

MINUTES OF THE APRIL 20, 2026 SELECT BOARD MEETING

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

ALSO PRESENT: Town Administrator Tim Roache, Planning and Building Director Vanessa Price, Steve Hamilton and Ben Heller, Whitney Consulting Group.

At 7:00pm Ms. Knab opened the meeting and asked for a motion on the draft minutes. Mr. Tramaloni motioned to approved the minutes from April 6, 2026. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Ms. Knab recognized Ms. Price for her department report. Ms. Price stated that the new fee structure took effect on March 3. The Planning Board will soon begin work on zoning amendments. In response to a question from Mr. Tramaloni, she explained the process for adopting impact fees, noting that they must be authorized in the zoning ordinance, tied to identified projects, usually CIP-related, and supported by a professional study.

She noted that NHMA Right-to-Know training went well, and a land-use board training session was recorded for those unable to attend. Work continues on the Open Space Connectivity Plan.

Ms. Price provided updates on current Planning Board applications, including:

- 170 Portsmouth Ave (residential contracting business; existing home to remain)
- Porsche dealership (proposed addition to service area)
- 210 Portsmouth Ave (residential condominium project)
- Extension requests for 41 Portsmouth Ave, 80 & 80R Winnicutt subdivision
- Lindt (continuance requested to complete permitting for a new fire access road)

The group discussed an older fire road on the Lindt complex that is now inaccessible due to overgrowth; Ms. Price will research responsibility for its maintenance.

Ms. Price reported that the temporary part-time building inspection consultant is performing well. From January through the previous day, 224 permits were issued and 226 inspections completed. Revenue has increased slightly due to large projects such as the school and Lindt. Additional updates included construction at 217 Portsmouth Ave and a planned triplex at 301 Portsmouth Ave.

In response to a question from Mr. Anderson, she stated that all boards will soon be fully staffed with regular members, though some still need alternates.

Ms. Knab recognized Steve Hamilton and Ben Heller for an update on the Town's assessing status. Mr. Hamilton reviewed assessment-to-sale ratios, noting that the 2024 revaluation brought the median ratio to 97.2%, with 2025 at 95.8% and recent sales trending at 94.9%. He explained that values remain within the acceptable 90–110% range and no valuation update is recommended for the coming year. A revaluation will be required in 2029, though earlier action would be advised if ratios fall below 90%.

Mr. Hamilton reviewed the median home sale price for the equalization period (\$975,000) and discussed assessment statistics, including the coefficient of dispersion (COD). He explained how utility properties are annually equalized under state law.

Mr. Heller reported on the Department of Revenue Administration's ongoing 2025 Assessment Review of their work, including file audits, credits and exemptions review, and compliance with records-retention requirements. Fieldwork inspections have been acceptable. Results are expected later in the year, though DRA is behind schedule.

Mr. Hamilton continued, reporting cyclical property inspections continue, with approximately 30% of improved properties completed. The Town remains on track to finish by the December tax bill. The equalization process is also underway, and the Board was asked to sign the certificate for the 2025 equalization survey. Ms. Knab requested that the Board have time to review before signing.

Mr. Hamilton reported that several 2023 tax abatement appeals are currently pending before the Board of Tax and Land Appeals. He has been working with taxpayers on preliminary resolutions and plans to present these to the Select Board at their next meeting. He requested time on the agenda, and the Board agreed. The Board thanked Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Heller for their update.

Ms. Knab recognized Mark Stevens, who provided an update on planned water and sewer infrastructure work in the Stratham Industrial Park. Mr. Stevens explained that a section of the 47-year-old water main needs replacement following a significant break last summer that resulted in substantial water loss. The association plans to replace the vulnerable section, inspect additional areas of the main, and determine whether further replacement is necessary.

He also described related sewer system improvements. The association has reached an agreement with the Town of Exeter to upgrade a restricted section of Exeter's sewer line in exchange for additional sewer capacity needed for Lindt's expansion. This work requires upsizing a force main from four inches to six inches and completing two road crossings—one for the sewer force main and one for the water line.

Mr. Stevens noted that a future easement across the Rollins property may be needed to complete a looped water-line system, but the immediate request is for an easement from the Town of Stratham to perform the current work.

Board members asked clarifying questions regarding ownership of the water and sewer systems, easements, and responsibility for the proposed work. Mr. Stevens confirmed the system is privately owned by an association he manages. Mr. Anderson expressed conceptual support but emphasized the need for protections for the Town, including a surety bond and long-term responsibility for any future road settlement at the crossing. Town counsel has not yet reviewed the proposed easement.

