

## **MINUTES OF THE JUNE 15, 2026 SELECT BOARD MEETING**

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

**ALSO PRESENT:** Town Administrator Tim Roache, Director of Public Works Trevor Batchelder

At 7:00pm Ms. Knab opened the meeting and called for a motion on the minutes. Mr. Anderson motioned to approve the minutes of June 1, 2026. Mr. Tramaloni seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Ms. Knab recognized Mr. Batchelder for his department report. He noted that mowing has been taking up much of the crew's time. He provided updates on paving and crack sealing, and reported that roadside mowing is scheduled for late July. The TerraStar truck was sold last week. He has decided to upfit the new 5500 with a switch-and-go system to increase versatility, allowing it to accommodate a flatbed, brine tank, chip body, and salt spreader. Mr. Batchelder also discussed a maintenance issue with the Ram truck and is negotiating for an extended warranty. Ram Chrysler has indicated the issue may be temporary but will continue investigating and recheck the vehicle in one to two weeks. He explained that the switch-and-go system was selected because the all-season body would not be available until after May of next year. He confirmed that the truck will be outfitted with all four modules, at a slightly lower cost and with a faster turnaround than the all-season body. They decided to put the 544 John Deere out to bid.

Mr. Batchelder reported a change to the access control install dates. Wiring will take place at the Police Department and DPW July 20–23; Fire Dept. August 17-20; Municipal Center August 24. Hardware installation will follow. The project is expected to be completed by early September.

Schroeder will be completing the bathroom and lighting work in the Sewall Room, with some preliminary work already done by Mr. St. Onge. Pace Tree Service will remove hazardous limbs at Stratham Hill Park prior to Summerfest. Mr. Batchelder noted that he would like to conduct a future walk-through to identify additional hazardous trees and establish an annual pruning plan; Ms. Knab offered to join him.

The 4-H Barn roof and bathroom RFP will be on hold for now. The Town is awaiting bids for the Stevens Park project. During the recent storm, a large tree leader broke and became lodged in another tree at Smyk Park; a tree company will be needed to remove the hazard. DPW continues to maintain the fields. The Community Garden Committee has cleaned up the garden area and constructed a shed. DPW will also install a shed at SMS for Parks & Recreation use.

Mr. Batchelder reported that the Transfer Station is still awaiting equipment needed to accept credit card payments. Mr. Anderson asked about the Transfer Station redesign; Mr. Roache noted the project is funded in the 2027 Capital Reserve and that no engineering funds appear to be allocated for this year, but he will look into it.

Mr. Batchelder noted that cemetery operations are going well. The Cemetery Trustees are seeking funds for tree work, and DPW has begun maintaining a small cemetery on River Road across from the Scamman field. He also reported that the department remains down one full-time and one part-time position.

Mr. Anderson asked about the DPW Detail policy. Mr. Roache said the threshold for when the Detail fee applies still needs to be defined, and discussion followed. Mr. Batchelder provided an update on staff training.

He also reported that a contractor delivering pool water damaged newly paved roadway; DPW will contact the contractor regarding repairs.

Ms. Knab recognized Steve Hamilton, Whitney Consulting Group, to discuss the eleven 2025 abatements. Mr. Anderson motioned to accept the recommended denials and the one approval of the assessor. Mr. Tramaloni seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Katie Walker has been assigned as the new representative to the Town. She brings eight years of experience and works as their representative in the towns of Barrington, Kingston, and Brentwood.

Ms. Knab asked Mr. Anderson for the Communications Committee update. Mr. Anderson reported that the group has met three times. He gave a brief background on the qualifications of each of the committee members. The group did an audit of Stratham's communication versus Exeter, Greenland and Newmarket. They came up with a list of a dozen items of quick fixes, some of which have already been implemented. The committee continues to work on several remaining website-related items, including restoring the ability for residents to communicate directly with boards and committees and reinstating email notifications for agendas and minutes. Mr. Anderson noted that while no single item is significant on its own, completing many of them together will be beneficial.

The committee is also conducting community feedback sessions to gather broader input beyond their own perspectives. Four demographic groups are being targeted: online users, general residents, seniors, and Town employees. Sessions will be held between June 20 and July 8. Topics to be explored include communication gaps and barriers, usability of Town communication channels, content and accessibility, and potential improvements. Following the sessions, results will be assessed. The committee hopes to offer a simple online survey to reach a wider audience.

Mr. Tramaloni asked whether the towns used for comparison had staff dedicated to community communications or social media, noting he did not want to add work to existing staff. Committee member Mr. Hollasch said he has been assigned to meet with the Town Administrator and Select Board Chair and requested time to gather their feedback. Ms. Knab recognized member of the public James Bigweather, who suggested sharing Town information on Stratham Talks.

