

Select Board Meeting  
Tuesday January 21, 2025  
7 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 Town Manager Russ Dean were present at this meeting. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Papakonstantis at 7 PM.

2. Public Comment

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

3. Approval of Minutes

- a. Regular Meeting: January 13, 2025

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to approve the Select Board minutes of January 13, 2025 as presented. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

4. Appointments

- a. There were no appointments or resignations considered.

5. Discussion/Action Items

- a. FY25 Budget and Bond Hearing

Mr. Papakonstantis read the public hearing notice:

*The Exeter Select Board hereby gives notice of a public hearing pursuant to RSA 33:8-a on the following projects requiring bonds and notes as part of the fiscal year 2025 town warrant: 1. Drinkwater Road Groundwater Well Development; 2. Pickpocket Dam Removal; 3. Linden Street Bridge Repairs; 4. DPW Fuel Island Replacement; 5. Street Sweeper Replacement; 6. Use of \$500,000 in excess bond proceeds to fund inspecting, cleaning, and dredging of Clemson Lagoon; 7. Use of \$250,000 in excess bond proceeds to fund repairs to sewers and drains at Pine, Front, and Linden Streets; 8. Use of \$245,000 in excess bond proceeds to fund repairs to the Wastewater Facility Effluent Flume building. The public hearing will be held on Tuesday, January 21, 2025 commencing at 7:00 p.m. in the Exeter Town Offices, Nowak Room, 10 Front Street, Exeter, NH. The public is encouraged to attend. Dated: December 26, 2024.*

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to open the public hearing for the Town of Exeter 2025 bonds. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 3, Drinkwater Road Groundwater Development:

*To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$6,800,000 for the purpose of design, engineering, and construction of a new groundwater source off Drinkwater Road, and to authorize the issuance of not more than \$6,800,000 of bonds or notes in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA 33); and further to authorize the Select Board to issue, negotiate, sell and deliver such bonds or notes and to determine the rate of interest thereon and the maturity and other terms thereof; and further to authorize the Select Board to apply for, accept and expend federal, state or other aid, if any, including principal forgiveness, which may become available for this project and to comply with all laws applicable to such project; and further to authorize the Select Board to take any other action or to pass any other vote relative thereto. Notwithstanding the general obligation nature of the bonds or notes, it is anticipated that debt service will be paid from the water fund. Bond payments would begin approximately one year after issuance. 3/5 Ballot Vote required for approval.*

Mr. Papakonstantis asked for public comment, but there was none. He brought the discussion back to the Board.

Mr. Dean said this project has been in our Capital Improvement Program for the last several years. We've completed pump testing on a new well source, and it's a significant project.

Mr. Chartrand said this is an important article. Developing more water sources is one of our key functions as a municipality.

**MOTION:** Mr. Chartrand moved to recommend Article 3, Drinkwater Road Groundwater Development, in the amount of \$6,800,000. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 4, Pickpocket Dam Removal:  
*To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$2,100,000 for the purpose of design, engineering and removal of the Pickpocket Dam and subsequent site monitoring, and to authorize the issuance of not more than \$2,100,000 of bonds or notes in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA 33); and further to authorize the Select Board to issue, negotiate, sell and deliver such bonds or notes and to determine the rate of interest thereon and the maturity and other terms thereof; and further to authorize the Select Board to apply for, accept and expend federal, state or other aid, if any, including principal forgiveness, which may become available for this project and to comply with all laws applicable to such project; and further to authorize the Select Board to take any other action or to pass any other vote relative thereto. The Town is seeking grants to offset up to 100% of the project cost. Debt service to be paid from the general fund. Estimated Tax Impact: assuming 15-year bond at 3.09% interest: \$0.06/1,000, \$6.00/100,000 of assessed property value. Bond payments would begin approximately one year after issuance. 3/5 Ballot Vote required for approval.*

Mr. Papakonstantis asked for public comment, but there was none. He brought the discussion back to the Board.

Mr. Dean said Pickpocket Dam has been declared a high hazard dam by NHDES and the town is under a letter of deficiency to do something about that. The Board took a vote in June that removal is the preferred option. This article would raise and appropriate the moneys needed. This may be offset up to 100% but we don't know what grants we will get. We are in the running for the Great Bay 2030 grant at \$300,000 and we will likely get it.

Mr. Papakonstantis said we've worked with a consultant, done numerous studies over the past few years, and had public meetings and hearings. There are three grants that we would be eligible to receive. Removal is the least expensive option and he believes it's the cleanest, most environmentally sound way to proceed.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to recommend approval of Article 4, Pickpocket Dam Removal, in the amount of \$2,100,00, to the voters. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 5, Linden Street Bridge Repairs:  
*To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,257,900 for the purpose of making repairs to the Linden Street Bridge, and to authorize the issuance of not more than \$1,257,900 of bonds or notes in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA 33); and further to authorize the Select Board to issue, negotiate, sell and deliver such bonds or notes and to determine the rate of interest thereon and the maturity and other terms thereof; and further to authorize the Select Board to apply for, accept and expend federal, state or other aid, if any, including principal forgiveness, which may become available for this project and to comply with all laws applicable to such project; and further to authorize the Select Board to take any other action or to pass any other vote relative thereto. Debt service to be paid from the general fund. Estimated Tax Impact: assuming 10-year bond at 2.72% interest: \$0.05/1,000, \$5.00/100,000 of assessed property value. Bond payments would begin approximately one year after issuance. 3/5 Ballot Vote required for approval.*

Mr. Papakonstantis asked for public comment, but there was none. He brought the discussion back to the Board.

DPW Director Steve Cronin said there are issues with settlement related to the bridge abutments. We did the design last year and went out to bid, but the bids we received were significantly higher than anticipated. We are asking for additional funding to rebid this project.

Ms. Gilman said this is necessary because it's a safety issue.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to recommend Article 5, Linden Street Bridge Repairs, at \$1,257,900. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 6, DPW Fuel Island Station Replacement:  
*To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$575,000 for the purpose of replacing the fuel island station at the DPW Complex at 13 Newfields*

*Road, and to authorize the issuance of not more than \$575,000 of bonds or notes in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA 33); and further to authorize the Select Board to issue, negotiate, sell and deliver such bonds or notes and to determine the rate of interest thereon and the maturity and other terms thereof; and further to authorize the Select Board to apply for, accept and expend federal, state or other aid, if any, including principal forgiveness, which may become available for this project and to comply with all laws applicable to such project; and further to authorize the Select Board to take any other action or to pass any other vote relative thereto. Debt service to be paid from the general fund. Estimated Tax Impact: assuming 5-year bond at 2.89% interest: .04/1,000, \$4.00/100,000 of assessed property value. Bond payments would begin approximately one year after issuance. 3/5 ballot vote required for approval.*

Mr. Papakonstantis asked for public comment, but there was none. He brought the discussion back to the Board.

