

Select Board Meeting
Monday July 22, 2024
6:50 PM
Nowak Room, Town Offices
Final Minutes

1. Call Meeting to Order

Members present: Chair Niko Papakonstantis, Vice-Chair Molly Cowan, Clerk Julie Gilman, Dan Chartrand, Nancy Belanger, and Assistant Town Manager Melissa Roy were present at this meeting. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Papakonstantis at 6:50 PM and the Board went downstairs to the Wheelwright Room for an interview.

2. Board Interviews

- a. David Kovar for the Budget Recommendations Committee

The Board reconvened in the Nowak Room at 7 PM.

3. Bid Opening - Septage Receiving Equipment Installation

- a. PRB Construction Inc. of Gilford NH bid \$165,000.
- b. Northeast Earth Mechanics LLC of Pittsfield NH bid \$332,500.
- c. Penta Corp. from Moultonborough NH bid \$175,200.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to refer the bids to the Department of Public Works for review and recommendation. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

4. Police Department - Swearing In

- a. The planned swearing in of Sergeant Taylor Sheehan was postponed until August.

5. Proclamations/Recognitions

- a. 2024 Hometown Media Award - EXTV
Mr. Papakonstantis recognized EXTV staff members Bob Glowacky, Will Tapply, and Gabe who won the 2024 Hometown Media Award from the Alliance for Community Media (ACM).
- b. Mr. Papakonstantis described a Parks and Rec event to take place on July 27, in which a Black Hawk helicopter will take off from the Rec Park field.

6. Public Comment

- a. There was no public comment at this time.

7. Approval of Minutes

- a. Regular Meeting: July 8, 2024

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to approve the Select Board meeting minutes of July 8, 2024 as presented. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

8. Appointments

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to appoint David Kovar to the Budget Recommendations Committee. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

9. Discussion/Action Items

a. Squamscott River Siphons Update

Public Works Director Stephen Cronin gave an update on the sewer siphons project. The two new 12" siphon pipes were activated. We're now in the process of transitioning to the new system. The new mains will be pressure tested and the inverts and manholes will be completed. Site cleanup activities will continue over the next few weeks. We are on track for completion by mid-August.

Ms. Roy suggested inviting Congressman Pappas for a final ceremony.

Mr. Cronin said Kristin Murphy submitted a Coastal Resiliency Grant application in May for tidal inundation concerns at Swasey Parkway. We were awarded the grant and are requesting that the Board accept it. Mr. Papakonstantis recognized Ms. Murphy's efforts as well as the efforts of Dwane Staples, the Chair of the Swasey Parkway Trustees.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to accept a grant from the NH Department of Environmental Services Coastal Program, a Coastal Resilience Grant in the amount of \$18,000 and to further authorize the Town Manager or their designee to sign the associated grant-related documents. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

b. Preliminary Re-Valuation Report – Scott Marsh, MRI

Assessor Scott Marsh of MRI was present to give an update on the Assessment. Mr. Marsh said it was last done in 2019, and must be reviewed every 5 years. For the period April 1, 2022 - April 1, 2024, 565 sales were reviewed. The town's taxable value went from \$2.3B to \$3.7B, a \$1.4B increase. Overall property values went up 61%; residential by 59%, condos by 62%, vacant land by 70%, manufactured homes by 149%, and commercial properties by 37%. We do a statistical analysis, and the overall ratio is 104%, with a COD [coefficient of dispersion] of 8.4, and a PRD [price-related differential] of 1.02, which are within the guidelines set by the State. The 1 year indications are 100%, 8.2, and 100.1. The State looks at October - September, and that's currently 97%, 8.5, and 1.01, which says values are still increasing. The assessments would have been at 52.3% if the reassessment was not done. We expect to send out value notices the week of August 1, and public hearings will be held the week of August 26. The public can call to schedule a hearing in person, by phone, and on Zoom; we also accept information in writing. There's usually a 2 week hearing period, depending on demand.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked if there's any flexibility for the hearings to be moved into September if needed. Mr. Marsh said yes, we can adjust it according to taxpayer needs.

Mr. Chartrand said occasionally a constituent will be upset about revaluations, thinking what they pay in taxes is going to spike. Mr. Marsh said the new value will be subject to a new tax rate. The money is the budget that was voted to spend. If we doubled the value of the town, the tax rate would be cut in half.

