finding

solutions to our problems, but we can't do it alone. Ideally, we need to find solutions to this issue by working closely with our member communities and other partners over the next 4-10 months.

To date, we have successfully taken many positive steps to resolving this issue but there is work yet to be done. Our current focus is on realizing the opportunities that have come to light in conversations with our partners.

It is important to note however, that absent new sustainable funding sources, our fiduciary responsibility will be to reduce our operating expenses to match our current levels of funding, which will likely involve a significant reduction in service and hardships being placed on our riders and the region.

At COAST, we remain steadfast in our commitment to do whatever we can to get the job done and help people get to where they need to be. If you would like to be part of this solution, please contact me.

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## NH Transportation News

### Increased State Operating Funding Impacts at COAST



In the SFY24-SFY25 state budget, funds directed to the operation of public transit service (statewide) increased to \$2.283M from \$400K in the last biennium. At COAST this will mean an increase of \$421,127 in state operating support.

These additional state funds will leverage the use of \$527,345 of FTA funds at COAST and fund 7,792 hours of service, 126,261 miles of service, and result in an estimated 51,200 trips being provided for travel to work, schooling, doctor appointments, and grocery stores and pharmacies.

These state funds will have a meaningful and consequential positive impact on public transportation for the Greater Seacoast region, its residents, businesses, and nonprofit service organizations.

The additional state funds also helped reduce our previously projected deficit in FY25 by 26%.

## Governor’s Advisory Commission on Intermodal Transportation (GACIT ) Hearings Underway

Every two years the State’s 10-Year Plan for Transportation Infrastructure begins its journey to adoption through a series of public hearings hosted by the Executive Councilors who make up the [Governor’s Advisory Commission on Intermodal Transportation \(GACIT\)](#).

The State’s Plan is more than just a list of transportation projects to be completed over the next 10-year cycle. It is an expression of the State’s priorities, strategies, and desired outcomes for our collective transportation infrastructure across the entire state.

**1 NHDOT Planning Ahead to 2034**  
See bullets below to learn how your input is used and why it is important to decision makers.

**WELCOME**

**We Want to Hear From You!**

The purpose of this survey is to gather information about your needs, preferences and what you believe is important in maintaining and planning NH's transportation system for today and in the future. The survey is designed to allow you to move back and forth between the five screens. The final **Wrap Up** screen is where you select the *submit button* to share your input. See the bullets below for a brief overview or select the green **Next** arrow to advance to the next screen.

**→ Next**

Consider how you travel around NH now, and how this could change for you in the future. Maintaining the existing system and developing new projects requires a lot of thought. There are many needs and limited financial resources to do it all. Tell us what is important for your future and NH's future. **Screens 2-5 are for you to complete.** It won't take long, but it is really important. Select the Next button to get started. **READ MORE.**

**New Hampshire DOT**  
Department of Transportation

**2 PRIORITY RANKING**  
**3 TRADEOFFS**  
**4 STRATEGY RATING**  
**5 WRAP UP**

## Upcoming Meetings in the Greater Seacoast Region

Tuesday, September 26 @ 3pm, Durham Town Offices

Thursday, September 28 @ 4pm, Rochester City Hall

Thursday, September 28 @ 7pm, Dover City Hall

Thursday, October 12 @ 7pm, Seabrook Community Center

Thursday, October 19 @ 7pm, Greenland Central School

The GACIT hearings are the most accessible opportunities for all of us (the public) to provide input on the State's Draft 10-Year Transportation Plan. The hearings are a unique opportunity for residents, businesses, and organizations to stand up and share their perspectives, as well as for members of the NHDOT, Executive Council, and state legislators to hear what you want from New Hampshire's transportation system.

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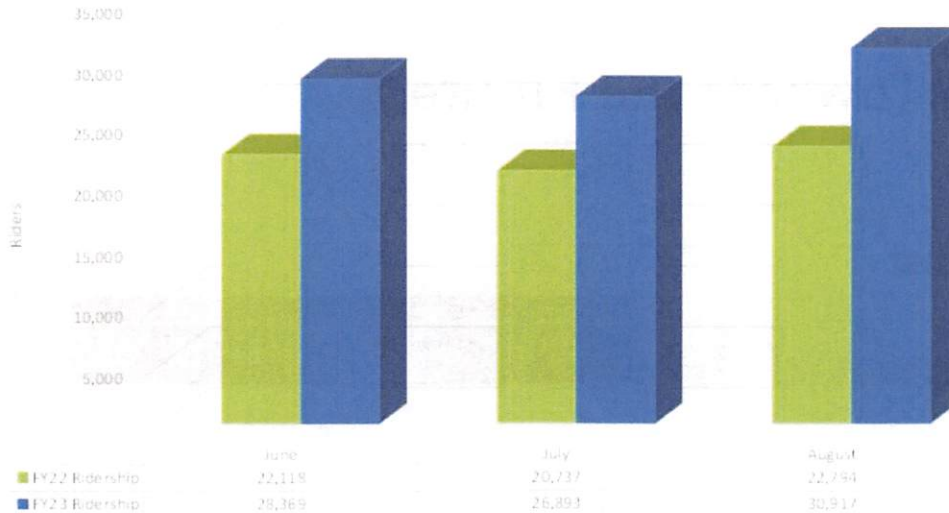
## Operations Updates

### Summer Ridership Way Up

After removing many of our service suspensions in mid-May, we experienced a resurgence of ridership, with gains of 28-35% in June, July, and August when compared to the same months a year ago.