Mr. Cronin said Public Works conducted a site evaluation and a facility evaluation on long-term replacement of the DPW complex. While that goes forward, the fuel island has reached the end of its life, so we'd like to replace that now. The new location of the fuel island has been determined through site analysis. We can keep the existing fuel island in place while the new one is being constructed.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to recommend Article 6, Fuel Island Station Replacement, in the amount of \$575,000. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 7, Street Sweeper:

*To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$395,000 for the purpose of purchasing a new street sweeper to be used to meet EPA nitrogen reduction permit requirements and the implementation of an enhanced sweeping program, and to authorize the issuance of not more than \$395,000 of bonds or notes in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA 33); and further to authorize the Select Board to issue, negotiate, sell and deliver such bonds or notes and to determine the rate of interest thereon and the maturity and other terms thereof; and further to authorize the Select Board to apply for, accept and expend federal, state or other aid, if any, including principal forgiveness, which may become available for this project and to comply with all laws applicable to such project; and further to authorize the Select Board to take any other action or to pass any other vote relative thereto. Debt service to be paid from the general fund. (Estimated Tax Impact: assuming 5-year bond at 2.89% interest: \$0.03/1,000, \$3.00/100,000 of assessed property value). Bond payments would begin approximately one year after issuance. 3/5 ballot vote required for approval.*

Mr. Papakonstantis asked for public comment, but there was none. He brought the discussion back to the Board.

Mr. Dean said our street sweeper is old and needs to be replaced. We're anticipating that this will be an SRF loan that may have some forgiveness.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to recommend Article 7, Street Sweeper, at \$395,000. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 8, Use of Excess Bonds Proceeds - Front, Pine & Linden Street Sewer & Drainage Improvements:

*Shall the Town vote to authorize the expenditure of a portion of the unused bonds approved in 2021 for Salem Street Area Water, Sewer, Drainage Road Improvements and Utility Replacements as follows: to raise and appropriate the sum of \$250,000 for the purpose of making sewer repairs at Pine, Front and Linden Streets, and making repairs to drainage systems at Pine, Front and Linden Streets, per RSA 33:3-a, II. Estimated Tax Impact: None. No amount to be raised by taxation. 3/5 ballot vote required for approval.*

Mr. Papakonstantis asked for public comment, but there was none. He brought the discussion back to the Board.

Mr. Dean said sometimes capital projects have budget surpluses at the end of the process, and they turn into an excess bond proceed which can be used for another project by 3/5 ballot vote approval. The Salem Street area project surplus is being applied to the sewer and drainage repairs at Pine/Linden/Front Street to facilitate the construction of the roundabout, which the voters approved.

Mr. Cronin said we're nearing completion of the design of the roundabout. We're still working with one abutter on an easement, which we have a verbal agreement on. We did an evaluation of these utilities and determined that replacement is the best course of action.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to recommend Article 8, Use of Excess Bonds Proceeds - Front, Pine & Linden Street Sewer & Drainage repairs, at \$250,000. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 9, Use of Excess Bonds Proceeds - Clemson Lagoon Cleaning and Inspection:

*Shall the Town vote to authorize the expenditure of a portion of the unused bonds approved in 2021 for Wastewater Lagoon Sludge Removal as follows: to raise and appropriate the sum of \$500,000 for the purpose of inspecting, cleaning and dredging of Clemson Lagoon, per RSA 33:3-a, II. Estimated Tax Impact: None. No amount to be raised by taxation. 3/5 ballot vote required for approval.*

Mr. Papakonstantis asked for public comment, but there was none. He brought the discussion back to the Board.

Mr. Cronin said Clemson Pond is located on the banks of the Exeter Squamscott River and is the holding pond for our combined sewer overflow. We will be inspecting the Combined Sewer Overflow barrels, cleaning the outfall to

those barrels, and designing repairs to the tide gates. This is design and evaluation; at some point, we'd be back for more funding for construction.

**MOTION:** Mr. Chartrand moved to recommend Article 9, Use of Excess Bonds Proceeds - Clemson Lagoon Cleaning and Inspection at \$500,000. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 10, Use of Excess Bonds Proceeds - Wastewater Treatment Facility Effluent Flume Repair:

*Shall the Town vote to authorize the expenditure of a portion of the unused bonds approved in 2021 for Wastewater Lagoon Sludge Removal as follows: to raise and appropriate the sum of \$245,000 for the purpose of repairing the effluent flume at the Wastewater Treatment Facility site at 13 Newfields Road, per RSA 33:3-a, II. Estimated Tax Impact: None. No amount to be raised by taxation. 3/5 ballot vote required for approval.*

Mr. Papakonstantis asked for public comment, but there was none. He brought the discussion back to the Board.

Mr. Cronin said the effluent flume was part of the old treatment plant that was replaced and was repurposed as part of the new plant. The coating failed so this is to remove that coating and apply a new coating. This is where we do our mandated sampling so we need those surfaces to be clean and free of bacteria.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to recommend Article 10, Use of Excess Bonds Proceeds - Wastewater Treatment Facility Effluent Flume Repair, at \$245,000. Mr. Chartrand seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked for any further public comment, but there was none.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to close the bond hearing. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis read the notice of public hearing:

*The Exeter Select Board hereby gives notice of a public hearing on the Town of Exeter Fiscal Year 2025 operating budget and all financial and other warrant articles on Tuesday, January 21st, 2025, at 7:00 p.m., in the Nowak Room of the Exeter Town Offices. This hearing will be held pursuant to RSA 32:5 and RSA 40:13. Dated: December 26, 2024*

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to open the Town of Exeter 2025 Operating Budget Hearing. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis said the Board does not vote to recommend Articles 1, 2, or 11. Ms. Gilman clarified that the Board is not authorized to vote on those articles.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 12, Operating Budget:

*Shall the Town of Exeter raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling \$23,983,368. Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be \$23,441,313, which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Town of Exeter or by law; or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13, X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only. (Estimated Tax Impact: .27/1,000 assessed property value, \$27/100,000 assessed property value). Majority vote required.*

Mr. Dean briefly described the budget process. There are three separate operating budget warrant articles: General Fund, Water, Fund, and Sewer Fund, which are 2025 Articles 12,13, and 14. Each operating budget has a default budget in case it doesn't pass. The FY25 budget is a 4.91% increase, up by \$1,122,506 up over FY24.

The three largest town Departments are Police, Fire/EMS, and DPW. These budgets make up 64% of the General Fund Operating Budget. We have a Step adjustment of 3% for non-union employees in the first pay period of July. The Union contracts are separate articles that will be discussed later. There is an 18.7% increase in health insurance for all plans. Retirement for Group 1 is 13.53% of payroll through 6/30/25 then drops to 12.75% July 1; for Group 2 Police it's 31.28% of payroll through 6/30/25 and then 30.95%; for Group 2 Fire it's 30.35% of payroll through 6/30/25 then 29.15% from July 1. Group 1 is eligible for Social Security, Group 2 is not eligible for Social Security.

The Select Board budget is reduced by \$6 to \$22,462. The Chair is paid \$4,000 and the Board members are paid \$3,000. The Assistant Town Manager is now budgeted 100% in the Town Manager budget. The overall budget increase is \$144,477 or 45.9%. There's a new Human Resources Director position proposed, and the HR budget is up 4.8%. The Legal budget is level-funded from FY24 at \$100,000. In Information Technology, there's a \$51,039 increase in Contracted Services, which is a reallocation from Police and Fire. There are increases in internet services, computer software, and network supplies, but decreases in phone utilization and email archiving. The overall IT increase is \$84,461 or 24.4%. The Media Communications budget is an increase of \$7,835 or 11.9%.

