

## **MINUTES OF THE MAY 18, 2026 SELECT BOARD MEETING**

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

**ALSO PRESENT:** Town Administrator Tim Roache, Parks & Recreation Director Seth Hickey

At 7:00pm Ms. Knab opened the meeting and called for a motion on the minutes. Mr. Anderson motioned to approve the minutes of May 4, 2026. Mr. Tramaloni seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Ms. Knab moved to Correspondence. Mr. Roache highlighted some items. They asked him to get the percentage from the DRA notification.

Ms. Knab moved to the drought discussion. Mr. Anderson reviewed the requirements for moving to a Level II drought declaration. The Board requested Mr. Roache speak with the DPW Director to ensure the Town does not violate the watering restrictions. Mr. Anderson motioned to enact a Level II Drought Restriction in accordance with RSA 41:11, effective on May 25, 2026. The lawn watering at odd number of houses restricted to Mondays and Thursdays, even numbered houses on Tuesdays and Fridays. No lawn watering between 8am and 7pm. Enforcement by any sworn officer or the CSO. Mr. Tramaloni seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Ms. Knab introduced the Liberty Tree Project. Ms. Sawyer and Ms. Cushman requested approval to plant a commemorative tree at the Veterans Memorial Garden in partnership with the Sons of Liberty for the 250th anniversary of the United States. The Stratham Hill Park Association agreed to fund the tree (\$200) and plaque (\$250), with a dedication planned for Summerfest. A location near the memorial garden was discussed. The Heritage Commission expressed support. Mr. Tramaloni motioned to approve the purchase and planting of the Liberty Tree Project elm somewhere in Stratham Hill Park—preferably near the Veterans Garden, or otherwise in a suitable location. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Ms. Knab moved to the 1793 Phineas Merrill map. Mr. Tramaloni motioned to accept the Phineas Merrill map from the Stratham Historical Society, return the small map currently on display, and further authorize the Town Administrator or his designee to coordinate transport and installation of the map at the Municipal Center. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Ms. Knab introduced the 4-H barn roof contractor selection . The DPW Director provided a recommendation, and Mr. Roache noted that DPW has worked with the recommended contractor previously and is comfortable with their work. The Board expressed concern that the bid appeared unusually low. Ms. Knab asked whether the Heritage Commission had provided any input. Mr. Roache said he had not discussed it with them. Mr. Anderson motioned to authorize the Town Administrator to enter into an agreement with JB Roofing Systems in the amount of \$49,475 for the purpose of replacing the 4-H barn roof. Mr. Tramaloni seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Ms. Knab asked Mr. Roache to ensure they were insured.

Ms. Knab introduced the Fire Tower RFP. Mr. Roache reported that the communications issue has been resolved. Mr. Tramaloni emphasized the importance of requiring the contractor to coordinate with the owners of the radio antennas and communications equipment on the tower to avoid any service disruptions. Mr. Roache will ensure the DPW Director is aware and will address this coordination during the project kickoff meeting.

Ms. Knab then moved to the Transfer Station credit card processing item. Mr. Roache explained that the existing credit card agreement was originally established solely for Town Clerk property tax transactions and had not been updated over time to include other transactions such as dogs, cars, and boats. Authorizing DPW to process Transfer Station credit card payments would prompt an update to the agreement to include these and all other applicable items. The Board requested to review the updated agreement. Mr. Anderson motioned to authorize the Town Administrator to enter into an agreement with Neumo System Payments for the purpose of establishing credit and debit card payments at the Transfer Station. Mr. Tramaloni seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

#### ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Roache reported that the Planning Department is applying for a PREPA grant to support updates to the Town's stormwater regulations, which will assist with MS4 compliance. The grant will be written in partnership with the Rockingham Planning Commission (RPC), and if awarded, RPC will also assist with the regulatory update work at no cost to the Town.

He also noted that the Town Clerk has informed him tax bills will be mailed on Wednesday.