About half of the gains can be attributed to returning nearly all Saturday services. The other half of the gains are the result of both new riders and individuals riding the buses more frequently.

## Summer Ridership at COAST (FY22 - FY23)



## Unexpected Staffing Challenges Cause Reinstatement of Some Service Suspensions

A recent wave of unavailability among current staff necessitated new temporary service suspensions, which took effect on September 1.

While staffing improvements in the first half of the year allowed us to reintroduce services that were previously suspended, the most recent suspensions are due to our current drivers being out for a variety of reasons. The goal is to get back to full operations as soon as possible.

Since Labor Day, we have started training four new staff members and hired another who will start training soon. As staff are released from training, which typically takes 3 to 5 weeks to complete, we expect to be able to reinstate the suspended services.

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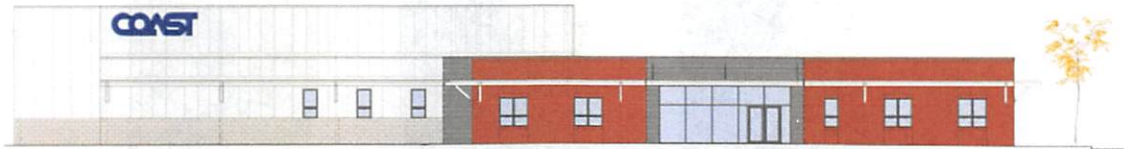
## Driving the Seacoast Economy

Each summer, the Seacoast welcomes an influx of seasonal workers as part of the J-1 Visa Program. COAST's transportation services are essential for many of these workers to get to and from their temporary housing to work at local hotels and other attractions.

Heading into the summer, COAST worked directly with area employers to ensure their seasonal workers were signing up for and receiving monthly passes. In some cases, workers were given a discount of up to 15% through our [Commuter Benefit Program](#).

If you, or businesses you know, expect to use J-1 Visa workers next year, please contact us now to help you with potential transportation solutions.

## Driving Towards the Future



The project plan for COAST's proposed new facility in Dover is slated for review at the September 26 Planning Board Meeting, having been reviewed and recommended by the Technical Review Committee and Conservation Commission (with adjustments related to plans for our onsite 10,000-gallon fuel tank).

We are anticipating a determination on our National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) submission by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) any day. Once in hand, we will be able to submit a grant for already awarded funds for final design and construction.

Our biggest current hurdle is securing the needed matching funds to unlock the Federal grant awards we have received. We have \$267,000 in tax credits still available for interested businesses in NH (\$150,000 in pledges have already been secured).

NHCDFR tax credits are a win-win, (1) COAST's receives pledges toward our project and those pledges have tremendous leveraging power, and (2) NH businesses can reduce their tax liabilities at pennies on the dollar for a well vetted, highly beneficial, community-based project that will serve the greater region.

Support COAST's new facility construction clicking on the button and making a pledge to purchase available NH CDFA tax credits.

Make a Pledge

---

## COAST in the Community

**Making a Difference: The Alliance for Community Transportation**

As the Alliance for Community Transportation (ACT) completes its 20th year as the region's Regional Coordination Council, it is exciting to see that we continue to add new members, build partnerships, improve how we communicate, expand our services, and streamline how we operate.

#### SERVING OUR COMMUNITY AND OUR PARTNERS IN SFY23

7		Services offered to our clients
781		People who received rides
37,140		Trips provided by our partners
527		People who signed up for a new service
217,528		Miles traveled
22,053		Calls answered by TripLink



We are thankful for the members, partners, funders, and TripLink staff that have contributed their time, talents, and resources to our continued work to improve southeastern New Hampshire's transportation network. Our riders, and in fact our whole community, are better off for your efforts.



## New Hampshire to Celebrate Community Transportation in October

The New Hampshire Transit Association (NHTA), along with support and cooperation from the State Coordinating Council for Community Transportation (SCC), New Hampshire Mobility Managers Network, and Transport NH, have announced that this October they will be celebrating the first annual Community Transportation Month in and across New Hampshire.

Be on the lookout for local and regional news, and social media buzz, to find out more about how your local agencies are celebrating the month.

In New Hampshire, Community Transportation, also known as public transit or local transportation, refers to a system of publicly or charitably subsidized services and infrastructure designed to provide convenient and affordable transportation options within a specific community or region.

The goal of community transportation is to ensure that residents have affordable access to essential services, employment opportunities, education, and recreational activities while reducing congestion, pollution, and the reliance on private cars. New Hampshire has a wide range of transportation options that often go unnoticed by the greater community. NHTA seeks to use this month of celebration to shine a light on all the various modes of community transportation that exist in NH.

NHTA Chair and COAST Executive Director, Rad Nichols, stated, "Community transportation plays a vital role in economic development, educational opportunity, independent living, and healthy, vibrant

communities. It is long past time we celebrate the important role community transportation plays in our state.”



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Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation  
42 Sumner Dr  
Dover, NH 03820-5451

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You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe](#)