Ms. Knab opened the public hearing to discuss Chapter 4-01-01 Stratham Hill Park Regulations Ordinance with regards to e-bikes in the park. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Mr. Roache said this is the first of two hearings on this subject. Under State RSA259:27 there are three classes of e-bikes. Class 1 is pedal assists, where the motor only kicks in when you're pedaling; Class 2 has a throttle and can propel the bike without pedaling and Class 3 is

also a pedal assist only, like Class 1, there's no throttle, but it can give you assistance up to 28 miles an hour. It was clarified that the discussion pertains to these e-bike classes and not mini-bikes, though the ordinance language may need to address other electric motorized bikes as well. Ms. Knab noted that the Stratham Hill Park Association, the Conservation Commission, the Trail Management Advisory Committee, and abutting property owners with conservation easements were all consulted in developing the recommendation. Mr. Roache explained that banning all classes of e-bikes is being considered because it is difficult for officers to distinguish Class 1 from Class 3 bikes, and a blanket approach would create an enforceable ordinance. He added that concerns about higher-speed bikes prompted the discussion.

Ms. Knab stated that all groups consulted recommended banning e-bikes. She noted that the Conservation Commission has authority over the Town Forest and can make its own determination, and abutters with conservation easements have also expressed that they do not want e-bikes permitted. She added that allowing them only on Town-owned property would create an inconsistent patchwork of rules across connected lands. She then opened the discussion for public comment.

Two representatives of New England Mountain Bike Association spoke in support of continued dialogue regarding e-bike use. They expressed appreciation for the partnership with Stratham Hill Park and acknowledged the complexity of the issue. Speakers noted that e-bike policy discussions are occurring nationwide and that there are ways to distinguish between e-bike classes through manufacturer displays and control systems. They emphasized that most users are responsible and that e-bikes can broaden access for individuals who might not otherwise be able to ride due to age or physical limitations.

They also recognized landowner concerns about motorized use and the difficulty of identifying whether a rider is using a low-speed pedal-assist bike or a higher-powered device. Both speakers encouraged ongoing communication among the Town, landowners, and the riding community, and offered to share educational materials and research to support enforcement and public understanding. Chris Heal, resident, stated that he works in Exeter and allows the biking group to operate out of his facility, noting they are an excellent group. He acknowledged that issues often stem from a small number of problematic users. Drawing on his background as a former motorcross rider, he emphasized the importance of responsible use. He suggested that one possible approach might be to distinguish permitted devices simply by whether they have pedals or not.

Mr. Hollasch, referenced a document he previously submitted outlining his research on e-bike classifications. He stated that visually distinguishing between types is generally straightforward: bikes resembling small motorcycles are typically the problematic models, while those resembling standard mountain bikes are almost always Class 1 pedal-assist e-bikes. He noted that banning all e-bikes would place Stratham in contrast with federal and state agencies—including the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, and several New England states—which have concluded that Class 1 e-bikes do not cause additional trail wear. He explained that enforcement challenges arise because Class 1 and Class 3 bikes look nearly identical, making hardware-based regulation impractical. He suggested that regulating rider behavior—such as speed, yielding, and conduct around other trail users—is a more effective approach and is the method adopted by most agencies. He added that from a distance, an e-mountain bike is indistinguishable from a traditional bike, so a full ban would not resolve

enforcement issues. Mr. Hollasch offered to resubmit his research document, but Mr. Roache confirmed he had forwarded it to the Board.

Ms. Barker, resident, stated that many of the trails involved are on private property, including hers, and she does not want e-bikes on her land. She said she already has difficulty with people not following the posted rules. She questioned research suggesting e-bikes do not cause additional trail wear, noting she has seen large ruts she had not seen before. She added that while e-bikes may make trails more accessible, she does not believe the park or the trails on her property are suitable due to their narrowness, sharp turns, and the crashes she has already witnessed with regular mountain bikes. She expressed concern that e-bikes are heavier and could cause more severe injuries and noted she has been run off the trail by mountain bikes in the past.

Ms. Barker also stated that e-bikes allow riders to cover more miles and make more trips, increasing wear and tear. She emphasized her role as a steward of the land, stating that e-bikes startle wildlife and increase recreational pressure on nesting birds and turtles, including endangered turtles and amphibians in Stratham Hill Park. She noted that her land is under a conservation easement intended for habitat protection rather than recreation, and stressed the cumulative impact on wildlife, urging respect for the land and the animals that live there.

Ms. Knab thanked everyone for their comments. Upon hearing no further comments, Ms. Knab motioned to close the Public Hearing on Chapter 4-01-01 Stratham Hill Park Regulations. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Anderson noted that New Hampshire law (RSA 265:144-a) allows municipalities to prohibit e-bike use on locally managed sidewalks, multi-use and natural-surface trails. They said the statute already prohibits Class 3 pedal-assist e-bikes on municipal bicycle or multi-use paths unless specifically permitted by a town. They added that further research is needed on definitions and how they apply to these trails.

Ms. Knab clarified that the ordinance was developed in coordination with Mr. Hickey, who also supports it. She noted the challenge of balancing access for people who might not otherwise ride with the reality that Stratham Hill Park is heavily used, not very large, and already experiences user conflicts. She said the Board has been discussing the issue for months, acknowledging it is a difficult decision. Another public hearing will be held in a few weeks, and she appreciates continued feedback and dialogue.

