MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 5, 2026 SELECT BOARD MEETING

MEMBERS PRESENT: Board Members Chair Allison Knab, Vice Chair Joe Anderson, participating remotely Tedd Tramaloni

ALSO PRESENT: Town Administrator Tim Roache, Town Clerk/Tax Collector Deborah Bakie, Parks & Recreation Director Seth Hickey

At 7:00pm Ms. Knab opened the meeting and noted that Member Ted Tramiloni would be participating remotely because he is away from Stratham attending urgent family matters.

Mr. Anderson motioned to approve the minutes of September 21, 2026. Mr. Tramaloni seconded the motion. Roll call: Knab-yes; Anderson-yes; Tramaloni-yes

Mr. Anderson motioned to approve the minutes of September 28, 2026. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. Roll call: Knab-yes; Anderson-yes; Tramaloni-abstain (due to absence)

Ms. Knab invited Ms. Bakie for her budget presentation. Ms. Bakie presented her budget request. A pay increase for the three Supervisors of the Checklist was requested again, as last year's request was not approved. The proposed increase is $600 per month total ($200 per supervisor). She emphasized that supervisors' responsibilities have grown significantly, including annual voter list reviews, processing registrations, issuing and tracking required letters, updating records for residents who move (including frequent updates for military voters), and ensuring compliance with statutory procedures. The workload has become increasingly complex.

Additionally, Ms. Bakie requested an increase in the conference and training budget. Only she will attend this year's conference in Nashua. Next year's conference in Lincoln will involve higher costs for mileage, meals, lodging, and travel time. She expressed the need for expanded funding to allow both the clerk and deputy to attend essential training.

Ms. Bakie shared that she is expected to be voted in as Second Vice President of the Town Clerk's Association this year. The role involves monthly meetings in Concord, and she noted that she is steadily working her way up within the organization. She acknowledged some initial hesitation due to the significant time commitment. She emphasized that the training she receives regarding elections and motor vehicles brings strong value back to the town.

Ms. Knab asked for an update on document transfers. Ms. Bakie explained that the remaining items are older state books and some old receipt books, which may not be necessary to preserve, though they are historically interesting. She noted that she postponed the transfer this year for that reason. The previous Town Clerk completed transfers annually, but Ms. Bakie shifted to doing them in odd-numbered years due to the cost. Last year's expense was approximately $2,300. The town continues to use Co-file, as it remains the only available vendor in the state for this service.

Ms. Bakie explained that budgeting for election costs can be challenging, especially in years with only one election. It is difficult to predict expenses for ballots and programming until the actual

invoices arrive. She noted her understanding that programming costs are capped at approximately $1,000, regardless of the number of ballots, though the amount may be lower when fewer items appear on the ballot.

Ms. Bakie noted that next year's budget includes funding for new stanchions. The current yellow bollards are breaking, require sand to stay upright, and are now leaking onto the gym floor. A few replacements have been ordered to test their durability, and if successful, she hopes to replace all existing bollards with a more reliable, heavy-duty option.

Ms. Knab welcomed Jen Rowden of the Rockingham Planning Commission for her presentation on the Stratham Hill Park visioning. Ms. Rowden provided a high-level overview of the results from the Stratham Hill Park visioning activities conducted earlier this summer. She explained that the purpose of the process was to understand how the park's use has shifted in recent years—post-COVID and after the end of the Fair—and to evaluate growing demands on the space. Public input highlighted top concerns, priorities, and both short- and long-term needs. The visioning focused on identifying overlapping uses, potential conflicts among user groups, and the need for a clear direction as the town approaches important management decisions. Ms. Rowden noted she is happy to discuss any part of the full report previously shared in August.

Ms. Rowden provided an overview of the community engagement process. In May, a facilitated forum with staff and key stakeholders drew about 25 participants to discuss constraints, opportunities, and long-term visioning for Stratham Hill Park. In June, a publicly advertised input session brought in roughly 30 attendees representing a wide range of park users. To broaden participation, a public survey was released the following day, receiving 227 responses—about 80% from Stratham residents and 19% from neighboring communities.

Feedback from all three activities highlighted several consistent themes. Residents value the park's natural environment and its role as a community gathering space, with popular activities including walking, running, biking, dog-walking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and playground use. Many respondents did not distinguish between the park proper and adjacent trail areas, though comments reflected use across both. A key concern that emerged was the need for a comprehensive maintenance plan, as park infrastructure is aging and community needs have evolved.

Ms. Rowden noted that several recurring concerns emerged from the public input. Many comments focused on existing rules—particularly those related to dogs, e-bikes, and parking—as these are issues users encounter daily. Signage was another frequent topic, with some participants wanting clearer rules, better directional and trail signage, and even historical markers, while others felt there were already too many signs. A common point of confusion was the distinction between Stratham Hill Park proper and adjacent properties, as the transition between them feels seamless.