Mr. Stevens stated he hopes to begin work as soon as possible. The Board agreed to review the matter promptly and will follow up once counsel has completed their review.

Ms. Knab introduced the Lindt water and sewer expansion item. Mr. Roache explained that the project is connected to the additional 75,000 gallons of sewer capacity being allocated to the

industrial park and assigned to Lindt. Exeter has requested a letter of support from Stratham to submit to the PUC, and a letter drafted by Exeter's attorney was included in the packet.

Mr. Anderson motioned to authorize the Board Chair to sign the letter on behalf of the Board. Mr. Tramaloni seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Mr. Tramaloni asked that the letter not be sent until town counsel has reviewed the project described earlier by Mr. Stevens. Mr. Roache agreed to hold the letter until counsel completes that review.

Ms. Knab opened discussion on the 2026 TMAC charge. Mr. Anderson suggested a minor edit to Section 2A, recommending that "conduct public forums" be changed to "conduct public input" to allow flexibility in how feedback is gathered.

Mr. Anderson also referenced comments in TMAC's recent minutes noting that the Select Board had not taken action. He stated that he had agreed with the recommendations at the time but no action was taken due to other Board members. He clarified that the issue they agreed on concerned commercial dog walkers. Ms. Knab noted that research had been planned on whether updates to the ordinance on motorized vehicles were needed to address e-bikes, as the current ordinance predates them.

The Board further discussed issues related to commercial dog walkers, e-bike use, parking, and enforcement at Stratham Hill Park. Members agreed these topics should be addressed comprehensively and that a public hearing—potentially in late May or June—would be appropriate.

Mr. Tramaloni emphasized the importance of confronting these issues directly, noting concerns about compliance and enforcement. Ms. Knab reiterated the need for adequate enforcement capacity, including the potential role of an Animal Control Officer. Mr. Anderson noted that establishing clear policy is the necessary first step. Mr. Anderson motioned to adopt the TMAC charge with the change of item 2a from "forum" to "gather public input". Mr. Tramaloni seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Roache reported on options for building access control. He reviewed mobile systems but noted that both the Police and Fire Departments expressed concerns about relying on personal phones for access, particularly in situations where staff may not be able to safely or quickly unlock a device. Staff also noted that requiring use of personal phones could be problematic. Based on this feedback, the recommendation is to proceed with key-card or key-fob access, with alternative options such as wristbands available for Police.

Mr. Roache also followed up on the selection of Pelmac Industries as the preferred consultant. The selection team was impressed by Pelmac's extensive walkthrough, familiarity with municipal facilities, and the value of their proposal. Pelmac also services the Police Department's existing system.

Ms. Knab asked about licensing costs; Mr. Anderson noted that replacement cards are included. Mr. Tramaloni assumed standard warranties would apply to hardware and related components. Mr. Roache added that some companies offer optional subscriptions, but those carry risks if updates are needed. With the Board's authorization, he will move forward.

Mr. Anderson motioned to authorize the Town Administrator to enter into an agreement with Pelmac Industries for the installation of an access control system with installation cost of \$142,770 and a first-year licensing cost of \$7,347. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Ms. Knab introduced the Hazard Mitigation Plan item. Mr. Roache explained that although the Board had approved the plan in April 2025, federal delays related to FEMA caused associated grant funding to be put on hold. By the time the funds were released, the required Certificate of Authority had expired, and all signatures were more than a year old. As a result, the Town must re-accept the grant funds.

Mr. Anderson asked what a Certificate of Authority is. Ms. Knab explained that it is a standard requirement for state and federal grants, authorizing a designated individual to sign on the Town's behalf. Mr. Roache added that it functions similarly to a certificate of vote authority and directed the Board to the motion included in the packet. Mr. Anderson motioned that the Select Board, in a majority vote, accepted the terms of the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) as presented in the amount of \$9,787.50 for updating the local hazard mitigation plan. Furthermore, the Board acknowledges that the total cost of this project will be \$13,050.00, in which the town will be responsible for a 25% match (\$3,262.50) and we authorize Town Administrator Tim Roache to sign all documents related to the grant. Mr. Tramaloni seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Ms. Knab noted that page 29 of the packet indicates the need to establish a Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee. Mr. Roache confirmed this requirement, explaining that the committee will primarily include Planning staff, the Planning & Building Director, and the Police and Fire Chiefs. The Town will hire a consultant to lead the process, and Mr. Roache noted that such consultants are highly effective and that he has experience with similar projects through the Rockingham Planning Commission.