The Town Clerk budget has a reduction of \$37,864 or 8.2%, mainly due to benefits changes. There is one election in 2025, so the Elections budget is decreased \$3,089 or 12.5%. Finance has an increase in wages and benefits but a reduction in audit fees, dues, and contracted services. The Treasurer budget is \$9,545, a budget decrease of \$147. In Tax Collection, there's an increase in wages and benefits, as well as education/training, postage, and tax billing services; the overall increase is \$14,603 or 12.1%. Assessing has an increase in Contracted Assessor Services of \$4,300, a wage increase of \$7,243, and a

benefits increase of \$5,178, but a decrease in postage and revaluation costs. There is an overall increase of \$5,256 or 1.9%.

In Planning, there are wage increases of \$19,768 or 9.1% and benefit increases of \$3,416 or 7.2%. There is an increase in mobile communications and dues. The overall budget increase is \$24,012 or 8%. In Economic Development, there are wage/benefit increases of \$13,490 and a \$50 increase in travel reimbursement, but a reduction in office supplies. In Building and Code Enforcement, there's a \$10,000 decrease in contracted services and a decrease in wages/benefits due to benefits changes, for an overall decrease of \$11,097 or 4%. The Conservation Commission budget has an increase of \$241. The Zoning Board has a decrease of \$105. The Historic District Commission has a decrease of \$366.

The Police Budget has a wage increase of \$82,909 or 4.2%, and overtime increase of \$10,418 or 11.3%. There is a step increase for Police Association employees which was built into the last contract negotiation. Benefits are increasing by \$144,674 or 11.2% and the Health insurance increase is \$110,159 of that. In Police Expenses, there are increases for accreditation, dry cleaning, education training, grant matching, and uniforms, and a decrease in the computer maintenance and service contract of \$16,300, as well as decreases in equipment, fuel, and the software agreement. The overall Police budget increase is 6.1%.

In the Fire Department, there's a wage increase of \$61,477 or 2.5%, and a benefits increase of \$38,209 or 2.7%. There is a one-year reduction in protective equipment of \$33,082 due to funds coming from ARPA; a reduction in cistern maintenance of \$900; a reduction in community relations of \$4,000 due to Mr. Schreiber no longer providing the same services to the Police and Fire Departments; a reduction in contract services of \$17,020; an increase in education training of \$737; and a reduction in conference/rooms/means of \$500. The expense reductions are \$51,483 or 15.6%, while the overall budget increase is \$48,203 or 1.1%.

For Dispatch, there are wage increases of \$18,881 or 1.1%. Health insurance is up \$8,917 or 8.5%. There is an overall increase to the Dispatch budget of \$30,372 or 6.4%. The Health budget has a wage increase of \$5,847 and a benefits increase of \$949. The total budget increase for Health is \$12,993 or 10%.

In Public Works Administration/Engineering, there are wage increases of \$57,502 or 9.1%, including the first full year of the new DPW Director and GIS Technician. In Highways & Streets, there are wage increases of \$13,514 or 1.7%; that doesn't include the collective bargaining. There are benefits increases of \$52,409 or 14.4%. There are increases in fuel of \$500, phone reimbursement at \$400, and safety equipment of \$1,000. In DPW Highway Road Paving, the budget is increased to \$625,000 due to additional paving in 2025 to be funded through state aid. In DPW Highway, culvert replacement is level-funded at



\$5,000. The DPW Snow and Ice budget has decreased by \$25,185, with the additional funds to come from the Snow and Ice Deficit fund.

In DPW Solid Waste, there's an increase in the disposal/recycling contract of \$112,180, an increase in blue bags of \$42,000, and an increase in supplies of \$1,000. DPW Streetlights is reduced by \$22,000 to \$147,000 due to the town purchasing the streetlights and replacing them with LEDs. DPW Stormwater is level funded at \$92,360.

DPW Maintenance wages are increasing by \$16,233 or 5.3% and have a benefits reduction of \$11,020 or -8.9%. There is an increase in contract services of \$23,500 or 50.5%, mostly due to cleaning in the Town Offices. There is an increase in fire safety expenses of \$9,000 or 60% following the Department of Labor's audit. Overall expenses are increasing \$34,113 or 6.34%. The town buildings budget, which covers electricity, natural gas, building maintenance, water/sewer bills, is at \$320,632, a \$17,021 increase or 5.6%. Maintenance Projects is level-funded at \$100,000. DPW Garage has an increase in full time wages of \$2,590 or 1.5%, and an increase in benefits of \$12,687 or 11.6%. DPW Garage has an overall increase of \$14,997 or 5%.

In Welfare/Human Services, there is a part-time wages increase of \$6,868 for the first full year of the Welfare/Human Services Administrator position at 29 hours per week. Direct relief is increasing by \$25,000. Human Services agency funding is at \$100,000, an increase of \$1,675.

In the Parks and Recreation Department, Recreation has a wage/benefits increase of \$74,481 or 17%. The request includes a new Senior Coordinator position with an impact in FY25 of \$32,125. In Parks, wages are reduced by \$6,170 or -5.8%, and benefits are increasing 1%, mainly due to staff turnover. In Other Culture/Recreation, the Special Events budget has an increase of \$2,000 for fireworks due to inflation. The total FY25 budget is \$36,500.

For the Library, the budget has increased by \$95,945 or 8.1%. The total budget is \$1,281,634.

In General Fund Debt Service, there is a reduction of \$120,699, or 5.8%. The total budget is \$1,948,573. Projects include the Solar Array, Intersection Improvements Program, Westside Drive Design and Construction, the Library Renovation and Addition, the Epping Road Improvements and Water Tank, and the Lincoln Street Project Phase 1 and 2.

In General Government, there is an increase of \$30,000 to account for the fire protection fee. This is the General Fund portion of the fire suppression system, which is supported by the public water system. This fee was introduced last year. The General Fund vehicle replacement and leases budget is \$230,317, a reduction of \$18,178. The General Fund Town-Wide expenses includes worker's compensation, the health buyout, unemployment, and insurance. In FY25 it's \$591,130, an increase of \$62,696 or 11.9%.

The total General Fund budget is \$23,983,368, a 4.91% increase over FY24.

In General Fund Revenue, which includes motor vehicle registration fees, Meals & Rooms tax, building permits, blue bag fees, other Department income, investment income, the Highway Block Grant Aid, and the prior year's fund balance, the total revenues are \$8,843,004. The total taxes to be raised for FY25 are \$15,140,364, compared to \$14,066,720 in FY24.

If the operating budget is voted down, the default budget goes into effect. The FY25 default budget is \$23,441,313, which is \$542,055 less than the proposed budget. The Water Fund default is \$4,613,401, which is \$12,044 more than the FY24 budget. The Sewer Fund default is \$8,074,074, which is \$73,653 less than the proposed budget. The General Fund default budget is a 2.54% increase over the FY24 budget.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked if the presentation can be made available on the town's website. Mr. Dean said yes.