In terms of priorities, short-term desires included improved playground and bathroom facilities. A need for clarification of parking rules—especially between the main entrance and Jack Rabbit Lane—and better use of existing facilities such as trails, the fire tower, the agricultural buildings,

and the stage emerged. Long-term priorities included investment in preserving the fire tower, noting that work on that effort has already begun.

Ms. Rowden added that improved communication about park offerings is also needed. For example, several participants requested more music events, unaware that summer music already takes place—indicating a gap between current programming and public awareness. Long-term, many respondents supported creating a central location for park information, such as a kiosk with seating, to provide a clear meeting point and better access to updates.

Residents also expressed interest in expanded recreation and entertainment opportunities—such as yoga classes, additional biking activities, more music events, and occasional festivals. Improving connectivity within the park, including clearer routes between parking areas, ballfields, and playgrounds, was another common theme. Protecting natural resources remained a broad long-term priority.

Participants also emphasized the need to identify potential funding sources for park improvements, though few specific ideas were offered beyond suggestions like charging nonresidents, noting that legal constraints may apply.

Ms. Rowden summarized the collective community vision: to maintain Stratham Hill Park as a natural, community-centered destination that protects its rural character while enhancing amenities, improving accessibility, and supporting community events—without changing the park's fundamental identity. She emphasized that the vision provides high-level guidance on which the Board can base its decisions. She also offered recommendations, including reviewing legal restrictions tied to the park's original land parcels to understand possible options for funding and fee structures.

Ms. Rowden outlined a second key recommendation: creating a current conditions report for all facilities and infrastructure within the park proper, and potentially for adjacent areas as well. This assessment would document what structures and amenities exist, their condition, whether repairs are needed, and rough cost estimates for addressing them. Having this information will help guide decisions about what should be repaired, repurposed, or potentially decommissioned. She noted that some facilities are in poor condition, and understanding their value and cost implications is essential for long-term planning. Much of this knowledge already exists among staff, volunteers, and members of the Stratham Hill Park Association, and other committees, but it needs to be gathered into a shared framework. Once the town has this baseline, the next step could be another public input session supported by more detailed information. Following that, hiring a landscape architect to draft conceptual options—with visual renderings—would help the community understand possibilities for improvements, such as the future configuration of playgrounds or other amenities.

Ms. Knab thanked Ms. Rowden and said the vision summary accurately reflected both the public feedback and her own conversations with residents. She noted that most people want the park to remain largely the same, with practical improvements rather than major new features—few suggested anything dramatic. Ms. Rowden acknowledged there were some outliers, but overall the community favored maintaining the park's character while addressing needed upgrades.

Mr. Hickey noted that some preliminary work has already been done to catalog park buildings and their current uses. Ms. Knab added that completing a full current conditions report would not be a heavy lift and could help determine whether certain buildings should be repurposed or removed. Mr. Tramaloni shared that the Heritage Commission has voted to hire a preservation firm to document historically and culturally significant assets in the park, so that work is already underway on a limited scale. Mr. Roache supported the idea of engaging a landscape architect later in the process, emphasizing the value of visuals for community decision-making.

Ms. Rowden recommended including extensive photos in any conditions analysis, as many residents were unclear about the purpose and condition of various agricultural and other buildings. Mr. Hickey observed that some community members still picture the park as it was decades ago, which differs significantly from its current state. Ms. Rowden added that thorough documentation will help clarify what is in good condition, what could be repurposed, and what may no longer be needed.

Ms. Knab noted that several people who could not attend the meeting were interested in the report's findings and asked whether Ms. Rowden could share her presentation or report. Ms. Rowden said she intends to send the materials to everyone who subscribed to the survey—about half of participants—and can share that email list with the town. She added that she is happy to distribute the materials herself or through the town and recommended posting them on the town website.

Mr. Tramaloni commented that while the visioning process was helpful, he had hoped for more "blue sky" strategic thinking about the park's long-term future. He suggested exploring broader ideas such as a public-private partnership to create a dog park on the old Voc property with a safe pedestrian crossing, or implementing an RFID-based gated parking system at Jack Rabbit Lane. He noted that while improving bathrooms and playgrounds is important, he would like the long-term vision to consider larger, town-wide recreational opportunities extending beyond the park proper. Ms. Knab noted that Mr. Tramaloni's broader ideas were outside the scope of RPC's work but still valuable. She added that Mr. Roache has also explored concepts related to crossing Portsmouth Avenue and the Voc property. Ms. Rowden agreed that some public feedback extends beyond Stratham Hill Park and should feed into larger community planning discussions. Ms. Knab observed that these broader considerations align more closely with open space planning. Ms. Rowden concluded that several themes in the report relate to community-wide recreation and should be incorporated into future, broader planning efforts.

