

SELECT BOARD MEETING
Monday, March 24, 2025
4:00 pm
Nowak Room, Town Offices
10 Front Street, Exeter, NH 03833

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<https://www.exeternh.gov/townmanager/virtual-town-meetings>
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AGENDA

1. Call Meeting to Order
2. Public Comment
3. Approval of Minutes
 - a. Regular Meeting: March 3, 2025
4. Review Board Calendar
5. Non-Public Session RSA 91-A:3 II (a) (c)
6. Adjournment

Niko Papakonstantis, Chair
Select Board

Posted 3/20/25 Town Office, Town Website

Persons may request an accommodation for a disabling condition in order to attend this meeting. It is asked that such requests be made with 72 hours notice.

AGENDA SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Select Board Meeting
Monday March 3, 2025
6:10 PM
Nowak Room, Town Offices
Final Minutes

1. Call Meeting to Order

Members present: Chair Niko Papakonstantis, Clerk Julie Gilman, Dan Chartrand, Nancy Belanger, and Town Manager Russ Dean were present at this meeting. Vice-Chair Molly Cowan was present remotely via Zoom. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Papakonstantis at 6:10 PM.

2. Non-Public Session

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to enter into non-public session under RSA 91-A3II(I). Ms. Gilman seconded. In a roll call vote, Ms. Gilman, Ms. Belanger, Mr. Chartrand, and Mr. Papakonstantis voted aye. Ms. Cowan was not yet present. The motion passed 4-0.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to adjourn from non-public session. Ms. Gilman seconded. By roll call vote, the Board adjourned non-public session with a vote 4-0.

MOTION: Mr. Chartrand moved to seal the non-public session minutes indefinitely. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 4-0 via roll call vote.

The Board emerged from non-public session at 6:35 pm to return to the public meeting.

3. Board Interviews

- a. David Kovar for the Communications Advisory Committee
- b. Patricia Scott-Hall for the Exeter Housing Authority
- c. Verity Boyer for the Historic District Commission

The Board reconvened in the Nowak Room at 7 PM. Vice Chair Molly Cowan, who was present remotely via Zoom, stated that she was unable to attend the meeting in person and was alone in the room.

4. Public Comment

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

5. Proclamations/Recognitions

- a. There were no proclamations/recognitions at this time.

6. Approval of Minutes

- a. Regular Meeting: February 18, 2025
Corrections: Ms. Belanger said that on page 3, she wanted to clarify that she was hoping that we could have public plays. On page 6, under Select Board

Committee reports, the Planning Board's Riverwoods decision did not have a condition of approval. It's a Select Board decision about speed bumps and signs, so the suggestion about having "no parking" signs on Pickpocket Road is going to come before the Board.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to approve the Select Board minutes of February 18, 2025 as amended. Ms. Gilman seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0.

7. Appointments and Resignations

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to appoint David Kovar to the Communications Committee, term to expire April 2026. Ms. Gilman seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to appoint Verity Boyer as a regular member of the Historic District Commission, term to expire April 2025. Ms. Gilman seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to appoint Karen Prior to the 250th Celebration Commission. Ms. Gilman seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to accept the resignation of Mary-Paige Provost from the Arts & Culture Advisory Commission. Ms. Gilman seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0.

8. Discussion/Action Items

a. Surface Water Treatment Plant Preliminary Design Contract

Public Works Director Stephen Cronin was present to request that the Board approve a contract for \$325,000 for professional engineering services for a surface water treatment plant with AECOM. He said the existing plant dates to the 1800s. The most recent update was 2019 to meet regulations for disinfection byproducts. Our staff has been able to keep it operational, but it's well past its intended design life. The voters approved \$500,000 in 2004 to begin the process of replacement. In September 2024, we issued an RFQ for design services. Five firms attended a pre-proposal meeting but we only received one proposal by the October 17 deadline. We put together a review committee to ensure it met minimum requirements, and it did. We moved to an in-person interview and felt strongly that AECOM were the right firm for us. We have decided to move forward with only the first two phases of the proposal to better understand the yield of the surface water supplies, which will determine the sizing of the plant. This includes a pilot study in two different seasons to evaluate the best treatment technology for Exeter's water quality.

Mr. Chartrand said there was only one firm that offered qualifications. Is everyone maxed out? Mr. Cronin said that surface water treatment plant design is fairly specialized. We were looking for a firm that had designed several plants over the last decade. There wasn't a lot of capacity among qualified firms. Ms. Gilman said Underwood Engineers is going to be working with AECOM. Mr. Cronin said yes, they will be subcontractors.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to approve a contract with AECOM in the amount of \$325,000 for professional engineering services for preliminary design of the surface water treatment plant, and to further authorize the Town Manager or their designee to sign the contract documents. Ms. Gilman seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0.

b. Donation Policy

Finance Director Corey Stevens was present to discuss a proposed donation policy. Mr. Stevens said he met with the Pairpoint Park Committee on their fundraising efforts, which got him thinking about what our donation policy is. We don't have anything formal on paper. He put together a proposed policy, working with Town Administration. It doesn't do a lot more than what we're already doing, it just formalizes it. The process is that a town Department Head vets a donation proposal. Their recommendation is forwarded to the Select Board, which has the sole authority to approve or deny a donation. If approved, the Department Head will work with the donor on any acknowledgement.