Ms. Knab opened the public hearing on Ordinances 12-03 and 12-04 regarding dog control at Stratham Hill Park. Mr. Roache explained that the proposed change is in response to incidents involving individuals—often commercial dog walkers—bringing multiple dogs onto park, forest, or private land, on or off leash. He noted that commercial activity is already prohibited, but the core issue is that one person cannot effectively manage large groups of dogs. The proposal would limit any one person to no more than two dogs at a time. Legal counsel advised that referencing “commercial” is unnecessary because it is unenforceable.

Mr. Anderson agreed that enforcement is based on the number of dogs, not whether someone is commercial. Ms. Knab reiterated that commercial activity is already addressed elsewhere. Mr.

Roache clarified that although advertised as a commercial dog walking change, the proposal is solely a two-dog limit.

In response to Ms. Barker's question, Mr. Roache confirmed that no person may have more than two dogs under their responsibility or on leash at once; families with three dogs would need two people. Ms. Knab noted ongoing issues with individuals arriving with as many as seven off-leash dogs not under control.

Ms. Barker asked about enforcement and jurisdiction. Ms. Knab said the rule would apply to the entire park under the Stratham Hill Park Ordinances. Mr. Roache read the current ordinance, which applies specifically to the park and not to Gifford Farm or other fields. Ms. Knab noted that most people are unaware the greater park consists of multiple parcels. They discussed signage, existing leash rules, and the areas where the proposed limit would apply. Ms. Knab motioned to close the public hearing. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Ms. Knab moved to the Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act grant. Referring to the memo in the packet, Mr. Roache reported that the Police Chief is seeking the Board's support to apply for a grant. The Board was supportive of him moving forward but requested more definitive information and specific details for the July 6<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Ms. Knab moved to the PREPA Town Landing Shoreline Protection Grant. Mr. Hollasch was present to answer any questions. Hearing none, Mr. Anderson motioned to authorize Allison Knab to sign the letter of support for the PREPA funding application for the Stratham Town Landing Living Shoreline and Erosion Management Plan on behalf of the Select Board. Mr. Tramaloni seconded the motion. All voted in favor. They thanked Mr. Hollasch for his work on the project. He expressed appreciation for the Board's support and thanked Ms. Price for her enthusiasm and quick response.

Mr. Roache reported receiving only one application for Building Inspector and two for Office Coordinator. Mr. Anderson requested Mr. Tramaloni be included in the hiring process. Mr. Roache reported that the Library's Strategic Plan Committee is seeking community input through a survey and suggested the Communications Committee coordinate with them. The Board briefly discussed the keyless access system and the need for backup keys in case of a power failure.

They then discussed the possibility of the Stratham Hill Park Association converting to a Town committee. Mr. Roache said the group would need to dissolve as a volunteer membership organization and then be re-established as a Town committee; Mr. Anderson noted this requires two votes at two meetings. Mr. Roache added that the Association has already transferred its funds to the Trustees of the Trust Fund. Ms. Knab emphasized that the group must fully understand the implications, including Board-appointed membership, and term limits. Mr. Tramaloni questioned why a volunteer group was making decisions about Town-owned property; Mr. Anderson clarified they do not have decision-making authority. Ms. Knab acknowledged the unusual structure and observed the group has recently become more active. Mr. Roache noted that Select Board members sit on the SHPA board. Ms. Knab said that regardless of the path chosen, they have advisory-only authority; any actions at the park require Select Board approval.

Mr. Roache also reported receiving another complaint regarding off-leash dogs, noting a resident's garden was damaged and that the issue will need to be addressed.

Mr. Roache noted credit card processing at the Transfer Station should begin in three or four weeks.

Mr. Roache informed the group that the state rejected the road name of May Apple. He suggested Coneflower as a replacement.

Mr. Roache forwarded for the Board's review language for a sign the Garden Club is requesting.

Mr. Anderson asked about the Emergency Management Director position. Mr. Roache said Mr. Hickey is interested and that he will also check with police and fire for additional interest. He also expressed concern that the CSO has too few hours allocated to the park.

Mr. Roache reviewed his current priority list, including completion of the Employee Manual, updates to policies and procedures, review of the Lane property at a special meeting on June 23, issuing a request for bids for curbside pickup, work at Stevens Park, exploring potential water connections with Exeter or Newmarket, and completing the deed transfer to Mr. Blaine as approved at Town Meeting. He is also working on the Capital Reserve and Capital Improvement Program. Mr. Anderson requested adding succession planning within the public safety departments to the list of priorities.

Mr. Anderson motioned to approve the fee waiver for the Front Pavilion for a July 30 potluck for the Friends In Action under the condition they clean up the area after their use/leave the area as they found it. Mr. Tramaloni seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

At 8:45pm Ms. Knab motioned to go into a non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II (a) the promotion or compensation of a public employee. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. Roll call: Knab-yes; Anderson-yes; Tramaloni-yes

At 9:09pm Ms. Knab motioned to come out of the non-public session and seal the minutes noting failure to do so may render a proposed action ineffective. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. Roll call: Knab-yes; Anderson-yes; Tramaloni-yes

At 9:10pm Ms. Knab motioned to adjourn. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard  
Recording Secretary