



TOWN OF STRATHAM

INCORPORATED 1716

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COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE AGENDA

May 29, 2026

1:00 PM

**Stratham Municipal Center, Hutton Room
10 Bunker Hill Ave, Stratham, NH 03885**

- I. Call to order
- II. Roll Call
- III. Consideration of May 15, 2026 Minutes
- IV. Review "quick fixes"
- V. Community Feedback sessions
- VI. Next meeting date
- VII. Public Comment
- VIII. Adjournment

The Communications and Community Engagement Committee reserves the right to take up business in any order deemed appropriate by the Chair. A motion to enter Non-Public Session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3 may occur at any time during the meeting.

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE May 15, 2026

COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

MEMBERS PRESENT: Joe Anderson, Geri Denton, Loren Schmidt, Diane Smith and Kyle Hollasch. Hansini Woodbury was absent. Joe Anderson opened the meeting at 1:02 pm.

Geri Denton moved to approve the minutes of April 10, 2026. Kyle Hollasch seconded. All voted to approve.

Each committee member reviewed their audit findings of Stratham's communication capabilities vs. Exeter, Newmarket and Greenland. A summary of the "low hanging fruit" findings are:

- Town Facebook page needs a profile picture. Use the town seal.
- Low posting frequency – Average of 3.7 times per month, for the past six months. Exeter 16.2, Newmarket 11.5 and Greenland 15.8. Who are the admins of the Town of Stratham Facebook page?
- Need a clearer sign-up for the SB newsletter. People have to work to find it on the new website. Confusing vs e-notify.
- Standardized branding. Develop templates. See Exeter SB agenda highlight template.
- Select Board live meetings/recorded videos should have an introductory page, so people know this is the June 1, 2026 Stratham Select Board meeting.
- Better communication of significant board & committee initiatives, both in the newsletter and on social media.
- Ability for residents to communicate directly to boards and committees and to Select Board members (via the website).
- Kyle discussed formatting the home page calendar to more easily see immediately upcoming board & committee meetings. Or a filter to show a list of the next 30 days.
- Email notifications for new agendas and minutes.
- Greater use of the MC bulletin boards ("spruce-up"), portable outside message boards and perhaps add a video screen in the MC lobby.

Although not a part of the immediate action items, Diane discussed the very active seniors programming, particularly the Friday morning coffees.

Focus Group Discussion

Segment groups of people (seniors and under age 40 will have very different concerns)

- Online (targeting under age 40). Advertise via SMS newsletter and Facebook pages.
- General residents (Targeting age 40-65) Open request through the website & newsletter.
- Seniors (Targeting over age 65) Diane to recruit seniors from, Friday coffees and 76ers. Joe can recruit from his neighborhood, if needed.
- Town employees. Joe to recruit.

Potential questions (These will need to be flushed out further):

- What types of town communication do people see now. How do you take in your data?
- How do you currently communicate with the Town.
- What would they want to see. Their vision of the communication gaps.
- What do you care most about in the Town?

Facilitators:

- Loren – online
- Geri – In-person. Could be 2 groups.
- Diane - seniors
- Joe – employees

Explore having a table at Summerfest. To listen to resident's ideas & get survey sign-ups.

The next meeting will take place on May 29th @ 1:00. At 2:14 pm. Geri Denton motioned to adjourn. Kyle Hollasch seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joe Anderson

Community Feedback Sessions - Draft Outline

- The goal is to see what communication gaps are important to residents, within different population segments. While quantitative surveys track what channels people use, focus groups uncover the "why" behind community perceptions, communication gaps, and public trust.
- One interviewer with a small group.
- Use a small set of 5 to 8 topics.
- 6 – 10 people.
- Should last about 45 – 60 minutes.
- The meetings should be recorded, so no comments are missed & the facilitator can focus on the meeting.

Segment groups of people (seniors vs. under age 40 will have very different communications needs)

- Online - (Lauren) Targeting busy professionals, and younger demographics.
Advertise via SMS newsletter and SMS Facebook pages.
- General residents - (Geri) Working professionals, tech-forward residents, commuters.
Since this is a large amount of people, could be two separate groups.
Open request through the town website & newsletter.
- Seniors – (Diane) Long-term community members, and those with limited broadband reliance.
Recruit from senior coffees and 76ers. Joe can also recruit from his neighborhood.
- Town employees – (Joe) How the town can best communicate things like major multi-year projects, policy initiatives and community events. Potentially ask Seth, Karen, Deb, Vanessa, Britt, Jenn and a library rep.
- Key Informant Interviews. (Kyle) Allison Knab and Tim Roache. Similar to focus groups, just one on one.

Welcome and Ground Rules

"Good [morning/evening] everyone! My name is [Your Name] and I'll be your moderator today. Thank you for joining us. We are here on behalf of the Town's Communications & Community Engagement Committee to learn how we can better share news and listen to your feedback. Your insights will help us ensure town messaging is transparent and accessible to everyone in our community."

