

Select Board Meeting
Monday January 13, 2025
6:00 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, Town Manager Russ Dean, Assistant Town Manager Melissa Roy, and Finance Director Corey Stevens were present at this meeting. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Papakonstantis at 6 PM.

2. Non Public Session

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to enter into non-public session under RSA 91-A3:II(a) and (I). Ms. Gilman seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0, and the meeting went into non-public at 6 PM.

The Board reconvened in the Nowak Room at 7:05 PM.

3. Bid Award

a. 2025 Chemical Bid Award

Mr. Papakonstantis said Mr. Dalton of the Water and Sewer Department has made recommendations on the bid awards.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to award bid item 1, Sodium Hypochlorite, to Univar Solutions in Morrisville PA at \$2.0310 per gallon; to award bid item 2, Activated Carbon, to Carbon Activated Corporation in Compton CA at \$1.3500 per pound; to award bid item 3, Potassium Permanganate, to Shannon Chemical Corporation of Malvern PA at \$2.33 per pound; and to award bid item 4, Sodium Hydroxide, to Borden & Remington of Fall River MA at \$1.4510 per gallon. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

4. Public Comment

a. There was no public comment at this time.

5. Proclamations/Recognitions

a. There were no proclamations/recognitions.

6. Approval of Minutes

a. Regular Meeting: January 6, 2025

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to approve the Select Board meeting minutes of January 6, 2025, as presented. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

7. Appointments

a. There were no appointments made at this meeting.

8. Discussion/Action Items

a. Collective Bargaining Cost Items

Mr. Dean said we reached an agreement with three of our unions. The ratification vote for one of them is scheduled for tomorrow. There is a cost agreement in the packet. The SEIU Local agreement for Public Works and Water/Sewer employees comes out of the General Fund at \$73,451 and from the Water/Sewer Fund at \$68,068 in the first year of the 3 year agreement. That total of \$138,519 is needed to fund the first year over and above the current wage levels. The Police are represented by the Teamsters, and will be funded at \$133,009 in the first year of the 3 year agreement. They are voting tomorrow to ratify the agreement. We checked with Legal and that order of operations is ok. In the Fire Department, the first year is funded at \$158,248.

Mr. Papakonstantis said FY26 is a full year of funding, which is a substantial increase. Mr. Stevens said the first year is front-loaded with increases to get them up to market rate. The first year is only July - December. In the second year, we see the second half of the front-loading. In year 3, it's dropping down to a 4% increase.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked if we are moving away from staggering the agreements. Mr. Dean said yes, each union asked for a 3 year agreement so they're on the same cycle.

Mr. Papakonstantis said these increases reflect the market right now. We're trying to keep our wages in line with other towns in NH and ensure that our employees aren't poached. When you look at market rate, these agreements are fair for both sides. Mr. Dean said the bargaining team agreed with that statement.

b. TIF Update

Economic Development Director Darren Winham was present to discuss the TIF update. Mr. Winham said the Epping Road widening project is underway, but we need additional funding to finish that off. We're proposing road improvements between Continental Drive and Cronin Road at \$800,000; Industrial Drive and Commerce Way paving at \$180,000; and a water pipe upgrade on Epping Road at \$500 per foot for engineering and construction, or \$850,000.

Mr. Chartrand said there were previously two projects. Mr. Winham said he proposed four but it's down to three. These were all discussed previously. The first project was already approved but we need more funding. Ms. Belanger said the memo of December 23 doesn't include the \$850,000 for the water project. Mr. Winham said at the time he didn't have a cost estimate for this project. Ms. Belanger asked where these figures came from; Mr. Winham said they are DPW estimates.

Mr. Dean presented a warrant article, which would be on the town warrant, which covers the use of the proceeds from the TIF.

Mr. Chartrand said the proposed TIF amendment was not included in the draft warrant. Mr. Dean said that's correct, we're discussing tonight whether to

move forward. Mr. Chartrand said he would like to see more details in the article. Transparency is important.

Mr. Papakonstantis read the legal notice of public hearing per RSA 162K:4:

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 7:00 p.m. at the Exeter Town Offices, 10 Front Street. Dated: January 8th, 2025.

c. FY25 Budget and Warrant Articles

Mr. Papakonstantis asked where the TIF amendment would fit into the warrant. Mr. Dean said it would be Article 31.

Mr. Chartrand said regarding Article 24, the BRC recommended that we only spend \$30,000 if we got a \$50,000 grant for the styrofoam recycling equipment. Should it be listed as \$80,000 or \$30,000? Mr. Papakonstantis said it needs to show the full cost but we could add more details. Mr. Dean said he can add language that the final cost will be \$30,000 after the grant.

Ms. Gilman said regarding the styrofoam recycling unit, we're also raising funds for transfer station improvements. Mr. Chartrand said the improvements would dovetail with creating space for the styrofoam recycling.