Ms. Knab moved to new business to establish trick or treat hours. Mr. Anderson motioned October 31, from 5:00 – 7:30pm be designated as Stratham's Trick or Treat Night. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. Roll call: Knab-yes; Anderson-yes; Tramaloni-yes

Ms. Knab directed attention to the charitable donation through Fidelity Charitable to the Revolving fund. Ms. Knab motioned acceptance of the $100 charitable donation from Kevin Burgeson via Fidelity Charitable. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. Roll call: Knab-yes; Anderson-yes; Tramaloni-yes

Ms. Knab introduced the Stormwater Facilities Maintenance Agreement for 170 Portsmouth Avenue, noting it pertains to the Mighty Roots Company. Mr. Roache explained that the agreement outlines the property owner's responsibility for maintaining and repairing the stormwater management facilities, and confirms that the Town of Stratham has no obligation to inspect or maintain them. The agreement will be recorded with the Rockingham County Registry of Deeds upon execution. Mr. Tramaloni reported that the Planning Board had reviewed the plan extensively, requested changes were made by the applicant, and the plan was ultimately approved. The matter is now before the Select Board. Mr. Anderson moved that the Select Board approve the Stormwater Management Facilities Maintenance Agreement for the approved site plan at 170 Portsmouth Avenue, authorize the Select Board to execute it on behalf of the Town of Stratham, and authorize its recording at the Rockingham County Registry of Deeds. Mr. Tramaloni seconded the motion. Roll call: Knab-yes; Anderson-yes; Tramaloni-yes

Ms. Knab moved to the Curbside Collection bid opening. Mr. Roache reported that three proposals were received. He noted that the purpose of the meeting was to open and read the company names and proposal amounts into the record, and that staff would later evaluate the proposals and return with a recommendation at the next meeting. The first proposal opened was from Waste Management, which indicated it would not be submitting a bid. The second proposal was from ELM Services of Hampton Falls, and the third was from Casella.

ELM Services

	Trash	**Recycling**
Year One	$355,000	$275,000
Year Two	369,200	286,000
Year Three	383,968	297440
Year Four	399,356	309,337
Year Five	415,330	321,710

Casella

	Trash	**Recycling**
Year One	$429,000	$444,437
Year Two	450,450	471,480
Year Three	472,973	499,876
Year Four	496,621	529,691
Year Five	521,452	560,097

Mr. Roache suggested Mr. Anderson, as the DPW liaison, review these with the DPW Director to come to a decision.

Ms. Knab recognized Jim Ziolkowski, Operations Manager from ELM Services, who stated that the company is a local, family-owned business known for reliability and strong performance. They operate out of Hampton Falls and provide service to several nearby communities, including Kensington, Southampton, and Newfields. He noted that they previously held a contract in Hampton Beach and now also serve Kingston, emphasizing their solid reputation in the region.

Ms. Knab moved to the Town Administrator report. Mr. Roache reviewed the budget, noting that approximately 70% of funds have been spent with 75% of the year elapsed, which is on target. He reported that the MS-1 is ready for signature. Mr. Anderson emphasized the MS-1's importance in calculating the tax rate and said he is monitoring revenue figures closely. Mr. Roache added that department budgets are due the following day.

Under Planning and Building, Mr. Roache reported that work has begun on updating the Local Emergency Operations Plan, last completed in 2008. Mr. Anderson noted that a former employee initiated the update, the Town has a reimbursable contract with Homeland Security, and consultant Jane Hubbard of Hubbard Consulting is assisting. Planning and Building is also reviewing the emergency road access between Lindt and Rollins Farm and may need to discuss future maintenance responsibilities with the homeowners association. Further details will be brought to the Board once the review is complete.

Mr. Roache continued by noting that a pre-construction meeting for the fire tower rehabilitation project will take place within the next two weeks. Once contractor requirements for site shutdown and management are understood, work will proceed. He added that this will be an opportunity for the Communications Committee to help inform the public about the construction and restricted access to the tower.

Mr. Roache continued his report, noting that a meeting with the Fire Department was held on the 28th and that budget work is still underway. He stated that a productive discussion with a labor lawyer helped clarify per diem limits and requirements, and he has provided the Fire Chief with the information needed to finalize the department's budget.

Mr. Roache also reported that keyless access has been installed at the Municipal Center. Staff are currently assigning permissions, with full implementation expected by the end of the week.

