

Administrative Policy and Procedure

Appointments to Boards and Commissions

Adopted by Select Board: November 9, 2020

This policy is designed to implement and supplement the policy for Appointments of Board & Commission members in the Select Board Manual. Where conflicts exist between this policy and the Manual, the Manual shall supersede.

The Town of Stratham benefits from - and significantly relies on - the civic-mindedness of its residents and their willingness to support the Town's governance through service on volunteer Boards and Commissions. This policy and procedure is established to achieve the following:

1. Harness volunteer energy of our residents for the betterment of the Town;
2. Recognize and show appreciation for residents willing to volunteer;
3. Ensure residents are aware of opportunities and are afforded the opportunity to serve;
4. Ensure full membership on Boards & Commissions; and
5. Effectively track appointments, terms, term expirations, and term renewals, in a manner that complies with the State RSAs and terms of establishment of each Board and Commission.

Note: Throughout this document going forward, the term "board" is used as short-hand to refer to all Boards, Commissions and Trustees as well as special and ad-hoc Committees. All references to the Select Board are "Select Board".

Select Board Responsibility & Staff Roles

The responsibility to ensure that seats on the various Town of Stratham volunteer boards are occupied in a manner consistent with the terms of law establishing the them (State RSA or Select Board Action) rests with the Select Board. The following additional roles and responsibilities are expected:

- The Town Administrator's role is to support the Select Board in carrying out this function and to supervise the performance of Town staff assigned duties under this policy.
- Town staff who are assigned to serve as staff support for the various boards are responsible for assisting the Select Board, Town Administrator and Chairs of each in ensuring a complete membership and tracking terms, term expirations and renewals and following this policy as well as ensuring a process for orienting and supporting new members.

The Select Board welcomes and encourages the support of the community, board chairs, and the membership of each board in recruiting residents to serve and supporting them to grow in their roles.

Membership and Terms

Each board is established via official action in state law, adopted by Town Meeting, or some other formal action. Special or Ad-hoc Committee(s) are appointed by the Select Board. The length of terms, membership criteria and other details vary depending on terms of establishment. Most terms expire following Town Meeting, annually. For example, for a term, which expires in 2021, the expiration shall be the adjournment of the Town Meeting in that year.

This list includes only those boards whose regular members, alternates and associated vacancies are under the appointment authority of the Select Board (SB).

| Boards | Established by | Staff |
|--|------------------------------------|---|
| Select Board (Vacancy) | State Law | Town Administrator |
| Planning Board | State Law | Town Planner |
| Zoning Board of Adjustment | State Law | Building Inspector/Code Enforcement Officer |
| Library Board of Trustees (SB fills vacancies and alternates) | State Law | Library Director |
| Trustees of Trust Funds (SB fills vacancies and alternates) | State Law | Town Administrator |
| Cemetery Trustees (SB fills vacancies) | State Law | Director of Public Works |
| Heritage Commission | State Law | Town Administrator |
| Conservation Commission | State Law | Town Planner |
| Recreation Commission | State Law | Parks & Recreation Director |
| Public Works Commission | State Law | Town Administrator |
| Energy Commission | State Law | Town Administrator |
| Exeter Squamscott River Advisory Committee (make nomination) | State Law | Town Planner |
| Rockingham Planning Commission | State Law | Town Planner |
| Stratham Fair Committee (act on nominations) | Select Board/Charitable Trust Unit | Town Administrator |
| Technical Review Committee | Zoning Ordinance | Town Planner |

Process for Applying to Town of Stratham Volunteer Boards

Opportunities to serve on newly formed boards and vacancies on existing boards under the appointment authority of the Select Board shall be advertised by posting on the Town's website for at least a two week period and distributed via other means (such as Town newsletters) prior to being appointed by the Select Board. For seats where a current member seeks reappointment, no such advertising period is required.

Town staff assigned to boards shall be responsible for requesting the Executive Assistant to post these openings including relevant details such as whether they are for full terms, partial term, or as an alternate and the expiration of the term.

Town staff are expected to actively work to fill open or vacant positions from the time they occur to the time they are filled and to generally support the Select Board, Town Administrator and relevant chairs to maintain a full boards with a complement of alternates according to each board's terms of establishment.