Mr. Roache continues to work on the Employee Manual. He shared that the Stratham Hill Park visioning session went well and that RPC will manage the facilitation of the discussion. Ms. Knab emphasized that the session should focus solely on the park—not the town forest, fields, or surrounding areas. Mr. Roache stated that RPC's facilitation cost is \$5,750, to be funded through the SHP Master Plan CIP allocation, \$2,500 of which must be used this year or it will lapse. He has the agreement in hand and is seeking the Board's authorization. Mr. Anderson motioned to approve the Stratham Hill Park visioning assistance by the Rockingham Planning Commission at a cost of \$5,750 and to authorize the Town Administrator to sign the agreement on behalf of the Town. Mr. Tramaloni seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Roache reported that Ms. Ruest has been working with the auditors on clarifying the CIP accounting. In past CIP reports, each category included "prior" and "current" amounts, but it was unclear which specific years were included in the "prior" totals. Because CIP funds lapse after five years, this lack of detail made it difficult to determine which funds were still available and which had expired.

As part of the review, it was determined that approximately \$41,000 from 2021 had lapsed and will return to the general fund. Mr. Anderson noted that lapsing funds are not lost; they simply revert back to the Town. Mr. Roache agreed but explained that the lack of clarity created challenges—for example, in the Town-Wide Technology Replacement CIP, where they believed roughly \$41,000 was available, the actual amount is closer to \$30,000. As a result, not all

planned technology purchases can be completed, and the amounts listed in the Town Report do not align with the actual balances.

Mr. Roache will share more information at an upcoming meeting and hopes to establish a clearer process moving forward. He noted that, despite the challenges, this review provides a solid starting point for planning the 2027 CIP.

Ms. Knab referenced the neighborhood block party request. Mr. Roache noted that it will be placed on the June 1 agenda to allow time for the Police and Fire Chiefs to provide input.

Ms. Knab then moved to the Great Bay 5K permit request and recused herself. Mr. Anderson motioned to approve the Great Bay 5K on October 24, 2026 and authorize the Town Administrator to sign on behalf of the town. Mr. Tramaloni seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Ms. Knab moved to the Stratham Hill Park Association agenda, noting that the Association's meeting had been cancelled. Ms. Knab requested this be included to discuss the tree-cutting item that had appeared on their agenda.

Mr. Roache added that the Association has also expressed interest in becoming an official Town committee. Mr. Tramaloni requested more information about the group, and Mr. Anderson offered to send him their charter. Mr. Tramaloni noted that the Association holds approximately \$204,000. Ms. Knab explained that the funds were generated from the Fair. Mr. Tramaloni asked who administers the funds, and Ms. Knab stated that Mr. Hickey serves as Treasurer. She added that if the Association were to become an official Town committee, many questions would need to be addressed, including the status of those funds.

The Board discussed the Association's role in the park. Ms. Knab felt they function in an advisory capacity, similar to other Town committees. She acknowledged the significant work they have done, including installing the ice-skating rink—with Select Board approval—which has been very successful.

Mr. Roache noted that during the recent park visioning meeting, the topic of dogs at the park arose and became emotional. The Association has requested to be placed on a future Select Board agenda to discuss the issue.

#### APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Tramaloni motioned to re-appoint Lucy Cushman to the Rockingham Planning Commission as recommended by the Planning Board, to a two year term to expire December 31, 2027. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

#### OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Roache addressed the scheduled computer replacements noting there is adequate CIP funds. Ms. Knab motioned to authorize the Town Administrator or the Assistant Town Administrator to

move forward with the purchase of the six computers, as well as the hardware cables, in the amount of \$8,827.43. Mr. Tramaloni seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

After discussion, Ms. Knab amended her motion to authorize the Town Administrator or the Assistant Town Administrator to move forward with the purchase of the six computers and miscellaneous hardware cables, not to exceed \$9,800 out of the capital improvement program. Mr. Tramaloni seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Ms. Knab introduced the agenda item regarding e-bikes at the park. Mr. Tramaloni shared an example of an 80-year-old longtime bicyclist who now relies on a pedal-assist e-bike to manage the hills, and he asked whether the Board might consider an exemption for individuals over age 70. Ms. Knab noted that the Board has discussed this topic extensively and has received several letters. She reiterated her position that creating exemptions would effectively open the park to e-bikes more broadly, which is not consistent with the intended use of the park. She added that there are other locations where e-bikes are permitted.