Mr. Marsh said if any taxpayers contact the Board, please refer them to contact his office.

c. Treasurer Delegation of Certain Authorities to Town Staff

Finance Director Corey Stevens said this came about through the audit process. It relates to the duties and functions of the Town Treasurer. Under the RSAs, the Treasurer can delegate some responsibilities to staff. We have already delegated a number of the functions, we just need to do it formally. The specific tasks to be delegated are daily deposits, which are carried out by various town staff; investment management, which he has been working on; and bank reconciliations. Sue [Penny] is part of the process, but we carry out a large piece of that. Sue has signed the memos regarding each duty.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to approve the Treasurer's delegation of authority over bank deposits, investment management, and bank account reconciliations, to certain members of town staff as detailed in the delegation of authority memo signed by the Treasurer dated July 15, 2024. Mr. Chartrand seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

d. Seacoast Green Challenge

Mr. Papakonstantis said the Energy Committee would like Exeter to enter a challenge regarding our community power coalition rates. Ms. Gilman said the community power rates for August 1 through December 31 are lower than the default rates. The object of this challenge is to compare how many people choose to opt up from the default rate. You can opt up to Granite Plus, where 33% of your energy is generated from renewable or clean energy sources, which at 9.3 cents per KW is less than Unitil's default rate. Or you can go to Clean 50, at 10 cents, or 100% at 12 cents. There's no prize for the challenge, it's just bragging rights for the town. The challenge is through January 31, 2025. EXTV will do a promotional video.

e. 2026 Semi-Sesquicentennial Celebration Discussion

Ms. Gilman said we have been tasked with organizing a semi-sesquicentennial for July 4, 2026, and we'll need to budget for it next year. She suggests forming a committee or commission with 6 residents and a member of the Heritage Commission. She would like to look at what we can do throughout the year, not just on July 4th. Mr. Papakonstantis suggested starting to recruit and beginning the interview process.

10. Regular Business

a. Tax Abatements, Veterans Credits and Exemptions

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to approve a tax abatement for 65/127/A in the amount of \$30,617.57 for the tax year 2023. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

b. Permits & Approvals

- i. The grant approval was discussed above.

c. Town Manager's Report

- i. Ms. Roy said the River Advisory had a presentation from VHB to discuss the surface or waterworks dam which holds our drinking water. We are starting the process of addressing this high-hazard dam.
- ii. We started negotiation meetings with two of the three unions last Friday. Police, Fire. SEIU negotiations start this week.
- iii. We held four interviews of architecture firms for our new Police Station and Fire Substation today. Ms. Gilman asked if the Facilities Committee was involved. Mr. Chartrand said there's a meeting on Wednesday. He doesn't remember it coming up previously.
- iv. We interviewed construction firms for the 10 Hampton Road construction.
- v. We worked with multiple departments on personnel issues.
- vi. She's helping to prepare the CIP for the Planning Department.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked if Greg Bisson can give an update at a future meeting on 10 Hampton Road. Ms. Roy said she could give an update. When we first got the building, we had money in the warrant article to make improvements. There was an opportunity for a grant and we paused so that we wouldn't have to move staff in and out again. We'll be able to do \$900,000 rather than \$100,000 worth of construction.

d. Select Board Committee Reports

- i. Ms. Belanger attended a Planning Board meeting July 11, where the Exeter Country Club restaurant approval was granted an extension to July 13, 2025. We had a second public hearing on 127 Portsmouth Ave, which is very close to our water supply. Andrew Koff of the Conservation Commission and Kristin Murphy were there. They will come back on August 27. A minor subdivision at 100 Linden Street was approved. There was a design review for another potential project at 76 Portsmouth Ave, and a lot of people brought in concerns.
- ii. Ms. Gilman met with the NH Preservation Alliance and toured several facilities for their next annual conference. Town Hall would be too hot so she suggested moving the conference to spring or fall. Heritage and HDC had no business so they were canceled.
- iii. Ms. Cowan had no report.
- iv. Mr. Chartrand attended a Conservation Commission meeting where they discussed the 127 Portsmouth Ave project. They recommended to the Planning Board not to make the allowance that the developer is seeking

because of proximity to our surfacewater supply. They also took up 76 Portsmouth Ave and he was impressed by the neighbors who showed up from the Jady Hill neighborhood. The developer got a ground-level view of the neighborhood's concerns. He attended a train station meeting, and planning on that continues. We hope to get something into the CIP.

- v. Mr. Papakonstantis attended the River Advisory Committee meeting. He missed the Pairpoint Park Advisory Committee meeting but got an update from Dave Sharples, who said they did a sitewalk to the property.

e. Correspondence

- i. An email from a citizen that Mr. Papakonstantis responded to.
- ii. An NHMA legislative update.
- iii. A notice to residents from Business and Economic Affairs.
- iv. Correspondence from Secretary of State Scanlan.
- v. An email from Exeter Hospital regarding their community survey.
- vi. A thank-you from Big Brothers Big Sisters for a successful pickleball tournament.

11. Review Board Calendar

- a. The next Select Board meetings are August 5, August 19, Tuesday September 3, September 16, and September 30. July 24 is the Budget Recommendations Committee kick-off. October 2nd is the presentation of the draft budget; it was moved from September due to a conflict.

12. Non-Public Session

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to enter into non-public session under RSA 91-A:3II(c). Mr. Chartrand seconded. In a roll-call vote, the motion passed 5-0 and the Board entered non-public at 8:01 PM.

MOTION: Mr. Chartrand moved to exit non-public session. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

MOTION: Mr. Chartrand moved to seal the minutes. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

13. Adjournment

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Chartrand seconded. The Select Board stood adjourned at 8:55 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanna Bartell
Recording Secretary