Mr. Papakonstantis said the Budget Recommendations Committee thoroughly vetted this budget. The version they recommended to the Select Board was slightly higher, but the Executive Team found further areas of cutbacks and got it down to a 4.91% increase. About a year ago, the Board was presented with a report from a consultant who looked at the organization and succession planning. We've been successful in implementing many of those recommendations with zero budget impact. The request for a Human Resources Manager in this budget will allow the Assistant Town Manager to work full time for the Town Manager. This is in service of our goal of retaining employees. Mr. Chartrand said the HR position is essential. There is a retention war among municipalities and it's caused us to lose folks and then have to rehire and retrain.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked for public comment.

Jeff Gitsi of 20 Chestnut Street asked regarding the list of revenues, are tax rates the figure that makes up the shortfall? Where do bonds and borrowing come into that? Mr. Dean said bonds are considered revenue in the year that we get the money, then are considered debt service after that. The revenues go into balancing the budget. We use those to set the tax rate in November. Mr. Chartrand said revenues have never covered our expenses. We've always had property taxes. Only 23% of taxes raised goes to the town; the rest goes to the schools, the county, and the State. We've done a good job of growing revenues to reduce the town's tax obligation.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to recommend Article 12, the 2025 Operating Budget, at \$23,983,368. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 13, Water Fund Operating Budget: *Shall the Town of Exeter raise and appropriate as a water operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling \$4,601,357. Should this article be defeated, the water default budget shall be \$4,613,401, which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments*

*required by previous action of the Town of Exeter or by law. Majority vote required.*

Mr. Dean said the Water Fund budget of \$4,601,357 is a decrease of \$361,417 or 7.28%. In Water Administration, there's a wages/benefits increase of \$57,391, a Consulting Services increase of \$3,250, and a property insurance increase of \$4,230. The overall budget for Administration is \$599,274. The Water Billing budget is \$222,970. Water Distribution, which includes personnel, system maintenance, natural gas and electric, and pump station maintenance, is \$930,425. The Water Treatment budget, which includes the Surface and Groundwater Treatment Plants, is \$1,148,821. In Debt Service, projects include the Epping Road Water Tank, the Salem Street Utilities Project, the Lary Lane Groundwater Plant, the Washington Street Water Line, the Groundwater Surface Water Assessment Bond, Groundwater Source Development, and Westside Drive Design and Construction. The total Debt Service budget is \$1,427,932. The Capital Outlay budget is \$271,935. The total Water Fund budget is \$4,601,357.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked for public comment, but there was none. He brought the discussion back to the Board.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to recommend Article 13, the 2025 Water Fund Budget, in the amount of \$4,601,357. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 14, Sewer Fund Operating Budget: *Shall the Town of Exeter raise and appropriate as a sewer operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling \$8,147,727. Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be \$8,074,074, which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Town of Exeter or by law. Majority vote required.*

Mr. Dean said Sewer Fund Administration is \$630,909. Sewer Billing is \$219,395. Sewer Collections is \$729,473. Sewer Treatment includes the operating and maintenance cost for the Sewer Treatment Facility, as well as 6 full-time operators. There was an equipment maintenance increase of \$30,000 but a reduction of \$3,000 for chemicals and a reduction in solids handling of \$25,000. The total Sewer Treatment budget is \$1,703,886. In Debt Service, the two major projects are the Wastewater Treatment Facility and the Siphons Project, and the budget is \$4,675,128. The Capital Outlay budget is paying the lease/purchase on the Vactor truck of two years ago. There's a new request for a fine bubble aeration blower repair and a 6,000 hour service for the centrifuge at \$50,000. The total Capital Outlay budget is \$188,936.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked for public comment, but there was none. He brought the discussion back to the Board.

Mr. Chartrand asked about the length of the Wastewater Treatment Facility bond. Mr. Dean said it was a 20 year bond that we got in 2019.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to recommend Article 14, Sewer Fund Operating Budget, in the amount of \$8,147,727. Mr. Chartrand seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 15, Collective Bargaining Agreement – SEIU Local 1984 and Town of Exeter:

*To see if the Town will vote to approve the cost items included in the three-year collective bargaining agreement reached between the Select Board and the SEIU (Service Employees International Union) Local 1984 covering Public Works and Administrative/Clerical employees, which calls for the following increased salaries and benefits at the current staffing levels: in FY25, \$68,068 from the Water/Sewer Fund and \$70,451 from the General Fund for a total of \$138,519; in FY26, \$93,597 from the Water/Sewer Fund and \$105,320 from the General Fund for a total of \$198,917; in FY27, \$61,403 from the Water/Sewer Fund and \$80,643 from the General Fund, for a total of \$142,046; and further, to raise and appropriate the sum of \$138,519 for the 2025 fiscal year, such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits over those of the appropriation at current staffing levels. The amounts raised will be \$70,451 through taxation (General Fund), and \$68,068 (Water/Sewer Funds) as offsetting revenue. The Estimated Tax Impact is \$0.02/1,000 or \$2.02/100,000 in assessed property value. Majority vote required.*

Mr. Papakonstantis asked for public comment, but there was none. He brought the discussion back to the Board.

Ms. Cowan said she knows that this took a lot of negotiation and she's inclined to support whatever the bargaining agreement was. Mr. Chartrand said there are agreements with all three unions and there were changes made to retain existing employees.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to recommend Article 15, Collective Bargaining Agreement – SEIU Local 1984 and Town of Exeter. Mr. Chartrand seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 16, Collective Bargaining Agreement – Exeter Police Association and Town of Exeter:

*To see if the Town will vote to approve the cost items included in the three-year collective bargaining agreement reached between the Select Board and the Exeter Police Association, which calls for the following increased salaries and benefits at the current staffing levels: in FY25, an estimated salary/benefits increase of \$133,009; in FY26, an estimated salary/benefits increase of \$225,370; in FY27, an estimated salary/benefits increase of \$128,120; and further, to raise and appropriate the sum of \$133,009 for the 2025 fiscal year, such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits over those of the appropriation at current staffing levels. (Estimated Tax Impact: \$0.038/1,000, \$3.82/100,000 assessed property value). Majority vote required.*

Mr. Papakonstantis asked for public comment, but there was none. He brought the discussion back to the Board.

Mr. Dean said we went through a process of negotiations with our Unions of negotiating wage adjustments to their scale, looking at outside communities and comparing them to our wage scale, and found that a lot of communities are paying more.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to recommend Article 16, Collective Bargaining Agreement – Exeter Police Association and Town of Exeter. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 17, Collective Bargaining Agreement – Exeter Professional Firefighters Association Local 3491 and Town of Exeter: *To see if the Town will vote to approve the cost items included in the three-year collective bargaining agreement reached between the Select Board and the Exeter Professional Firefighters Association Local 3491, which calls for the following increased salaries and benefits at the current staffing levels: in FY25, an estimated salary/benefits increase of \$158,248; in FY26, an estimated salary/benefits increase of \$207,857; and in FY27, an estimated salary/benefits increase of \$124,297; and further, to raise and appropriate the sum of \$158,248 for the 2025 fiscal year, such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits over those of the appropriation at current staffing levels. Estimated Tax Impact: \$0.045/1,000, \$4.54/100,000 assessed property value. Majority vote required.*