Town staff assigned to each board shall ensure complete applications are provided to the Executive Assistant, appointment letters are distributed, board chairs are notified and all necessary communication to ensure the new member is successfully connected with the chair for communications purposes. The staff person is also responsible for ensuring the website is updated with the name of the new member.

The Town Administrator shall be responsible for issuing appointment letters noting the date of the Select Board action and other details such as the term length and expiration, including voting member or alternate status.

Prior to December 31st of each year, the Town staff assigned to each board shall submit to the Town Administrator a summary of the board expirations for the following year. The Town staff shall also coordinate with the chairs to determine if expiring members are seeking renewal and to coordinate the submission of a new application as required.

Staff shall make the Town Administrator aware of resignations immediately and in writing and shall collect a written statement of resignation from the board member. The Town Administrator shall be responsible for ensuring Select Board action on resignations.

The Town Administrator shall bring forth all applications received for each position to the Select Board chair for inclusion on the Select Board's Agenda. Each application for appointment will appear on two Select Board agendas. Applicants for open positions, shall first be placed on a Select Board meeting agenda and noted as "for consideration", prior to being acted upon at the next regular Select Board meeting. At the time a name appears for a second time on an agenda, it shall be referenced on the agenda as "to be voted on".

Following appointment, board members will be required to swear an oath with the Town Clerk. An appointment letter from the Town Administrator reporting on the Select Board's action, which shall include the Town Clerk (and other appropriate staff) as a "carbon copy", will advise the board of the same. Records of appointment developed by the Town Clerk and confirmation of oath will be provided to the Select Board for signature and returned to the Town Clerk for filing.

Review of Applications and Placement on Select Board Agendas

The Select Board Chair and the Town Administrator shall be responsible for ensuring applications are presented and acted upon by the Select Board in accordance with its procedures outlined in the Select Board Manual and this policy.

Town staff assigned to each board are responsible for ensuring each formal application for appointment is transmitted to the chair of that board as a courtesy prior to that application appearing on a Select Board agenda for consideration.

Some Boards take an active role in recruiting new members and recommending them to the Select Board. The process of recommending new members as a board, is accommodated in this policy through sending applications to chairs before they appear on Select Board agendas for consideration and by allowing time for consideration by requiring the appointment be voted on at a second meeting of the Select Board (see above). Board chairs are also encouraged to provide feedback to the Select Board Chair or Town Administrator in their capacity as chair or by communicating feedback of their board.

Responsibility of Applicants to Boards and Commissions

The Select Board's goal is to place volunteers in seats that will be personally fulfilling for residents as well as productive and effective for the Town and each board's charge, mission or legislative purpose. In accordance with this goal, the following actions are recommended to applicants preparing to apply for appointment to Town boards.

1. Familiarize themselves with the board's purpose, work and charge.
2. Contact the relevant board chair or Town staff to express interest and or learn about the responsibilities and requirements of members.
3. Attend at least one meeting as a member of the public for further understanding. If the board meets infrequently, we encourage speaking with the chair.
4. Assess and confirm their general ability to attend the regular meetings if appointed.
5. Access relevant training materials and workshops, including those by New Hampshire Municipal Association (NHMA) of which the Town is member.¹

Expectations and Attendance

In appointing residents to boards the Select Board expects members to actively engage and participate in the business of that board. Members are expected to show commitment to the mission and engage in the tasks of their committee as well as fulfill their role in a professional and ethical manner. In furtherance of this expectation, the Select Board has established the following attendance policy. Note: while the policy

¹ To access trainings or workshops, members are encouraged to request assistance from the Executive Assistant who can assist with registration and payment to NHMA if applicable.

establishes vacancy based on number of unexcused absences, removal from office shall ultimately be determined by state law (where applicable, for Land Use boards and for any other board where removal procedures are established by law). For the purposes of complying with this attendance policy, participation by remote means constitutes “attendance”.

Records of attendance shall be kept by the chairs with the assistance of assigned staff. The attendance records of boards shall be reported to the Select Board on an annual basis, by December 31st of each year, or the last Friday of December, whichever is latest. If a member notifies the chair prior to a meeting that he or she will not be able to attend the meeting due to sickness, vacation or work or business commitment, such absence will be considered an excused absence and so noted in the minutes of the meeting and the annual attendance summary sent to the Select Board. The Select Board may declare vacant the office of any member who has unexcused absences from more than one-third of the regularly scheduled meetings of the board in any calendar year.