Ms. Knab introduced the 2027 Highway Safety Grant. Mr. Roache explained that this is a routine annual grant that the Police Department intends to apply for. Chief King provided a memo in the packet; however, the current action is only to authorize the department to apply, as the grant has not yet been awarded. No further action is required beyond approving the application. Ms. Knab motioned to authorize the Police Department to move forward with the application for the Highway Safety Grant in the amount of \$15,800 acknowledging that there's a match requirement. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Ms. Knab moved to the Stevens Park agenda item. Mr. Roache said that the application for the septic system has been received. Mr. Anderson motioned to approve the Stevens Park application for an individual septic, individual sewer disposal system and to authorize the Town Administrator to sign the application on the Select Board's behalf. Mr. Tramaloni seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

The Board reviewed cost estimates for exterior repairs to the Lane House and Tannery buildings. Mr. Roache explained that the proposed exterior work totals approximately \$110,000, with roughly \$197,000 remaining from the original \$200,000 allocation. Additional major needs include heating systems, water line and plumbing work, and septic system evaluation, though full cost estimates are not yet available.

Board members discussed prioritizing essential systems—water, septic, and heating—before committing to exterior work, given the limited budget. Mr. Merrill, Heritage Commission Chair, cautioned that delaying carpentry work could push scheduling out significantly and noted that the Heritage Preservation Capital Reserve Fund could be used temporarily as a cash-flow tool, though he emphasized the goal of keeping the project cost-neutral to taxpayers.

The Board discussed the need for more information, including septic system details and heating system assessments. Mr. Tramaloni noted that the exterior repairs are recommended because the building is currently compromised, and delaying could increase long-term costs. Mr. Roache added that some exterior work, such as removing the deteriorated back porch, could begin while other estimates are finalized. The Board agreed to await additional cost information before making final decisions.

Mr. Tramaloni asked whether long-term repair costs had been estimated, noting concern about balancing anticipated rental income with the scope of needed improvements. Mr. Merrill explained that financial feasibility was reviewed before the Town accepted the gift, and the Select Board at that time believed rental income from the four buildings would be sufficient to support the property once deferred maintenance was addressed.

Board members discussed the distinction between exterior repairs and interior work. Mr. Anderson suggested pursuing a parallel approach—continuing to gather full cost estimates while authorizing high-priority exterior work in phases. Mr. Roache and Mr. Merrill agreed that the north porch removal is the most urgent item due to significant rot, with additional deterioration on the east and south sides. Removal of the east porch will require Preservation Alliance approval.

The Board confirmed that the current proposal includes demolition—not reconstruction—of the north porch, with necessary siding and clapboard repairs to follow. Mr. Roache noted that some work could begin while remaining estimates are finalized, allowing the project to move forward without committing to the full \$110,000 exterior package at once.

Mr. Tramaloni asked that Mr. Merrill consult with Mr. Bedard to identify the highest-priority repairs. Mr. Merrill recommended authorizing approximately \$50,000 for Mr. Bedard to begin work, allowing him to address the most urgent items while the Town awaits heating, plumbing, and septic estimates expected within the next several weeks. Mr. Roache supported this phased approach.

Ms. Knab expressed hesitation about committing funds before receiving additional cost information, noting the need to address essential interior systems. Mr. Anderson clarified that a \$50,000 authorization would represent roughly one-quarter of available funds, leaving approximately \$150,000 for remaining needs. After discussion, Ms. Knab indicated she could support allocating half of the exterior amount upfront if the Board was comfortable.

Mr. Merrill reported that Mr. Bedard is prepared to begin work immediately, starting with removal of the deteriorated north porch. DPW is also ready to assist before their roadwork season begins. Ms. Knab requested a clear statement outlining what work will be completed with the initial funding. Mr. Merrill agreed to coordinate with Mr. Bedard.