Mr. Papakonstantis asked for public comment, but there was none. He brought the discussion back to the Board.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to recommend Article 17, Collective Bargaining Agreement – Exeter Professional Firefighters Association Local 3491 and Town of Exeter. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 18, Replace Sidewalk Tractor #58: *To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to enter into a 5-year lease/purchase agreement for \$225,000 for the purpose of lease/purchasing a replacement for a sidewalk tractor in the Public Works Department, and to raise and appropriate the sum of \$56,250, which represents the first of 5 annual payments (a total of \$258,750) for this purpose. This lease/purchase will contain an escape (non-appropriation) clause. This sum to come from general taxation. Estimated Tax Impact: \$0.016/1,000, \$1.61/100,000 assessed property value. Majority vote is required.*

DPW Director Stephen Cronin said this is a 1991 trackless multi-tool tractor, the oldest of all of our tractors for sidewalk maintenance such as snow removal and sweeping. We've put a lot into repairing this over the last few years.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked for public comment, but there was none. He brought the discussion back to the Board.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to recommend Article 18, Replace Sidewalk Tractor #58 for \$225,000. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 19, Replace Dump Truck #33:

*To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to enter into a 5-year lease/purchase agreement for \$160,000 for the purpose of lease/purchasing a replacement for dump truck #33 in the Public Works Department, and to raise and appropriate the sum of forty-thousand dollars (\$40,000), which represents the first of 5 annual payments (a total of \$184,000) for this purpose. This lease/purchase will contain an escape (non-appropriation) clause. This sum to come from general taxation. Estimated Tax Impact: \$0.011/1,000, \$1.15/100,000 assessed property value. Majority vote required.*

DPW Director Stephen Cronin said this vehicle is a 2008 six-wheel dump truck that started originally in the Water Department and was shifted over to Highway. It's used on a daily basis and is part of our snow and ice operations. We're replacing this with a smaller platform truck that is more flexible and allows us to swap the type of equipment on the truck. It will have a plow. It won't require a commercial driver's license, which we've struggled with in terms of recruitment.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked for public comment, but there was none. He brought the discussion back to the Board.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to recommend Article 19, Replace Dump Truck #33, for \$160,000. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 20, Purchase ADA Accessible Van for Parks/Recreation:

*To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to enter into a 5-year lease/purchase agreement for \$120,000 for the purpose of lease/purchasing an ADA Accessible Van for the Parks/Recreation Department, and to raise and appropriate the sum of fifteen-thousand dollars (\$15,000), which represents the first of 5 annual general fund payments (a total of \$69,000) for this purpose. The total cost of the van will be shared with the Recreation Revolving Fund which will provide 50% funding or \$69,000 for this purchase over the 5-year lease/purchase. The total sum to be raised from taxation will be \$69,000. The total amount of the lease/purchase is estimated at \$138,000. This lease/purchase will contain an escape (non-appropriation) clause. This sum to come from general taxation and Recreation Revolving Funds. Estimated Tax Impact: \$0.004/1,000, \$0.43/100,000 assessed property value. Majority vote required.*

Assistant Parks and Rec Director David Tovey was present to speak about this article. He said we currently only have one 15 passenger van that we use for trips and events. We offer over 30 trips a year and we're adding to that. This van would allow us to offer trips to more people. It can accommodate people with mobility issues. We're moving into the new multigenerational center at 10 Hampton Road, and this could bring people down to participate in a program or luncheon. We would try to purchase a lightly-used vehicle, so hopefully that could save some money. We're looking to get a part-time Senior Coordinator and get the new building really busy during the day.

Barbara Desjardins, a member of the Senior Council, said the ADA van and Senior Coordinator are desperately needed. We need activities for our Seniors in Exeter. Programs now are limited because we don't have someone working part-time to develop interesting programs. Exeter is falling behind. Some people aren't able to go on any outings or can't get to the Senior Center because of their mobility issues.

Mr. Tovey said this van could be used for all ages.

Mr. Papakonstantis said when he ran for the Select Board, one of his platforms was to improve multi-generational activities. It would be exciting to have this vehicle available to anyone who needs it.

Mr. Dean said the \$15,000 is the first of 5 payments from the General Fund, which includes principal and interest. The Rec Revolving Fund is a non-appropriated fund, so not raised by Town Meeting.

Mr. Chartrand said the current van we own is not ADA accessible. Going forward, we'd have two vans, one of which is ADA accessible. This would increase the capacity of our trips.

Ms. Gilman said we still need to say we're raising and appropriating \$120,000 in the Article, according to statute. Ms. Belanger asked if they are able to buy one for less, would \$69,000 still come out of the Rec Revolving Fund? Mr. Dean said no, we'd redistribute the payments in a proportional way.

Ms. Belanger said this will help more Seniors participate in the programming we've worked so hard to offer.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to recommend Article 20, Purchase ADA Accessible Van for Parks/Recreation, for \$120,000. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 21, Public EV Charging Facility:  
*To see if the Town will raise and appropriate, through special warrant article, the sum of \$120,000 for the purpose of purchasing and installing 2 two-port Electric Vehicle chargers, which provides charging for 4 vehicles, to be located in the Downtown Municipal Lot. This project may qualify for a DOT Charging Fueling Infrastructure (CFI) Grant that provides an 80:20 grant match (federal:local) up to \$96,000. The Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for this grant is typically announced in May. Any additional grants obtained will offset the cost of the project. This appropriation will not take effect unless at least \$96,000 in grants is received, with the town's share of up to \$24,000 to come from the unassigned fund balance. Estimated Tax Impact: None. No amount to be raised by taxation. Majority vote required.*

Town Conservation and Sustainability Planner Kristen Murphy was present to discuss this article. She said the Energy Committee worked on vetting design proposals and moving this forward. They explored several locations. It needs to be very walkable to downtown, but we want to minimize impact to downtown parking. This is for 2 two-port chargers, which can charge up to 4 vehicles. It's \$120,000, but it's grant-dependent. The State applied for a Federal grant and was awarded that grant. This isn't guaranteed funding, but our project

has been vetted. The location is in the Water Street lot on the Bow Street end. The parking spots will be ADA-capable. The charging units will have safety bollards. We're pursuing removal of the parking island, which will give us two spaces, for a net loss of two spaces. These chargers have a 5-year warranty and a 5-year network service provided. We would have the ability to control what it costs users to use this space. There are currently 6 chargers in Exeter and 11 in Stratham, but the US DOE recommends 22 chargers for Exeter. This can also draw in people who don't live in Exeter to visit our town and the local businesses. The Energy Committee and Planning Department supports this because it supports movement away from fossil fuels. If there were a 10% utilization rate with a \$.35 KWh fee and a \$0.50 use fee, we would break even in 2 years and be cashflow-positive in year 3.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked for public comment, but there was none. He brought the discussion back to the Board.

Mr. Chartrand said he likes that it's contingent on getting the grant. It's a good way to present this to the public.

