

## **MINUTES OF THE MARCH 16, 2026 SELECT BOARD MEETING**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Board Members Allison Knab, Joe Anderson, Tedd Tramaloni

**ALSO PRESENT:** Town Administrator Tim Roache, Director of Public Works Trevor Batchelder, Department Coordinator Britt Fowle

At 7:00pm Ms. Knab opened the meeting and asked for a motion on the draft minutes. Mr. Anderson motioned to approved the minutes from March 2, 2026. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Ms. Knab welcomed the legislative delegation. The legislative delegation provided an overview of the State House calendar, noting that bills are filed in September and November, with committee hearings and votes occurring from January through the March “crossover” deadline, when House and Senate must exchange all remaining bills. From late March to early June, the House considers Senate bills and participates in committees of conference to resolve differences before final votes. Members also briefly outlined their committee assignments, including Judiciary, Resources, Recreation and Development, Education, Finance, and Executive Departments and Administration.

Rep. Manos explained that New Hampshire’s legislative process is highly democratic, noting that every bill receives a committee assignment, a public hearing, and a floor vote—unlike at the federal level, where leadership can block legislation. As a result, bills across the full political spectrum are introduced and considered. She highlighted the value of public testimony in shaping legislators’ perspectives. She noted that the House considered nearly 900 bills this year, with most now completed and the remainder moving through second committees. She and the other legislators reviewed the latest NHMA legislative bulletin to prepare for discussion and invited questions from the Board.

Rep. Manos highlighted several bills of interest. HB 1704, which would have allowed individual employee contract negotiations and disrupted municipal collective bargaining, was indefinitely postponed. HB 1788, which sought to void DEI-related contracts for municipalities and state agencies, also failed to advance. She noted ongoing debate around HB 1195 regarding allowing small family child-care centers by right in commercial and residential zones and encouraged municipalities to review the legislation closely. Rep. Manos highlighted HB 1275, noting its relevance to Stratham’s agricultural community. The bill aims to address PFAS contamination and biosolids in a way that is not punitive to farmers. Ms. Knab explained that the bill provides farmers with limited immunity from civil liability related to certain PFAS impacts and directs DES to establish concentration-based PFAS standards and related rules. The delegation noted that the bill represents an incremental step forward and will next move to the Senate for further review.

Rep. Manos briefed the Board on a bill proposing changes to the process for adopting SB2, noting the ongoing debate over whether such a change should be decided at Town Meeting or solely by ballot. Members discussed how SB2 differs from traditional Town Meeting, including the requirement for a separate deliberative session and its implications for voter participation.

Rep. Manos emphasized that SB2 demands significant diligence in the deliberative process and expressed her view that traditional Town Meeting offers a more direct form of democratic engagement.

Rep. Simpson reviewed several House-passed bills now headed to the Senate. HB 1224, opposed by NHMA, would significantly change default budget calculations for SB2 communities and limit financial flexibility. HB 1540 regulates ADUs in protected shoreline districts; members noted that portions of Great Bay and Squamscott River may be affected. HB 1681 would allow municipalities to permit tiny houses and yurts as innovative housing structures. HB 1184 would authorize 72-hour temporary no-trespass orders on municipal and school property with required procedural safeguards. The delegation also discussed related privacy concerns prompting separate drone-policy legislation currently under Senate review. Sen. Altschiller reported that she sponsored 16 bills this session, including SB 439, which proposes creating a new statewide zoning category for data centers. She explained that the bill aims to ensure data centers are responsible for their own water-supply planning and any necessary electrical-grid upgrades, rather than shifting costs to municipalities or ratepayers. She noted that data centers have significant water and energy demands and provide limited local employment, making upfront safeguards important. The bill has been amended and will next move to the House.

Sen. Altschiller reported on several education-related bills she sponsored, including proposals to increase oversight of the state's voucher program, which currently operates under a no-bid contract; these efforts did not advance. She also highlighted two zoning-related bills moving to the House: SB 435, which would change ZBA variance criteria, and SB 508, which would alter ZBA appeal procedures by requiring all grounds for appeal to be included in the initial filing. She reiterated her position that zoning decisions should remain at the municipal level, noting that communities differ significantly in geography, priorities, and conservation practices, and that statewide zoning mandates are not appropriate for New Hampshire's diverse towns.