The Board reviewed priority items, including demolition of the north porch, demolition and repairs on the east side, and repairs to the south porch. Estimated costs for these three components total approximately \$54,500. After discussion, the Board agreed this phased approach was the best path forward. Mr. Tramaloni motioned to authorize the Town Administrator to work with Hall & Parlor to allocate \$54,500 to demolish the north porch and repair the east and to pay according to the terms of the contract, 30% down and billing monthly. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Merrill asked whether the Historical Society building was included in the municipal re-keying project. The Board confirmed it was not. Mr. Merrill noted that the building faces similar issues with lost or unreturned keys and requested it be added to the list. The Board agreed, and Mr. Roache said he would speak with the selected vendor to include it.

Ms. Knab moved to the authorizations from the CIP and CRF funds. Mr. Roache noted that the next item is authorization to purchase the Police Department's body camera system, using CIP funds. The request is for \$11,081 from the Town-Wide Technology account. Ms. Knab motioned to authorize the police chief to move forward with the purchase of the police department body camera server in the amount of \$11,081 out of the town-wide technology fund, CIP Fund and to enter into a contract with Pelmac Industries for the project. Mr. Tramaloni seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Roache introduced the workstation replacement item, noting two memos in the packet—one from the Police Department and one from Mr. Hickey. He explained that the total request should not exceed \$12,000, which is the amount available in the Town-Wide Workstation Replacement CIP line.

Mr. Anderson asked what equipment was being proposed. Mr. Roache said the Police Department is requesting three desktop computers, and other departments may need desktops or laptops. Mr. Anderson raised concerns about employees having both a desktop and a laptop, noting that a prior policy allowed only one device. The Board requested clarification from Mr. Hickey.

The Board also discussed the idea of repurposing two older laptops for use in the Hutton Room during meetings. Ms. Knab and Mr. Tramaloni supported the idea since it would not require new spending, while Mr. Anderson expressed concern about setting a precedent. Mr. Tramaloni had a concern regarding confidentiality and shared logins.

The Board requested a detailed list from Mr. Hickey identifying which employees would receive new computers or laptops. They agreed to defer action and revisit the item at the next meeting.

Mr. Anderson motioned to approve the release of \$126,971.45 in CRF funds for the purchase of two replacement defibrillators and to authorize the Town Administrator to enter into a contract as outlined in the April 20, 2026 packet with Stryker Emergency Care. Mr. Tramaloni seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Mr. Roache noted the current balance in that fund is \$350,000. We will be adding another \$150,000 bringing the total to \$500,000.

Ms. Knab introduced the agenda item regarding Municipal Center bathroom renovations and LED lighting upgrades. Mr. Roache reported that the proposal totals \$58,971, and the Building Maintenance Fund within the CIP has \$59,000 available. He noted that Mr. Tramaloni shared information from the Energy Commission about Unitil rebates for LED lighting, and the Town should take advantage of those incentives. Mr. O’Keefe requested that the workscope be sent to him so he can submit it for rebate processing. Mr. Roache will coordinate with him to ensure the project proceeds in the correct order while capturing available savings. Mr. Anderson motioned to approve the release of \$58,971 in CIP funds for the Municipal Center LED lighting project and the bathroom renovations and to authorize the Town Administrator to enter into a contract with Schroeder Construction Management. Mr. Tramaloni seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

The Board reviewed correspondence from Bell & Flynn outlining the proposed paving work. Mr. Batchelder reported that all listed roads will be completed this year except Jason, Jana, Joyce, and Linda Lane, which will be deferred to next year. Of the \$513,000 available, approximately \$400,000 is planned for paving.

Mr. Roache explained that the proposed paving budget is \$403,000, funded by \$125,000 in the operating budget, \$350,000 in the 2026 CIP (about half of which is Highway Block Grant funds), and \$38,000 remaining in a prior CIP authorization. Crack sealing is estimated at an additional \$180,000, bringing the total to roughly \$483,000—well within the \$513,000 available.

Regarding Academic Way, the Town is waiting to confirm whether the school will pave its section; if so, it would be efficient for the Town to pave its portion at the same time.

Mr. Anderson motioned to authorize the expenditure of \$388,000 CIP with \$125,000 from the operating budget for a total of \$513,000 to support the 2026 paving and crack seal program. Mr. Tramaloni seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Roache noted that, in addition to Ms. Price’s earlier update, there is a stormwater MS4 technical assistance program available that would provide consultant support for required mapping work. He and Ms. Connors will pursue this opportunity.

The Finance Administrator reported that the annual audit is progressing well, though it has been demanding on her time.

The Fire Department continues work on its Healthy Community survey, and the Board looks forward to reviewing a draft.