Mr. Tramaloni stated that the concern is not e-bikes themselves but riders traveling too fast, and he doubted that older riders would pose that issue. Ms. Knab expressed sympathy but compared the situation to allowing vehicles to drive to the top of the hill—once exceptions begin, the policy becomes difficult to manage. She also clarified that the Board is not changing the ordinance; they are updating and clarifying an ordinance that has been in place for 50 years.

Mr. Tramaloni noted that the individual plans to attend the June 1 meeting to hear the Board's rationale. He offered an analogy involving service animals, suggesting that some exceptions can be reasonable. Ms. Knab responded that service-animal accommodations fall under ADA requirements, whereas age-related difficulty on an e-bike does not, and the two situations are not comparable.

Mr. Anderson noted that due to noticing requirements, the public hearing on this matter will need to be scheduled for June 15.

Mr. Anderson raised the issue of limiting the number of dogs an individual may walk at the park. Mr. Roache felt the Board was not yet ready to move forward, as Town Counsel has not yet reviewed and approved the proposed language. Mr. Anderson suggested holding the public hearing on this item at the June 15 meeting, alongside the e-bike discussion.

The Board discussed potential limits and agreed on allowing no more than two dogs per person. Mr. Roache will follow up with Town Counsel regarding this change.

Mr. Tramaloni raised concerns about enforcement, noting that while a CSO will be present during the summer, coverage in the fall and winter remains uncertain. Mr. Anderson had hoped the CSO could provide more than 16 hours of coverage at the park.

Ms. Knab introduced the Lane property update. The Board reviewed the spreadsheet outlining available funds and projected costs. Mr. Anderson asked about a note stating that the balance

after November 2030 must not fall below \$100,000; Mr. Roache explained that the Finance Administrator identified this requirement in the original gift language.

Mr. Roache summarized the preliminary cost estimates for major system repairs across the property. As of the end of April, the fund balance was approximately \$197,000, and the projected needs total that amount plus an additional \$235. Priority items include restoring water service to the main house by trenching a new line and boring through the foundation, repairing winter-damaged plumbing, and evaluating or replacing the furnace. Estimated costs include \$1,500–\$3,000 for the water line work, \$9,200 for plumbing repairs, and approximately \$20,000 for furnace replacement or conversion.

Similar plumbing and heating work is needed at the tannery, including an estimated \$5,000 for plumbing repairs and \$16,000 for mini-split installation and electrical work. At the cobble house, the oil tank must be removed and replaced with a propane system, estimated at \$6,000.

Mr. Roache reported that septic inspections revealed significant failures across all three systems, with cracked tanks, root intrusion, and failing leach fields. While no formal estimate has been provided, he anticipates approximately \$20,000 per system, with potential cost savings if shared components are permitted. He will follow up with the septic contractor regarding feasibility.

Ms. Knab cautioned against allowing Mr. Bedard to proceed too far with exterior repair work until funding is clarified, noting that the next installment of gift funds will not be available until January. She also noted that the Board had anticipated many of these issues. Mr. Roache added that Mr. Bedard has agreed to work toward mid-range estimates for now and is capped at the previously authorized \$54,000 pending further analysis.

Mr. Roache reported that the Collector's Eye has raised concerns about bats on the property and would like mitigation addressed as soon as possible.

Ms. Knab asked about the status of the DPW Detail policy. Mr. Roache said he had not yet met with Mr. Batchelder to establish a threshold for when a DPW detail would be required. Mr. Anderson noted that, in his conversation with Mr. Batchelder, it was suggested that since the Select Board approves major events, the Board could determine when a detail is necessary. Mr. Roache will follow up.

Ms. Knab then moved to the updated community health survey. Mr. Tramaloni questioned the purpose of the Fire Department conducting the survey. Ms. Knab explained that it is intended to assess community health needs and explore offering low-level clinics, such as blood pressure checks or vaccines. The Board was supportive of sending the survey.