To make our conversation successful, let's agree on a few ground rules:

- **One Speaker at a Time:** Please speak clearly so everyone can hear.
- **No Right or Wrong Answers:** We want your honest experiences. It is okay to disagree; we value all points of view.
- **Confidentiality:** This session is being recorded for summary purposes, but we will not identify anyone by name in our final report. What is shared in this room stays in this room.
- **Share the Air:** We want to hear from everyone. I may occasionally 'tap the brakes' on a topic to ensure everyone has a chance to speak.
- **Silence Devices:** Please silence cell phones so we can stay present."
- **Define "Town":** Clarify early we are focusing on *municipal* operations (Select Board, Town Hall, Police/Fire/Parks & Rec) and not schools or community organizations.

Notes to the Moderator:

- **Keep it conversational:** Use these as a guide rather than a rigid script. Let participants build on each other's answers.
- **Avoid "Yes/No" traps:** If someone says "I use Facebook for town news," follow up with: "What specifically makes that work well for you?" or "Does anything about using Facebook for official news bother you?"
- **Tailor these questions** for specific demographics (e.g., seniors or parents).
- **Questions should be open-ended** such as what do you think about, what is your experience with, can you tell me about, what are examples of.

Potential questions

1. Opening & Warm-up (10 minutes)

Goal: Get people comfortable and gauge their baseline interaction with the town.

- Tell us your name and one thing you enjoy about living in Stratham.
- Thinking about the last few months, how do you usually get your information about what is happening in Stratham (e.g., road closures, town meetings or events)?
- When you need a specific piece of information from the town, where do you look first? Was it easy to find?
- How would you describe the overall "vibe" of town communication right now? (e.g., informative, overwhelming, confusing, outdated?)

2. Identifying Communication Gaps & Barriers (15 minutes)

Goal: Pinpoint where the system breaks down and why.

- Can you share a time when you felt out-of-the-loop on a town decision or upcoming project? What happened?
- We know people get news differently now. Are there specific groups of people in Stratham (e.g., families with young children, seniors, working professionals) who you feel miss out on important town updates?
- If you are a member of any local community or neighborhood groups, how do you communicate within those networks?

3. Usability of Town Channels (15 minutes)

Goal: Evaluate specific town platforms like the website, email lists, or social media.

- The town utilizes [mention the current tools: the Town of Stratham website, Select Board newsletter, Facebook, etc.]. How well are these working for you?
- What is the biggest frustration or pain point you experience when trying to navigate town communication platforms?
- Is there an official piece of information you were looking for recently (like a budget report, meeting agenda, park schedule or seniors event) that was too difficult to locate?

4. Content & Accessibility (10 minutes)

Goal: Understand if the town is sharing the right information in a way everyone can understand.

- When you read town communications, do you feel like you understand the information? Are the notices clear, or do they feel weighed down by jargon?
- "How often do you read the bi-weekly Select Board Newsletter? Is the information typically relevant to you? What types of information could be added?"
- "When navigating the Town Website, do you find it 'streamlined and useful', or do you encounter 'black holes' where information is hard to find?"

5. Solutions & Future Improvements (10 minutes)

Goal: Turn complaints into constructive, actionable ideas.

- If you were the Town Administrator, what is the **first thing** you would change about how Stratham communicates with its residents?
- If the town were to implement a new communication tool (e.g., a community app, text alerts for emergencies, or short video updates), what would be the most useful for your daily life?

6. Closing

This brings us to the end of our session. Thank-you again for your time and involvement. We will use your feedback to refine how Stratham communicates with our residents.

Next Steps

- Recruitment
 - SMS Facebook pages / newsletter
 - Town newsletter (6/12), website & Town Facebook page
 - Direct ask: Seniors, employees & key informants
- Potential dates – late June, early July (or sooner if possible).
- Use Google forms to sign-up. Can someone help with this?

Mock invitation:

Help Shape How Stratham Communicates: Join Our Community Feedback Session!

Dear Stratham Resident,

The Town of Stratham is committed to fostering an open, transparent community where every voice is heard.

The **Communications & Community Engagement Committee** is currently evaluating how we share news—including the town website, our bi-weekly newsletter, and our Facebook pages. We need your honest feedback to improve.

We are looking for residents to participate in a **60-minute community feedback session** to share your experiences and help us bridge communication gaps.



Session Details

- **Location:** Stratham Municipal Center, 10 Bunker Hill Ave.
- **Option A:** Wednesday, June 10, 2026, at 6:30 PM (General Session)
- **Option B:** Thursday, June 11, 2026, at 10:00 AM (Special Session for Seniors & Retirees)



Why Your Voice Matters

Your input will directly influence our long-term messaging strategy. Help us ensure that important town updates never "disappear into a black hole" again.



How to RSVP

Space is limited to **8 participants per session** to ensure everyone has ample time to speak. To reserve your spot, please fill out the attached form or contact Karen Richard at the Town Administrator's office:

- **(Link to form)**
- **Email:** krichard@strathamnh.gov
- **Phone:** (603) 772-7391

Thank you for helping us build a more connected Stratham!

Sincerely,

The Stratham Communications & Community Engagement Committee

Additional Areas:

- Select Board general C&CE update on June 15th.
- Explore having a table at Summerfest. Listen to resident's ideas & get survey sign-ups.