Sen. Altschiller briefed the Board on an upcoming Right-to-Know bill aimed at addressing increasingly burdensome and AI-generated records requests, which have created significant workload issues for municipalities and SAUs. She noted the challenge of distinguishing legitimate requests from dilatory or data-mining inquiries and said the Legislature is still working toward a solution. She also emphasized broader concerns about ongoing legislative efforts that reduce local control over municipal and school district decision-making, as well as the state's continued failure to fund its share of retirement and education adequacy costs. She reviewed the legislative schedule leading up to the May 14 deadline and encouraged the Board to monitor NHMA updates and communicate positions directly when needed. The delegation noted that letters or testimony from the town can be important when specific bills escalate. The Board also briefly discussed SB 538 on net metering. Ms. Knab noted that our Energy Commission wrote a letter of support, but it has since moved on to the House. She suggested the Energy Commission's letter be directed there.

The Board thanked the delegation for coming in.

Ms. Knab recognized Mr. Batchelder for the Public Works report. With winter ending, the department will begin its paving plan, focusing on the Lane project, Jason Drive, and failing paths at Stratham Hill Park. Additional crack-sealing contractors will be contacted to begin work earlier this year. Drainage improvements and MS-4 data collection will continue, with roughly half of outfalls and catch basins completed last fall.

He requested moving forward with purchasing the new service truck and plow-truck replacement now that the budget has been approved, noting the existing truck is out of service and not cost-effective to repair. If ordered tomorrow, delivery is expected in November. The utility truck would have a short turnaround to readiness. He also reported on equipment disposal, including the decommissioning and parts-only sale of the old John Deere loader.

Mr. Anderson motioned to approve the release of \$65,000 from CRF for the purchase of a Ram 2500 pickup with utility body. Mr. Tramaloni seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Anderson motioned to release \$158,000 from CRF for the purchase of a Ram 5500 with plow package and all season body. Mr. Tramaloni seconded the motion. All voted in favor, Mr. Anderson motioned to approve disposal of the 2014 International TerraStar at the Kittery auction. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Batchelder noted that the department is beginning to transition away from larger trucks. He explained that the bigger vehicles are difficult to maneuver on Stratham's many cul-de-sacs and hammerheads and place heavier stress on roads, especially in spring. Smaller trucks also eliminate the need for CDL-licensed operators.

Mr. Batchelder reported upcoming equipment rentals, including a roadside mower rental in July. He discussed building-maintenance items, including access-control upgrades for municipal buildings, pending budget items for lower-level bathrooms, LED lighting, and potential entryway cameras. Parking-lot striping at the library and a septic repair at the Historical Society are scheduled for spring. He also highlighted that River Birch Builders will donate labor for the dugout project, significantly reducing project costs, and the Board agreed this contribution should be publicly acknowledged.

Mr. Anderson motioned to approve the release of \$9,045.44 from the Town Wide Parks and Recreation Improvements CIP and to authorize the Public Works Director to expend these funds for materials to construct dug outs at that field. Mr. Tramaloni seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Mr. Roache reported that there was \$14,000 in the fund.

Water service at the park will be turned on in April. Proposals for the 4H barn roof and 4H bathrooms are out, with responses due April 3 and April 13. Field maintenance will begin with one initial treatment by Hillside, after which the Town will handle upkeep. The fire tower project and Stevens Park improvements are moving forward; final design plans for Stevens Park have been received, and an RFP will be prepared once the Board reviews the plans at the April meeting.

Mr. Batchelder reported that landscaping work has begun at the Lane property and that the old furnace has been removed from the tannery cottage. The Town is evaluating heating options—propane, oil, or mini-splits—and will gather pricing. The Energy Commission will be consulted.

The existing outdoor oil tank will eventually need to be removed, as it can no longer be filled. Similar heating decisions will be needed for the other buildings in the complex. Tree work and brush cutting on the property will begin this week and are expected to take two to three days. Mr. Batchelder reported that cemetery tree work is moving forward, with meetings scheduled to release funds for work at Greenwood Cemetery and continued cleanup at Maple Lane. The Casella contract expires at year-end. At the Transfer Station, AT&T FirstNet will be tested to improve payment processing. Engineering for the Transfer Station redesign remains in early stages with CMA Engineers. He noted approximately 20 plowable events this winter and about 750 tons of salt used, which is relatively low; the Board acknowledged his careful salt management.

Mr. Batchelder reported that a candidate had interviewed for the operator/laborer position, and the Board agreed to discuss the matter in non-public session later in the meeting. Mr. Tramaloni asked whether the swap shop is included in the CMA Engineers redesign of the Transfer Station. Mr. Roache explained that it is uncertain, as the site sits on a geotextile layer that may not support a building foundation. Ms. Knab summarized that the issue is feasibility, not funding, and recalled expectations during the budget process that it would be incorporated. Mr. Roache said engineers are still evaluating options. The Board agreed that if the site cannot support the structure, the group advocating for the swap shop will need to identify an alternative location.