At 8:18pm 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 8:37pm Ms. Knab motioned to come out of the non-public session and seal the minutes in accordance with RSA 91-A:3 III noting that divulgence of the information likely would affect adversely the reputation of any person other than a member of this board. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. Roll call: Knab-yes; Anderson-yes; Tramaloni-yes

Ms. Knab recognized Mr. Hickey for his department report. He noted that senior programming continues to go well, and with summer approaching, the department will shift its focus toward youth programming. Mr. Anderson commented on the strong attendance at the Friday morning mixers; Mr. Hickey agreed and noted that recent collaboration with the Police Department has helped increase participation.

Mr. Hickey reported that the Recreation Commission is seeking a Chair and that additional Soccer Board members are needed. TMAC has not met recently. He is working with Ms. Dardinski on updating trail maps and developing a more structured plan for trail work in 2026. He also noted that Cole Emanuel's bridge project is complete and turned out very well.

Regarding the Stratham Hill Park visioning meeting, Mr. Hickey said his biggest takeaway was the general lack of public awareness about the park's facilities, programs, and assets. He shared that Britt created a Google map labeling all buildings and features, which he hopes to make available online. An intern has begun photographing all park features to help improve public understanding ahead of the next public meeting. Mr. Hickey also plans to compile a comprehensive list of all programs and activities held at the park, noting that many residents are unaware of the full range of activities, including trail races hosted by various schools and organizations.

Mr. Hickey reported that the summer running race series will not be held this year due to declining participation, particularly among Stratham residents. The mountain bike race series will continue.

Mr. Hickey reported that the Great Bay Food Truck Festival experienced rain, but despite the weather, each participating entity will receive \$10,000. The event did not meet the rain-insurance threshold, so no payout was issued. He met with the Exeter Chamber of Commerce, and both parties agreed to hold the event again next year. They will explore options including adjusting insurance coverage or adding a large tent in the center of the field.

Thursday Nights in the Park food trucks will begin June 4, weather permitting. Summerfest planning continues. The Stevens Park RFP will be released this week. The Recreation Commission has approved additional field use at Stevens and Municipal Center fields to generate revenue. Due to repeated issues with windscreens blowing down at Stevens, they will no longer be installed. As part of future improvements, he suggested planting a row of trees to block wind.

Once DPW places mulch at the playground, mats will be installed there and at Stratham Hill Park. Current programming includes field hockey clinics and ultimate frisbee. The Recreation Commission is considering using recreation revolving funds to purchase a shed at Stratham Memorial School to support summer camp operations. UNH intern Andrew Berwanger began last week.

Mr. Tramaloni asked for Mr. Hickey's perspective on e-bikes. Mr. Hickey responded that they are a growing regional concern, noting a resurgence of electric dirt bikes being reclassified as e-bikes, which has created significant issues across the area. He described several incidents illustrating the risks. Mr. Tramaloni observed that there is ambiguity around what qualifies as an e-bike. Mr. Hickey noted that some private property owners with trail connections have made it clear they do not want e-bikes on their land. He noted that volume of riders should be considered. The discussed the safety concerns these bikes pose on the trails.

Ms. Knab informed Mr. Hickey about the Liberty Tree Project and requested his input on an appropriate planting location.

At 8:52pm Ms. Knab motioned to go into a non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3 II(c). Mr. Tramaloni seconded the motion. Roll call: Knab-yes; Anderson-yes; Tramaloni-yes

At 9:06pm Ms. Knab motioned to come out of the non-public session. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. Roll call: Knab-yes; Anderson-yes; Tramaloni-yes

Mr. Tramaloni provided brief updates from recent Heritage Commission and Planning Board meetings. He noted that Mr. St. Onge was recognized for his work. The Heritage Commission discussed street-naming options; Ms. Knab recalled that the Commission had previously submitted a comprehensive list. The developer is expected to attend the June 1 meeting, where street names will be discussed again.

At 9:09pm Ms. Knab motioned to adjourn. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard  
Recording Secretary