Ms. Belanger said the topic of donations came up at the Arts & Culture Committee. Having this in writing will help all of our Boards and Committees.

Mr. Papakonstantis said it was very helpful for Mr. Stevens to sit down with the Pairpoint Park Committee on fundraising. To have something memorialized in writing is great.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to adopt the proposed donation and gift policy #2025-01, effective March 3, 2025. Ms. Gilman seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0.

c. TIF Advisory Board

Town Manager Russ Dean discussed updates to the TIF Advisory Board. The District Administrator, who in this case is the Town Manager, shall provide quarterly reports to the governing body. This is a five-member advisory board. The Public Works Director and Town Planner may attend as needed. The conflict provision, which in the statute RSA 162K, says whenever the Advisory Board and the District Administrator are in conflict or have activity related to the TIF district financing plan it would come before the Board. Mr. Chartrand asked what wouldn't be included in that. Mr. Dean said it means that everything that impacts the plan would need to come to the Board. The conflict provision needs to be in there per the RSA. Ms. Belanger said she doesn't think it's clear that the Select Board would weigh in on all the decisions. This only says conflicts. Mr. Dean asked for suggestions on language. The Board said they would like legal counsel to weigh in on the wording. Ms. Belanger asked that any new and updated language be highlighted in future drafts.

a. Rider Conservation Project [Permits and Approvals]

Kristin Murphy and Kaitlin Deyo from Southeast Land Trust, the project lead for Rider Conservation Project, were present to discuss the Rider Conservation Project. Ms. Murphy said this is a property off of Powder Mill Road,

a beautiful and scenic property with a dramatic water course, supportive wetlands, and supportive woodlands. This has risen to the top of priority properties in the Exeter Conservation Natural Resource Inventory. For NH Fish and Game, it contains the highest rated habitat of the state and the biological region. This project includes land in three communities. This deed is a document that has met the needs of grantors and the towns. Each town's Conservation Commission, as well as our Legal Counsel, has reviewed it. The land interest that is being presented is a conservation easement held by SELT. The responsibility for monitoring and landowner communication will be on SELT. We would retain executory interest on the portion of land in our town, which is 21 acres out of 156 acres. This property had a gravel extraction effort, and the property owner was looking to establish an agricultural field, so it's becoming an open agricultural field.

Ms. Deyo said Kensington and East Kingston signed today. We have another interest in the deed, the Drinking Water Groundwater Trust fund. They gave \$500,000, their maximum, because they recognize the drinking water importance of this property. Ms. Murphy said some terms in the deed are unusual. They are related to groundwater extraction. Steve Cronin reviewed this and was ok with it.

Ms. Gilman asked whether there will be public trails. Ms. Murphy said no, the intent of the property owner is to have it be private. Ms. Belanger asked if there are trails in the other towns. Ms. Deyo said no, there is an abutting property with trails but this property doesn't have public access rights.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to authorize the Select Board to sign the final conservation deed for the Rider property on Powder Mill Road, tax map 113, lots 3 and 5. Ms. Gilman seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0.

Ms. Cowan left the meeting at this time.

2. Regular Business

a. Tax Abatements, Veterans Credits and Exemptions

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to deny an elderly exemption for 72/91 for tax year 2025. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to approve an Elderly Exemption for 104/70/322 and 95/64/342 in the amount of \$152,251 for tax year 2025. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to approve an Elderly Exemption for 103/13/2 and 95/64/281 in the amount of \$183,751 for tax year 2025. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

Ms. Gilman did not read the Disability Exemptions due to a discrepancy in the packet.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to approve a Veterans Credit for 72/91 and 68/6/344 in the amount of \$500 for tax year 2025. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to approve an abatement for 72/58 in the amount of \$405.61 for tax year 2024. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to approve an abatement for 63/41/2 in the amount of \$2,067.20 for tax year 2024. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to approve a Solar Exemption for 24/2 in the amount of \$14,000 for tax year 2025. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

b. Permits & Approvals

i. Rider Conservation Project

This item was discussed above.

ii. Citizen Awards – Letters of Support – Julie Gilman

Ms. Gilman said every year the NH State Commission on Aging has an award for the 2025 older adult volunteer. Our Heritage Commission Chair recommended we send in this application for Pam Gjettum, who has been a volunteer for 47 years. This would require the Select Board Chair to sign.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to forward the application for the NH State Commission on Aging, which in 2025 has an award for an older adult volunteer, in the name of Pam Gjettum. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