Ms. Belanger asked what would happen if people were parked in those spots beyond the charging time. Ms. Murphy said if their car is full and remains parked there, we can charge them a fee.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to recommend Article 21, Public EV Charging Facility, at \$120,000. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 22 – Appropriate to Sick Leave Trust Fund:

*To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$100,000 to be added to the Sick Leave Expendable Trust Fund previously established. This sum to come from the unassigned fund balance. Estimated Tax Impact: None. No amount to be raised by taxation. Majority vote required.*

Mr. Papakonstantis asked for public comment, but there was none. He brought the discussion back to the Board.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to recommend Article 22, Appropriate to Sick Leave Trust Fund, at \$100,000. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 23 – Appropriate to Capital Reserve Fund – Parks Improvements:

*To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$100,000 to be added to the Parks Improvement Capital Reserve Fund previously established. Estimated Tax Impact: \$0.028/1,000 assessed property value, \$2.84/100,000 assessed property value. Majority vote required.*

Mr. Papakonstantis asked for public comment, but there was none.

Parks and Rec Director Greg Bisson said this fund was established several years ago and has been essential in the revitalization of our Parks program. We still have a ways to go, as we have had a lot of deferred maintenance over the years.



Mr. Papakonstantis said the Budget Recommendations Committee recommended this at \$100,000.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to recommend Article 23, Appropriate to Capital Reserve Fund – Parks Improvements at \$100,000. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 24, Purchase Styrofoam Densifier Unit:  
*To see if the Town will raise and appropriate, through special warrant article, the sum of \$80,000, for the purpose of purchasing a Styrofoam densifier unit. This project is eligible for a \$50,000 grant through RecycleFoam.org with applications due in March/April. Any grants obtained will go to offset the cost of the project. This appropriation will not take effect unless \$50,000 in grants are received, with the Town's share of \$30,000 to come from unassigned fund balance. Estimated Tax Impact: None. No amount to be raised by taxation. Majority vote required.*

Mr. Papakonstantis asked for public comment, but there was none.

Town Conservation and Sustainability Planner Kristen Murphy was present to discuss this article. Ms. Murphy said this is a joint proposal between the Planning Department and the Sustainability Advisory Committee. This minimizes the waste added to our landfills and offers residents an option for styrofoam. There's a \$50,000 grant available for this, so the cost to the town would be \$30,000. It would extend the life of the Waste Management landfill in Rochester and would result in a hauling savings of \$3,000 year. We can also sell the “ingots” of condensed styrofoam. The Sustainability Committee held a trial recycling event and collected the equivalent of 75 blue bags' worth.

Mr. Chartrand, who attended the recycling event, said this is very exciting. The landfill is closing in 9 years and we don't know where our waste will go after that. This is low-hanging fruit to reduce our waste.

**MOTION:** Mr. Chartrand moved to recommend Article 24, Purchase Styrofoam Densifier Unit, at \$80,000. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 25, Appropriate to Non-Capital Reserve Fund – Snow and Ice Deficit:

*To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$75,000 to be added to the Snow and Ice Deficit Non-Capital Reserve Fund previously established. This sum to come from the unassigned fund balance. Estimated Tax Impact: None. No amount to be raised by taxation. Majority vote required.*

Mr. Papakonstantis asked for public comment, but there was none. He brought the discussion back to the Board.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to recommend Article 25, Appropriate to Non-Capital Reserve Fund Snow and Ice Deficit, at \$75,000. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 26 – Replace Fire Utility Truck:  
*To see if the Town will raise and appropriate, through special warrant article, the sum of \$71,355, for the purpose of purchasing a replacement for the Fire Department Utility Truck purchased in 2008. This vehicle is primarily used for*

*towing emergency and non-emergency trailers to incident scenes. It is also used to pick up used equipment after fire and other incidents. This sum to come from the unassigned fund balance. Estimated Tax Impact: None. No amount to be raised by taxation. Majority vote required.*

Fire Chief Justin Pizon was present to discuss this article. Chief Pizon said this truck is a multi-purpose daily driver. Right now it's got a plow on it. This will be replacing an F350 single cab with an F350 extended cab, which will allow us to get 5 individuals into that vehicle rather than 2. It's from 2008, which is pretty old.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked for public comment, but there was none. He brought the discussion back to the Board.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to recommend Article 26 – Replace Fire Utility Truck, at \$71,355. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 27 – Transfer Station Improvements: *To see if the Town will raise and appropriate, through special warrant article, the sum of \$50,000 for the purpose of making improvements to the Town transfer station. This sum to come from general taxation. Estimated Tax Impact: \$0.014/1,000, \$1.44/100,000 assessed property value. Majority vote required.*

DPW Director Stephen Cronin was present to discuss this article. He said this project was initiated by the Sustainability Advisory Committee with the full support of the DPW. This project would address safety, vehicle circulation, and efficiency of operations at the transfer station, as well as accommodate expanded recycling options. We initially requested \$100,000 but we can do the project without full paving of the site.

Mr. Chartrand said the ramp is currently a mild hazard. He would like to see some reorganization of the site. He was also hoping to have a better cover over the cardboard area. If the cardboard gets wet, it's not saleable.

**MOTION:** Mr. Chartrand moved to recommend Article 27, Transfer Station Improvements, at \$50,000. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 28 – Appropriate to Capital Reserve Fund – ADA Fund:

*To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$25,000 to be added to the ADA Non-Capital Reserve Fund previously established. Estimated Tax Impact: \$0.0072/1,000 assessed property value, \$0.72/\$100,000 assessed property value. Majority vote required.*

Mr. Papakonstantis asked for public comment, but there was none. He brought the discussion back to the Board.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to recommend Article 28 – Appropriate to Capital Reserve Fund – ADA Fund at \$25,000. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 29 – Sestercentennial Fund:

*To see if the Town will vote to establish a non-capital reserve fund under RSA 35:1-c, to be known as the Sestercentennial Fund, for the purpose of planning events and celebrations for the Sestercentennial of the United States of America, and to raise and appropriate the sum of five-thousand dollars (\$5,000) to be placed in this fund and further the Select Board shall be named agents of the fund and be authorized to make expenditures from the fund. Estimated Tax Impact: \$0.0014/1,000 assessed property value, \$0.14/\$100,000 assessed property value. Majority vote required.*

Ms. Gilman said the Sestercentennial Committee met for the first time today. This committee needs to have a brand or logo. The \$5,000 will get us up and running. We'll be soliciting donations that will offset the 2026 budget. The State set aside money to create a website that we can add to.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked for public comment, but there was none. He brought the discussion back to the Board.

**MOTION:** Ms. Gilman moved to recommend Article 29, Sestercentennial Fund, at \$5,000. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0. a

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 30 – Appropriate to Trust Fund – Swasey Parkway (\$3,750)

*To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$3,750 to be added to the Swasey Parkway Expendable Trust Fund previously established. This sum to come from unassigned fund balance. This amount is equivalent to the amount of permit fees collected during 2024 for use of the Swasey Parkway. Estimated Tax Impact: None. No amount to be raised by taxation. Majority vote required.*

Mr. Papakonstantis asked for public comment, but there was none. He brought the discussion back to the Board.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to recommend Article 30, Appropriate to Trust Fund – Swasey Parkway, at \$3,750. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 32, a Citizens Petition:

*On the petition of Gerry Hamel and other registered voters of the town of Exeter, NH, to see if the town shall vote to discontinue the Community Revitalization Tax Incentive Program (RSA 79E) adopted by the Town of Exeter in March 2014. The program was used to give tax incentives to owners and investors in certain districts to spur revitalization of property. With property values more than doubling in the past ten years and the lack of needing incentives to renovate, we feel the incentive program should be discontinued so that taxes on all future projects can be utilized by the town and citizens instead of investors.*

Gerry Hamel of 28 Newfields Road said in 2014 this was adopted by the town. We were coming out of a recession and the economic climate was moving slowly. This plan gave investors incentive to renovate buildings in town. Since then, the housing market has taken off like a rocket. The incentive has been there for the last few years without needing help from the town. Developers

would have done them anyway. This is detrimental to the town. One developer should be paying \$175,000 a year but is paying \$10-11,000. We're losing a lot of tax money. It's time for this to be taken off the books.