Mr. Chartrand said the article regarding the EV Charging Facility, Article 21, doesn't make clear how much will come from unassigned fund balance.

Mr. Papakonstantis said the language of the articles should be as easy to understand as possible, given the legal requirements. Ms. Belanger said that voters want a bottom line number. Mr. Dean said he will work with Kristin Murphy on the numbers associated with the various grants.

Mr. Dean said regarding Article 31 [not the TIF amendment], the expendable trust proposal, we received advice from Legal Counsel that setting up a Trust may not be in our best interest. Mr. Stevens said he met with the Pairpoint Park committee to talk about raising donations towards that project. We talked about creating an expendable Trust Fund to house donations. We put together an article, but Legal Counsel gave feedback that it would be overkill. In 1994, the town voted to allow the Select Board to accept donations and take those funds and give them to the Trustee of Trust Funds until they are used. Unless the town were going to raise and appropriate money for it, an Expendable Trust Fund would not be appropriate. Therefore, we don't need Article 31. The committee could collect several donations and come before the Board with a list.

Mr. Dean said regarding Article 4, Pickpocket Dam removal, \$2.1M is the current estimate provided by Public Works for this project. This does not include

the grants that would offset this project. He will work on this to give a better idea of the costs.

Mr. Dean said Articles 8, 9, and 10 are seeking authorization to use excess bond proceeds. The projects are closed, but the money hasn't been spent. By a $\frac{3}{5}$ ballots vote, we can reassign the proceeds to a different project. Mr. Papakonstantis said the BRC concurred with the use of \$1M here for these three projects. Last year at Deliberative Session, there was some confusion on this, so we want to communicate that the BRC concurred and we want to explain the "why," both next week and at the Deliberative Session.

Mr. Dean said regarding the article on the ADA accessible van, Article 20, this would be a 5 year lease purchase. We're only raising and appropriating \$15,000; the other 50% would come from the Rec Revolving Fund. Ms. Belanger asked if it would be on the warrant each of the 5 years, and Mr. Dean said no, it becomes part of the budget once it's approved.

Mr. Chartrand asked if any Citizens' Petitions have come in. Mr. Dean said he has not received any yet. The deadline is tomorrow at 5 PM.

Mr. Papakonstantis said he spoke with the Town Moderator and she said the Board need not speak to each article. They discussed which member would speak about which article.

Ms. Belanger said we may want to increase our Legal budget from the current \$100,000. Mr. Dean said there was additional cost this year due to the negotiations process. Labor Counsel was \$12-15,000.

9. Regular Business

- a. Tax Abatements, Veterans Credits and Exemptions
 - i. There were no abatement requests considered.
- b. Permits & Approvals
 - i. There were no permits or approvals considered.
- c. Town Manager's Report
 - i. We had a State evaluation of the November wildfire. The review provided positive feedback on the efforts of the Exeter Fire Department.
 - ii. The Union Leader wrote a story on Drew Martin, a Captain of the FD who had worked on wildfires in California.
 - iii. The E911 Meeting Place numbering issue will come back to the Board after the March elections.
 - iv. New Dispatcher Melissa Eckerson started today.
 - v. There was a "secure campus" situation at EHS, and our PD responded.
 - vi. Parks and Rec had their Senior Luncheon on Friday
 - vii. Highway picked up Christmas Trees last week. If residents were missed, please let us know.
 - viii. Dave Sharples talked with DES, who will meet with the town representatives and the Exeter Sportsman's Club.
 - ix. We signed an MOU with UNH to create a business retention and expansion program for the town.

- x. He attended a Housing Advisory Committee meeting last week, where they talked about short term rentals.

d. Select Board Committee Reports

- i. Ms. Belanger attended a Planning Board sitewalk, which was very well attended. The 76 Portsmouth Ave application hearing is scheduled for next Thursday. At the last meeting we discussed a proposed short-term rental zoning change in the C1 Commercial and WC Waterfront Commercial districts. The Housing Advisory Committee tabled their discussion on 79E until May.
- ii. Ms. Gilman said she missed an Energy Committee meeting. The Community Build for the window dressers is coming up January 17th-22nd at Town Hall.
- iii. Ms. Cowan had no report.
- iv. Mr. Chartrand attended a Sustainability Advisory Committee meeting. Chris Zigmont needs to step down as Chair but would like to continue to serve as a member. We're hoping to have a replacement at the February meeting.
- v. Mr. Papakonstantis had no report. He will go to RiverWoods tomorrow to give a presentation on the Board's work over the last year.

e. Correspondence

- i. An NHMA bulletin

10. Review Board Calendar

- a. The next meetings are Tuesday January 21, February 3, Tuesday Feb 18, March 3, and March 17. Deliberative Session is February 1, and Town Election is March 11.

11. Non-Public Session

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

12. Adjournment

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Cowan seconded. The motion passed 5-0 and the meeting was adjourned at 8:09 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanna Bartell
Recording Secretary