

Working together is success.

— Henry Ford



Town of Exeter
New Hampshire

April 11, 2015

Primex³
NH Public Risk Management Exchange

Center for
Public Sector
Advancement

Promoting Excellence in the Public Sector

Purpose and Intended Result of the Session

The purpose of the session was for the Board and Town Manager to come together to lay the horizon for the Town and establish goals and strategies that will help guide the Town over the next twelve (12) months.

Participants

Julie Gilman, Chairman
Donald Clement, Vice-Chairman
Anne Surman, Board of Selectmen
Nancy Belanger, Clerk
Dan Chartrand, Board of Selectmen
Russ Dean, Town Manager

The exercise was facilitated by:

Rick Alpers, Risk Management Consultant, Primex³

2014 Goals Review Discussion

The session began with the Board of Selectmen and Town Manager reviewing the successful goals for 2014 and to identify any goals to continue working on along with the goals identified for 2015.

BOS to Lead Update of the Master Plan - *Goal Partially Achieved*

A contract is in place with the Rockingham County Planning Commission to begin the update in May of 2015. The initial focus of the update was to address five chapters of the current master plan. After further discussion of the board it was decided that the focus of the update should be on chapters one and two only. The Board and Manager will lead further discussion with the planning board to ensure that the focus is narrowed to chapters one and two of the current master plan. It is also the desire of the board to have as much citizen input as possible regarding the update.

Develop Strategies to Diversify Tax Base - *Goal Achieved*

- There has been continuous investments made over the years in municipal infrastructure and it continues into 2015.
- Exeter's current bond rating has improved.
- The Economic Development Director has been hired and has hit the ground running.
- The TIF passed for Epping Road this past March.

Second All Boards Meeting Convened – *Goal Not Achieved*

The goal of the all boards meeting was to review concerns regarding how the application process moves along for folks looking to bring their business to Exeter or build a home in town. During the two meetings it was determined that many process issues exist and need to be addressed. The concerns and issues would most likely not be easily addressed as simply as it once hoped. The land use process will be brought up later in this report as a new 2015 goal.

Organizational Alignment – *Goal Achieved*

- Pay Scale study adopted
- Job descriptions updated for about 50 non-union employees
- A potential study may be needed for efficiency of delivery of town services down the road

Project Execution from 2014

- ✓ Stadium Well – Contract to be signed by Philips Exeter Academy
- ✓ Great Dam removal – Removal to begin in 2015
- ✓ Downtown Revitalization (Draft Charge May 2014 2nd meeting) – sidewalk project in 2015
- ✓ Waste Water Municipal Agreement – Regional options being explored and waste water facilities plan completed
- ✓ Groundwater Plant – Currently under construction
- ✓ Organizational Alignment – Manager made much headway this past year
- ✓ Housing Analysis – Housing Committee formed
- ✓ String Bridge – In design phase

General Topics for Discussion for 2015

Planning Department

There was considerable discussion regarding the current planning department operations and the regulations that govern it. The board believes that the department could be much more business and resident-friendly than it currently is. They feel that the current department leans too heavily on the environment when making recommendations to the land use boards and business owners. It was recommended by the board to the manager that he seek out an independent consulting company to perform a study on the operations of the current planning department, staffing and regulations to ensure that Exeter is both user friendly for both businesses and residents.

The Manager will report back to the board by June 1st, 2015 on the recommendation of a company and the cost to perform the study.

Housing Committee

For the last few years the board has discussed housing as an overall goal for the town. The discussion generally pertains to market rate housing or affordable housing. The board wants to ensure that the average middle class young family can afford to live in Exeter. In an effort to start the housing analysis needed the Board of Selectmen formed a Housing Committee. It is an eight member committee that now needs actual volunteers or members. A mission statement for the committee has been adopted by the board. **The goal is to have the committee fully appointed and operational by June 15th, 2015. The committee will give its first report back to the board regarding its progress as a committee and it's charges no later than March of 2016.**

Town Facilities

The Town has made considerable capital investments annually in updating its infrastructure. Many roads have been rebuilt, many water & sewer pipes have been replaced or extended and many culverts been replaced. One area of capital investment the town has not given much attention to is to their aging facilities. The facilities that the board and manager oversee are: The Fire Department, Police Department, Public Works, Town Office, Town Hall, and the Parks and Recreation Department. These Departments have many buildings of various ages. It is the hope of the manager to have under contract by the end of May a company to complete a town wide audit of all the facilities mentioned above. The consultant will review space needs and costs to repair or replace buildings. **A report from the consultant will be due to the board in the fall of 2015. After the board has reviewed the report and participated in an in-depth conversation with the consultant; the board will be ready during the 2016 goal setting session to begin to prioritize capital investments for their aging facilities.**

Top 2-3 Priorities for 2015

Each Board member and the Town Manager identified their individual 2-3 priorities for the Town of Exeter to focus on in 2015.

Julie Gilman

1. Complete Streets initiative
2. Improve working relationship with the planning department and public works department
3. Master Plan Update

Dan Chartrand

1. Water sharing agreement with Stratham
2. Regional waste water treatment solution
3. Regional Ambulance service

Don Clement

1. Water sharing agreement with Stratham
2. Regional waste water treatment solution
3. Reorganizing of Exeter TV

Anne Surman

1. Update wetland buffer regulations
2. Regional waste water treatment solution with an Exeter only option
3. Board meeting process

Nancy Belanger

1. Complete Dam removal
2. Complete Streets initiative and sidewalk update
3. Affordable housing analysis

Russ Dean

1. Audit of Planning Department operations
2. Execution of Projects
3. Facilities plan

Top 2015 Goals

The Board of Selectmen and the Town Manager identified the top goals for the Town of Exeter and to develop a work plan. The goals were formulated from the individual goals listed above. The goals and deadline for an update or completion are listed below.

GOAL #1: *Grow and improve relationship with major industries in Town.* Major industries are:

- Exeter School Board
- Philipps Exeter Academy
- Exeter Hospital
- River Woods

Deadline: April 2016

GOAL #2: *Regional waste water treatment solution*

- Should Exeter proceed alone
- Should Exeter join forces with just Stratham
- Should Exeter join forces with Stratham, Greenland and Portsmouth

Manager to report back with an update:

Deadline: December 2015

GOAL #3: *Water Sharing with Stratham*

- Exeter would supply Stratham with 125,000 gallons of water a day
- An initial buy in from Stratham would take place
- Stratham will then pay tier 2 and tier 3 rates as an Exeter water customer.

The hope would to have both boards sign an agreement on the water sharing no later than September of 2015.

GOAL #4: *Planning Department complete operations review*

Deadline: Company and cost for audit to the board by June 1st, 2015. Goal would be to have a completed report from a consultant in time for the 2016 goal setting session.

Thank you again for the opportunity to participate in this process. Primex³ appreciates the opportunity to provide assistance to members with goal setting, and to help governing bodies create a vision for their communities and paths to achieve those visions. A forward-looking community that is deliberate and disciplined in accomplishing its goals illustrates how “good management is good risk management.”

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