Mr. Chartrand said he agrees that it's time to retire this for now. If we were to bring this back, we might tie it more closely to a district that needs revitalization. He mentioned that the tax break is for a certain number of years, not in perpetuity.

Mr. Chartrand said that typically we don't recommend Citizens Petitions that don't have dollar amounts attached. Mr. Papakonstantis said if there's no money appropriated, we don't have to make a motion on it. Mr. Chartrand said he expects this will have broad support and he would vote yes on it. This was useful initially but is no longer needed.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked for public comment, but there was none. There was no further discussion from the Board.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 33, a Citizens Petition:

*By petition of Karishma Manzur and others, shall the town vote to call upon our Federal elected representatives to use the US Government's considerable influence to 1) support the safety and right to life of all people living in Israel and Palestine; 2) enforce US laws prohibiting weapons sales to countries that violate human rights, and 3) ensure the safe delivery of food and medical supplies to the people in Gaza? While many American struggle to live from paycheck to paycheck, many are homeless, children are going hungry, elderly people are unable to afford to heat their homes, and millions of Americans don't have health insurance, our government spent over \$90 million of New Hampshire tax money in 2024 to buy weapons for Israel. We want our government to spend our money to help ordinary Americans. As citizens, we are also concerned that our money and weapons are being used to make Gaza the most dangerous place in the world to be a child. The record of the vote approving this article shall be sent to Exeter's State and Federal representatives and the Governor of New Hampshire.*

Karishma Manzur of 6 Windemere Lane said as citizens, we can't bring forward Statewide ballot initiatives, so this is our only option to try to move our government in the right direction.

Mr. Papakonstantis said this came before the Select Board previously but fell outside our purview. At that time, we talked about your right as an SB2 citizen to do this and get your message out in this form. This will go on to Deliberative Session as written.

Ms. Manzur discussed reordering the Citizens Petitions she had submitted. Mr. Papakonstantis said he will read them in the initial order tonight and they will be changed for Deliberative Session.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 34, a Citizens Petition:

*By petition of Karishma Manzur and others, shall the town vote to call upon our Federal elected representatives to investigate the massive fraud and waste in the US Department of Defense, cut the vast \$900 billion defense budget, and use taxpayer funds to help ordinary Americans? While over 45 million Americans are struggling with hunger, billions of dollars will go to a few giant defense contractors that overcharge the US government and make enormous profits for their CEOs and shareholders. This is disgraceful. As citizens, we want our tax funds to help ordinary Americans. The record of the vote approving this article shall be sent to Exeter's State and Federal representatives and the Governor of New Hampshire.*

Resident Patricia Yosha said we may think because there is a ceasefire, this is no longer necessary, but everything in these articles is still going to be true. It's a very tenuous ceasefire.

Ms. Manzur said we could easily cut Pentagon spending by 15% or \$140 billion dollars and use it to support schools, renewable energy, universal pre-K, eliminate hunger worldwide, and end homelessness in the United States.

The public and the Board had no further comment.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 35, a Citizens Petition:

*By petition of Karishma Manzur and others, shall the town vote to authorize and direct the Exeter Select Board, our Governor, and State and Federal elected representatives to support a \$5,000 limit on contributions to political action committees (PACs) and super PACs that spend money to support or defeat candidates for office in New Hampshire? Democracy means that we elect our political leaders, and they represent us. As citizens, we are concerned that corporations and billionaires use money to make our elected officials do what they want, and most ordinary Americans do not have that power. The record of the vote approving this article shall be sent to Exeter's State and Federal representatives and the Governor of New Hampshire.*

Ms. Manzur said since the ruling on the Citizens United case, the campaign finance rules that had been in place for almost 100 years were negated, which has enabled the rise of dark money in politics. Super PACs can raise unlimited money from wealthy donors, and we have no way of knowing who those donors are. We must work together to protect fairness in the State's elections.

The public and the Board had no further comment.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 36, a Citizens Petition:

*By petition of Karishma Manzur and others, shall the town vote to call upon our Governor and State and Federal elected representatives to conserve and maintain New Hampshire's public natural resources for the benefit of this and future generations? As citizens, we recognize the fundamental right of people, plants, and animals to have clean air, pure water, and a healthy environment. We urge our State and Federal governments to ensure that our beautiful state*

*continues to have a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment upon which we all rely. The record of the vote approving this article shall be sent to Exeter's State and Federal representatives and the Governor of New Hampshire.*

Ms. Manzur said our State's Constitution does not guarantee us a healthy environment. We have no avenue to ask our government to protect our State.

The public and the Board had no further comment.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 36, a Citizens Petition:

*By petition of Karishma Mazur and others, shall the town vote to direct the Exeter Select Board, our Governor, and State elected representatives to disclose and divest all town and state pension funds and withdraw investments from weapons manufacturers that are profiting from gun violence? Every year, gun violence kills more than 40,000 people in America and wounds twice as many. Injury from firearms is now the leading cause of death for children and teens in America. Gun violence is costing our nation over \$557 billion in health care treatments and lost economic opportunity. The lost human potential cannot be measured. Put simply, America cannot afford gun violence. As citizens, we want to make the world safer for everyone, especially children. The record of the vote approving this article shall be sent to Exeter's State and Federal representatives and the Governor of New Hampshire.*

Ms. Manzur said in other communities, when citizens cannot make a difference, they have asked the government to divest pension funds. The New Hampshire retirement system is worth \$12 billion. Some of their investments are gun-free investments but we cannot find the information for some of the others. She described the varieties and causes of gun violence.

Another resident said with these articles, we hope to send a signal to our elected representatives that these are important topics for a lot of people.