Ms. Gilman said we'd like to nominate John Merkel of the Heritage Commission for the NH Preservation Alliance Award. He established the Commission in 2005 and has been on it since.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to authorize the Select Board to sign a letter of support for the nomination of John Merkel for the NHPA's 2025 Annual Preservation Achievement Award. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

c. Town Manager's Report

i. Mr. Dean said he was on vacation Feb 19 - 25.

ii. He went to RiverWoods February 27 for warrant night, which was very successful.

iii. The Bike and Pedestrian Plan has been finalized and will come before the Board in April.

iv. Andy Swanson, IT Coordinator, is having a retirement party on Friday at Town Hall.

v. There's a meeting tomorrow regarding financing for the Police Station/Fire Substation.

vi. There's a bill on risk pools being discussed in Senate Finance committee tomorrow which proposes that any reserve deficiencies be made up by assessments to communities. This is a problem for many towns. It would impact Primex and Health Insurance.

- vii. The Kingston Road project \$425,000 grant came in last week. That was a State grant that was initially through the Federal Government.
- viii. Town Election is March 11.

d. Select Board Committee Reports

- i. Ms. Belanger had meetings cancelled for Rec Advisory and Arts & Culture. The Arts & Culture committee voted to move Kelsey Dumville from an alternate to a full member, what's the process for that? Mr. Dean said the Select Board has to appoint the person. Ms. Belanger said she will reach out to Scott [Ruffner] to let him know. At the Planning Board meeting, the Willey Creek Company asked for a continuance to April 24. There was a continued public hearing on Green Company, the MUND project at 76 Portsmouth Ave which affects the Jady Hill neighborhood. 112 Front Street is an ongoing application. There was public comment/concern about speed limits and speed bumps.
- ii. Ms. Gilman attended the Heritage Commission meeting. In addition to the nominations discussed, we thought about how to support the Historical Society and maybe work together. The two groups are often confused. We want to do a neighborhood meeting or presentation for the Pine and Elliot Street survey we did a few months ago.
- iii. Mr. Chartrand attended an informal train station group meeting, where we worked on paving the way for a permanent committee. Don Briselden presented a revised timeline. Mr. Chartrand attended Hope Godino's retirement party and the DPW thank you at Town Hall. He was able to thank some of the DPW members but a lot were too shy to show up. We need to get them to a place where they are celebrated alongside our Police and Fire Departments. He attended a Facilities Advisory Committee meeting where they continue to get ready for a space needs assessment exercise in April. They heard updates on Public Safety and 10 Hampton Road from the Town Planner.
- iv. Mr. Papakonstantis attended a Pairpoint Park Committee meeting in the Wheelwright Room that had too many members to collaborate effectively. They hope to come before the Select Board in June with recommendations aligned with the budget cycle. He attended the RiverWoods forum on the warrant articles, which was well-attended. He recognized Andy Swanson who is retiring.

e. Correspondence

- i. Mr. Dean said letter in the packet on water and sewer service to 13 and 15 Stoneybrook Lane in Stratham. The request was made through the Water and Sewer Agreement with the town of Stratham to consider service to that development. The Stratham Town Administrator said the project hasn't reached the Planning Board there yet. We'd need to know what kind of development it would be to know if we could handle it. Mr.

Chartrand asked if it's a dense development. Mr. Dean said nothing's been presented yet, but it's likely to be dense. Mr. Chartrand said years ago we were considering supporting the business strip of Stratham. Mr. Dean said these days we're more guarded these days based on drought conditions. If the groundwater project on Drinkwater Road is successful, we may be able to loosen that up. Mr. Chartrand said if we do have the capacity, we want more customers to spread the costs out. Scale would help us in general. Mr. Dean said there are two sides, with both water and sewer. The site has some natural limitations on water. Mr. Papakonstantis asked if we should respond in writing. Mr. Dean said yes. The Board delegated the writing of that letter to the Town Manager.

- ii. Mr. Papakonstantis said resident on Newfields Road, with whom he has communicated. Chief Poulin and Devin West are also gathering data.
- iii. Letter from DRA with USPAP report. Mr. Dean said this is part of the revaluation process. The DRA audits our revaluation. USPAP is a review of whether we are within the guidelines of professional appraisal practice.
- iv. An NHMA Legislative Bulletin

9. Review Board Calendar

- a. The Town Election is March 11. The next meetings are March 17, March 31, April 14, and April 28.

10. Non-Public Session

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to enter into non-public 91 A 3II(a). Ms. Gilman seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 4-0. The meeting entered non-public at 8:03 PM.

11. Adjournment. The Board emerged from non public session. Mr. Chartrand moved to seal the minutes indefinitely. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion carried. Ms. Belanger moved to adjourn. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion carried. The Board stood adjourned at 9:05 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanna Bartell
Recording Secretary