

Select Board Special Meeting
Monday, April 19, 2021
Nowak Room, Exeter Town Offices, 5:30 pm.
Draft Minutes

Members present: Niko Papakonstantis (Chair), Molly Cowan, Julie Gilman, Lovey Roundtree Oliff, Daryl Browne, Russell Dean, and Melissa Roy.

Annual Goal Setting

Chair Papakonstantis called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

1. Mr. Papakonstantis's goals

- Mr. Papakonstantis would like the Select Board to consider restructuring some staff positions under RSA 37 which gives the Select Board the authority to restructure when necessary. He noted that towns similar to Exeter throughout New Hampshire and Massachusetts often have an Assistant Town Manager. He believes that Exeter has grown substantially over the last 15 years and the role of Town Manager is becoming increasingly challenging. Creating a succession plan for emergencies is prudent town planning. Mr. Papakonstantis believes the Town has begun to execute this concept by appointing a Deputy Police Chief and a Deputy Fire Chief. Due to an upcoming retirement, he feels that the Town Manager should propose a restructuring plan to the Board as soon as possible. The Board members agreed they would like to see a restructuring plan for review.
- Mr. Papakonstantis's second goal is for the Town to continue and provide no disruptions of service and no staff layoffs due to the challenges faced by the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - i. Mr. Browne said he had concerns that residents in the private sector were not getting the same protections in times of need.
 - ii. Mr. Papakonstantis clarified that this was a goal but he understands if there is no way around laying off staff, he would do what is best for the Town as a whole.

2. Ms. Roundtree Oliff's goal

- Ms. Oliff's goal is for the Select Board to complete an audit of Town committees and boards. The audit would review boards/committees' goals/purpose, how they operate, and how often they meet. There are many boards/committees, and a review would ensure they are all necessary and operating appropriately to meet the Town's needs as well as the needs of the volunteers of each board/committee. She suggested an anonymous survey sent to all board/committee members could field feedback on their experience.
 - i. An all boards/committee meeting was discussed as a possibility which the Select Board has tried in the past with varied success.

- ii. Training through NHMA for all committee and board chairs were also discussed.

3. Ms. Cowan's goals

- o Ms. Cowan would like to see the Town continue to evaluate what is needed to bring and facilitate more affordable housing in Exeter. She would like the Board to review ways to support zoning or ordinance changes that might help the current lack of affordable housing.
- o Ms. Cowan would also like to see the waterfront in Exeter better utilized and planned for. She feels that Exeter has an amazing asset on the waterfront but most businesses and buildings face out away from the river so there is less of a focus on the waterfront. How can Economic Development help in this area?
 - i. Mr. Dean noted that obtaining easements to the river can be challenging but not impossible.
 - ii. Mr. Browne noted in a previous community he worked with it was reported that it takes a town approximately 40 years to refocus development toward a river/body of water and not away from it.

4. Mr. Browne's goals

- o Mr. Browne would like to see the Board focus on diversity among the boards and committee members by helping all residents have better access to the Town government process. Mr. Browne wants the Board to make a conscious effort to ensure residents who are affected by their decisions are available to help deliberate and give feedback on various decisions being made throughout the year. Most members of Exeter's various boards and committees are very similar and most own their own homes. He hopes to increase access and promote more participation from residents who rent.
 - i. It was suggested the Board could invite various housing associations to a special meeting with the Select Board to discuss issues important to them. Possibly create an ambassador program so people could get their voices heard.

5. Ms. Gilman's goals

- o Ms. Gilman wants to promote better interaction between the Town and State government. She feels the Select Board should advocate more to give feedback to legislators. Although the timing can be challenging she felt with a little planning the Board could be better prepared to support or not support various State issues.

6. Increased opportunities for interaction with the Select Board

- o Some Select Board members would like to see more opportunities for interaction with the community such as going to events around the Town.

The goal setting session then concluded. Ms. Gilman moved to adjourn, second by Mr. Browne. The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 pm.