The public and the Board had no further comment.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to close the public hearing of the 2025 Operating Budget. Mr. Chartrand seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis read the notice of public hearing:

*Pursuant to New Hampshire RSA 162-K:4, the Exeter Select Board hereby gives notice that they will hold a public hearing on the proposed amendment to the existing Epping Road Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Plan as part of the Epping Road Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District, which was approved in 2015. Copies of the amended plan are available at the Town Clerk's Office, 10 Front Street, Exeter, NH. The hearing will be held on Tuesday, January 21st, 2025, commencing at 7 PM in the Exeter Town Offices, 10 Front Street. Dated January 8, 2025.*

**MOTION:** Mr. Chartrand moved to open the public hearing. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis read Article 31, TIF Amendment - Amend Financing Plan:

*To see if the Town will adopt the provisions of the Epping Road Tax Increment District Financing Plan Amendment, dated January 6, 2025, in accordance with RSA 162-K:9 IV which allocates the use of tax increments for retirement of bonds and notes as outlined in the plan amendment. The plan amendment includes three capital projects in the Epping Road TIF District. Epping Road Widening phase 2 - estimated cost \$880,000; Industrial Drive/Commerce Way Paving - estimated cost \$180,000; and Water/Sewer improvements south of the Continental Drive traffic light - estimated cost \$850,000. Estimated tax impact: none. No amount to be raised by taxation. Majority vote required.*

Town Economic Development Director Darren Winham was present to discuss this article. Mr. Winham said in 2015 Exeter adopted a tax increment financing plan to encourage development on the Epping Road Corridor. Our first order of business was to install water/sewer that goes up to the bridge and a road that would go from Ray Farmstead Road to its conclusion in map 20, lot 12. The 2018 TIF was to put a traffic light on Continental Drive, and we realized that we didn't need water/sewer/gas on the other side of the highway, so we pulled that back. In 2020, we thought we may need a center turn lane, so we asked the voters to approve us to do the corridor study and then do the work. Then Covid hit, and by the time we were able to come back to the project, we were \$800,000 short. This would be to complete the road widening and sidewalk. None of this money is money we have to borrow, it's already sitting in an account. We have \$8.2M in the fund now. The second project is a paving project. DPW expects to pave these roads in summer 2025 at a cost of \$180,000. The third project is to replace a section of water piping that's 8 inches where the rest of the piping in the area is 12 inches. This will ensure the highest water pressure is being delivered to corridor businesses. When he wrote the TIF in 2015, he estimated that we could create \$130M in new taxable property. We've created \$160M dollars of taxable property, and there's more under construction. We're going miles beyond where we thought we would go.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked for public comment, but there was none. He brought the discussion back to the Board.

Mr. Chartrand said when this TIF is wrapped up, there will be a significant amount of property added to the tax base which will relieve owners of some tax obligation. The success has gone wildly beyond what we expected. He is in favor of this article.

**MOTION:** Mr. Chartrand moved to recommend Article 31, TIF Amendment - Amend Financing Plan. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to close the public hearing on the proposed amendment to the Epping Road TIF plan. Mr. Chartrand seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Town Moderator Kate Miller said Deliberative Session is coming up on February 1st at the High School at 9 AM. We'll go through anything that people want to talk about. We'll try to keep the conversation brisk.

Mr. Chartrand said this is not the only session that Attorney Miller moderates. Attorney Miller said she is also the Cooperative School District Moderator. That session is on February 5th at 6 PM. Christopher Hillson is the moderator for Exeter School District. Voting is March 11. Ms. Belanger said that residents should attend the Deliberative Session early to check in.

Ms. Cowan asked if HB-1569, the documentary proof of citizenship requirement, is in effect for Deliberative Session? Attorney Miller said there is not an opportunity to register at Deliberative Session. You have to be a registered voter or register in advance. For registration, there are higher requirements for documents than there used to be. Ms. Belanger said today was the last day to register for Deliberative Session.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked if by Monday of next week, Select Board members can email him which articles they wish to speak to, so he can get it to the Moderator before Deliberative Session.

## 6. Regular Business

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

**MOTION:** Ms. Gilman moved to approve a Solar Exemption for 94/1 in the amount of \$1,000 for tax year 2025. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**MOTION:** Ms. Gilman moved to approve a Solar Exemption for 101/8/4 in the amount of \$14,000 for tax year 2025. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**MOTION:** Ms. Gilman moved to approve a Veterans Credit for 87/18/03 in the amount of \$500 for tax year 2025. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**MOTION:** Ms. Gilman moved to approve a Veterans Credit for 18/4/4 in the amount of \$500 for tax year 2025. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

### b. Permits & Approvals

- i. There were no permits or approvals considered.

### c. Town Manager's Report

- i. Bill Keegan visited the town last week.
- ii. He attended the Tax Exemption and Credit Advisory meeting, and there was a spirited discussion on the elderly exemption and veterans credits.
- iii. He thanked Public Works for the last two days of snow removal.
- iv. This week he'll be working on explanatory information coming out of tonight's hearing so the warrant will be ready to be posted on Monday.
- v. Ms. Belanger asked why EXTV didn't televise the tax committee. Mr. Dean said there was a camera in the room. He'll check in with them.

### d. Select Board Committee Reports

- i. Ms. Belanger had no report.



- ii. Ms. Gilman said she attended the Tax Exemption and Credits committee meeting. The first step is to start with elderly exemptions because they use more money and there are questions about the extent of proof needed to receive that exemption. We want to look at income limits, asset limits, and amounts. The Energy Committee is continuing with building the window inserts. She asked Mr. Dean that when we print the warrant for Deliberative Session, we space it so that the title of the article is associated with the body of the article. Mr. Chartrand asked if the “trust but verify” approach on elderly exemptions had any pushback from members. Ms. Gilman said no.
- iii. Ms. Cowan had no report.
- iv. Mr. Chartrand attended the Conservation Commission meeting, where they discussed the 76 Portsmouth Ave proposal. They were looking at recommending denial but the applicants asked them to hold so they could revise the proposal. He also attended with the Train Committee and informed them that we want to convert that into a town committee. Mr. Hall, who is a vital part of the committee, is not a citizen of Exeter; he’s a citizen of Kensington, but we would like him included as an ad-hoc member. Mr. Dean said we can find a way to do that.
- v. Mr. Papakonstantis said he went with the Town Manager and Assistant Town Manager to Riverwoods to discuss potential warrant articles and other issues. They asked a lot of good questions. He also attended a short Swasey Parkway Trustees meeting where we went over plans for 2025. Each of the members owns pickup trucks and reported that they were able to drive into the Parkway and maneuver with ease. They’re happy with the response from most members of the public. They’re planning to put some “no dogs” signs on the Newfields Road end and talk with Highway about putting up speed limit signs. He also attended the Pairpoint Park Committee meeting and went through a presentation on the input they received from folks. 900 people responded to the survey.

e. Correspondence

- i. An effort by Comcast to expand Broadband opportunities in some NH towns. Mr. Papakonstantis said he could sign this on behalf of the Board.

**MOTION:** Mr. Chartrand moved to instruct the Chair to sign the letter to Comcast. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

- ii. The NHMA Legislative Bulletin
- iii. A letter from resident Ryan O’Brien on a proposed zoning ordinance amendment. Mr. Papakonstantis and Mr. Sharples have spoken with him. Mr. O’Brien, who was present, asked when he could revisit this with the Board. Mr. Chartrand said he should work with the Planning Board. Mr. Dean said the Planning Board sponsors zoning amendments. They have their own public hearing process. If they vote to recommend it,

it goes on to the warrant. Mr. O'Brien said it's hard to find dates on the website associated with these hearings. He understands that he was too late to affect this year's voting.

7. Review Board Calendar

The next meetings are February 3rd, Tuesday February 18, March 3, and March 17. February 1st is Deliberative Session and Town Election is March 11.

8. Non-Public Session

- a. There was no non-public session at this time.

9. Adjournment

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0 and the meeting was adjourned at 10:39 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Joanna Bartell  
Recording Secretary