Mr. Roache revisited the Lane property tree-removal discussion, originally raised at the March 2 meeting. Funding had been unclear at that time and was discussed in nonpublic session. The final determination was that the \$15,800 cost would be covered through the DPW Maintenance budget. Mr. Tramaloni questioned whether the Lane Trust should be used, but it was recalled that prior Board discussions established the Trust as a buildings-only fund. The Board agreed no motion was needed.

Mr. Roache will be meeting internally regarding the Stratham Hill Park charette, including outreach to RPC. The Building Inspector consultant will be providing her assessment of the department to him this week.

INFORMATIONAL

Ms. Knab highlighted the Recreation Revolving budget, noting that she and Mr. Anderson were pleased to see the updated information. She explained to Mr. Tramaloni that the fund has been a long-term effort to clarify how fees are collected and spent on recreation programming, and that its use is governed by state law.

Mr. Tramaloni expressed concern about spending without sufficient oversight. Ms. Knab, serving as Recreation Commission liaison, explained that while the Recreation Commission is sometimes involved, most spending decisions are made by the Recreation Department for program needs such as uniforms.

Mr. Roache added that the Recreation Department operates as a largely self-supporting program. Ms. Knab reiterated that expenditures from the fund must comply with state law.

APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Anderson noted Mr. Hanson should be listed Under Consideration for appointment to the Energy Commission as this is the first time his application has appeared on the agenda.

Ms. Knab motioned to appoint Nate Merrill to the Heritage Commission for a three year term to expire at Town Meeting 2029. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Tramaloni motioned to re-appoint Michelle McCann-Corti and Kathy Bower, and appoint Jenny Hinson to the Wiggin Memorial Library Board of Trustees alternates for a one year term to expire at Town Meeting 2027. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Anderson motioned to appoint Geri Denton, Kyle Hollasch, Hansini Woodbury, Lauren Schmidt and Diane Smith for a one year term to the Communications and Community Engagement Committee. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. Motion held for a non-public discussion.

Ms. Knab motioned to appoint Allyson Moore, Colleen Jarvela, Gale Lyon, Chris West, Ellen Johansen for a one year term to the Stratham Community Garden Committee. Mr. Tramaloni seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Ms. Knab moved to the Investment Policy. Mr. Anderson motioned to readopt the current Investment Policy with the additions of items in red from his March 31 email added to Section H. Mr. Tramaloni seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Anderson motioned to authorize the Treasurer to invest the funds as follows. We already agreed for April and May so this is outside of that, \$1 million in NH PDIP, TD Bank 30 day CD of \$6 million for June, July, August and September. Four million for October. Two million for November and also to invest the Conservation Commission \$500,000 in NH PDIP and \$400,000 in 3 month CDs at TD Bank. The Board will receive updated results in October to inform

investment decisions for December and future periods. Reviews will occur on a six-month cycle. Mr. Tramaloni seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Tramaloni reported on the results of the Hutton Room audio test, noting that a small amount of additional, low-cost equipment will be needed. He outlined two options for next steps: holding a special Select Board meeting solely to test the technology, or conducting a regular meeting and recording it. He noted that Microsoft Teams can record meetings, and the recording could be posted on the Town website. Mr. Roache added that Zoom could also be used to stream directly to YouTube.

The Board discussed streaming capabilities, including whether all meetings should eventually be streamed and how storage requirements might be managed. Ms. Knab noted that viewership of Select Board meetings may help gauge public interest in other committees. It was noted that a more advanced Teams account may be needed to allow public access. The Board anticipates being able to conduct a recorded or streamed meeting by June.

Mr. Tramaloni reported that he contacted several Stratham businesses to request congratulatory messages on their signs in recognition of the Fire Department's 75th anniversary. DPW and the Police Department will also display messages on their electronic boards. Board members plan to attend the anniversary ceremony at the Fire Department the following evening.

At 9:21pm Ms. Knab motioned to go into a non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II(a) and II(c) Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. Roll call: Knab-yes; Anderson-yes; Tramaloni-yes

At 9:46pm Ms. Knab motioned to exit the non-public session and seal the minutes noting failure to do so may render a proposed action ineffective. Mr. Tramaloni seconded the motion. Roll call: Tramaloni-yes; Anderson-yes: Knab-yes

All voted in favor of the appointments to the Communications and Community Engagement Committee.

At 9:47pm Ms. Knab motioned to adjourn. Mr. Tramaloni seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard
Recording Secretary