Mr. Anderson asked that Mr. Batchelder track the time spent on work at the Lane property, noting it appears significant. Mr. Batchelder reported that the backsplash in the tannery cottage kitchen has been replaced and recommended cleaning, rather than removing, the existing rug. Plumbing work will begin once weather allows, with the goal of making the unit rentable. Mr. Roache clarified that major expenses will be charged to the trust, while staff time is a personnel cost. Mr. Anderson expressed concern that other departmental work may be impacted, and Ms. Knab suggested that, at some point, property-management tasks may need to be outsourced.

Mr. Anderson requested that DPW develop a detail-coverage policy similar to Police and EMS, noting the need to have it in place before the PAWS Walk; Mr. Batchelder said he could complete one by then. Mr. Anderson also asked about improving water access at the Community Garden, but Mr. Batchelder said no practical solution exists and noted that a compost bin will be added.

At 8:25pm Ms. Knab motioned to go into a non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II(b) hiring and (c) reputation. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

At 8:59pm Ms. Knab motioned to return to the public meeting. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Ms. Knab expressed interest in serving as Chair of the Select Board, citing her seven years on the Board and 18 years of volunteer service in Stratham. Mr. Anderson raised concerns about her availability given her work in Concord; Ms. Knab explained that her schedule is busiest January–March and eases significantly afterward, and she would meet weekly with the Town Administrator. She also noted the significance of potentially becoming the first woman to serve as Chair. Mr. Tramaloni shared concerns about workload, and Ms. Knab stated she could step

down from the role if it became too demanding. Mr. Anderson noted that in his previous town, the Chair position rotated annually. After more discussion, Mr. Anderson motioned to appoint Allison Knab as Chair of the Select Board to end in March 2027. Mr. Tramaloni seconded the motion. Motion passed. Ms. Knab motioned to appoint Mr. Anderson as Vice Chair of the Select Board to end in March 2027. Mr. Tramaloni seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Mr. Anderson motioned to release the performance bond for Perlowski Properties LLC at the property 149 - 151 Portsmouth Avenue as they met the conditions of their performance and escrow agreement dated May 18, 2018. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Mr. Roache reported that CMA Engineers has been conducting plan reviews for the Town and that this agreement is now being formalized. Mr. Anderson asked whether developers are being charged for plan review and requested that Mr. Roache confirm this with Ms. Price, noting that they should be. Mr. Anderson motioned to authorize the Town Administrator to enter into the agreement with CMA Engineers as outlined in their March 6, 2026 master agreement for professional services. Mr. Tramaloni seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Ms. Knab asked Mr. Roache to ensure the Energy Commission Chair is aware that their letter of support for the net-metering bill should now be directed to the House Committee. She noted the bill appears to have limited support in the House.

Mr. Anderson emphasized the need to improve communication with residents and shared that he recently completed a seven-week course on community engagement. He proposed forming a Communications & Community Engagement Committee. Ms. Knab encouraged ensuring representation across generations and suggested conducting an audit of current communication methods. The Board discussed potential membership, and Mr. Tramaloni advised proceeding cautiously given the risks associated with social media. Mr. Anderson moved to establish the committee and to serve as the Select Board representative.

They discussed which Board member would serve as liaison to each committee. Mr. Anderson motioned to approve the Board/Committee liaisons as outlined with the addition of the Communications Committee and moving the Energy Commission liaison from Mr. Houghton to Mr. Tramaloni. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

#### ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Roache provided department updates. Parks & Recreation is preparing to launch an Ultimate Frisbee program. The annual audit is underway in Finance. In Administration, he is developing a grants acceptance policy. NHDOT will hold a public presentation on the Bunker Hill intersection project on April 6. The part-time Building Inspector from MRI has begun work and has already offered useful recommendations. Elections and Town Meeting proceeded smoothly. The Library is exploring a consortium with Hampton and Greenland to expand book-lending options. Mr. Roache is also working on the employee review process and a draft noise ordinance.

Mr. Anderson shared feedback he received from residents after Town Meeting, noting concerns about spending. He pointed out that the Town's budget increased by only 3%, which is below

inflation, and suggested the need for clearer communication on budget matters. The Board agreed that additional public education on budget issues would be beneficial.

#### APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Anderson motioned to re-appoint Drew Pierce to the Zoning Board of Adjustment for a three year term to end at March 2029. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Anderson motioned to authorize the Select Board Chair to sign the Energy Commission letter once it is readdressed to the House. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

9:52pm Mr. Anderson motioned to adjourn. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard  
Recording Secretary