Mr. Roache provided an update on Stevens Park, noting the need for a discussion on the project's overall direction. He explained that the septic design permit expires in October and, given prior conversations about not pursuing a septic system, the Board should formally confirm whether it intends to shift away from the original plan. Ms. Knab recalled that the Board intended to obtain additional estimates for the pavilion, as the initial quote was very high. She requested one or two more for comparison. Mr. Roache noted that a private company in Epping had provided an alternative estimate of $125,000. Mr. Anderson added that other vendors are available as well. Mr. Roache described the concept for the pavilion, which would be similar to the Scamman Pavilion. He suggested that using seasonal porta potties—potentially with stabilized enclosures—could provide the same basic function at a fraction of the cost of building a full septic system. Ms. Knab confirmed septic costs were the primary concern, and wondered if the project could be designed to allow bathroom facilities to be added later. Board members agreed that the pavilion is intended simply as a shelter. Mr. Anderson noted that drainage work and a redesigned parking lot would also be required. Mr. Roache reported that he is obtaining updated quotes for the parking lot. Mr. Tramaloni suggested that composting toilets, similar to those used in National Parks, could serve as a reasonable alternative to porta potties and full septic infrastructure. He recommended gathering more information and exploring additional options.

The Board agreed to hold a separate meeting dedicated to discussing the entire Stevens Park project.

Mr. Roache followed up on the Energy Committee presentation from the previous meeting. He confirmed that the petition regarding automatic inclusion has been completed, and the Town is now waiting on updated rates before considering any future withdrawal decisions. He reported that the Capital Improvement Program is progressing well, noting that Ms. Fowle has done excellent work and that they expect to have materials ready for budget season. Regarding the purchasing policy, he stated that he incorporated the edits provided at the last meeting but did not have time to finalize the document for this session. Additional staff feedback has been received and may lead to further revisions before it returns to the Board.

Mr. Roache also noted that the employee manual is nearly complete. He, Ms. Ruest, Mr. Hickey, and Mr. Anderson plan to meet tomorrow to finish their review. Mr. Anderson requested that the Board workshop the manual before it is broadly circulated, followed by a legal review and then distribution to department heads. The group agreed this was the appropriate process.

APPOINTMENTS

Ms. Knab noted that the Board had two appointments to consider: the Health Officer appointment and the appointment of Mr. McAuliffe to the Conservation Commission. She questioned why Mr. McAuliffe's appointment was being acted on in October when his term had expired in March, noting he has continued attending meetings. Mr. Anderson stated that Mr. McAuliffe would still be considered legally appointed under a holdover provision but agreed it was unclear why the reappointment was not addressed in April. The Board discussed how the new term should be defined and agreed that listing term lengths on future agendas would help avoid confusion. Mr. Roache suggested that committee secretaries should track member terms and proposed maintaining a spreadsheet for this purpose. Ms. Knab believed Ms. Connors already tracked terms for the Conservation Commission, while Mr. Anderson thought Ms. Richard handled it. Mr. Tramaloni noted that upon joining the Board, he created his own spreadsheet based on the website and found several terms had expired. Ms. Knab motioned the reappointment of Dan McAuliffe to the Conservation Commission for a three-year term to expire at town meeting 2029. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. Roll call: Knab-yes; Anderson-yes; Tramaloni-yes

Mr. Anderson motioned to appoint Joe O'Callaghan as the Stratham Health Officer. Mr. Tramaloni seconded the motion. Roll call: Knab-yes; Anderson-yes; Tramaloni-yes

The Board discussed the Emergency Management Director position, noting that it has historically been an appointed role. Mr. Roache reported that Lieutenant Pierce's application was included in the packet and explained that Lt. Pierce is interested in elevating the position's level of activity. He noted this is not necessarily a negative direction, but the Board should be sure it aligns with their expectations. Mr. Anderson cautioned that they do not want the role to consume an undue portion of Lt. Pierce's time. Mr. Roache added that Lt. Pierce envisions responsibilities beyond coordinating Seabrook-related emergency drills, which Mr. Anderson agreed is appropriate, as the role encompasses broader emergency management functions. Ms.

Knab requested an opportunity to speak with Lt. Pierce directly. Mr. Roache will arrange a meeting.

At 8:07pm Ms. Knab motioned to go into a non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II(c). Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. Roll call: Knab-yes; Anderson-yes; Tramaloni-yes. At 8:13pm Ms. Knab motioned to come out of the non-public session and seal the minutes, noting failure to do so may render an action invalid. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. Roll call: Knab-yes; Anderson-yes; Tramaloni-yes.

At 8:14pm Mr. Anderson motioned to adjourn. Mr. Tramaloni seconded the motion. Roll call: Knab-yes; Anderson-yes; Tramaloni-yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard
Recording Secretary