



**SELECTBOARD
TOWN OF NEW CASTLE, NH**

APPROVED

**AUGUST 18, 2026, 11:00 AM
LOCATION: Macomber Room**

Meeting Minutes are maintained on file within the Town Clerk's office, Town Hall, 49 Main Street, New Castle, NH.
Meeting Notices are posted on bulletin boards within the Town Hall, Website, and the New Castle Post Office.

**Join The Meeting by ZOOM: Please Join the Select Board Meetings by Zoom @
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3294523610> Passcode: 656268**

PRESENT: Chair William Stewart, Select Board Member Jane Finn, Select Board Member Pam Cullen, Town Coordinator and Police Chief Don White, DPW Director Chris Robillard, New Employee, Matt. Interim Fire Chief Mark Wooley, Building Inspector Russ Bookholz, Administrative Assistant Bernice Barnes.

ALSO PRESENT: Residents Dave McGuckin, Curt Springer, Dawn Lake, Bill Kingston, Chad Roberge, Avitar

Chair Stewart called the meeting to order at **11:00 AM**.

The Select Board's first order of business is the Consent Calendar:

Review and Approval of the Previous Select Board Minutes, dated August 4, 2026

MOTION: To Approve the Select Board Minutes Dated August 4, 2026, as written.

MOTION: P. CULLEN

SECOND: J. FINN

UNANIMOUS

MOTION CARRIED

Acceptance of Payroll Manifest Dated: 8.13.26 in the amount of \$50,845.24

MOTION: To Accept Payroll Manifest Dated: 8.13.26 in the amount of **\$50,845.24**

MOTION: P. CULLEN

SECOND: J. FINN

UNANIMOUS

MOTION CARRIED

Acceptance of Accounts Payable Manifest Dated: 8.13.26 in the amount of \$50,771.83

MOTION: To Accept Accounts Payable Manifest Dated: 8.13.26 in the amount of **\$50,771.83**

MOTION: P. CULLEN

SECOND: J. FINN

UNANIMOUS

MOTION CARRIED

TOWN OF NEW CASTLE, NEW HAMPSHIRE
OFFICE of the TOWN COORDINATOR

PROJECT STATUS REPORT
AUGUST 18, 2026, SELECT BOARD MEETING

REPORTING PERIOD

The reporting period is from August 4, 2026, through August 18, 2026

Departments:

Police Department:

The Police Department received a free solar-powered speed sign that will be permanently mounted on a pole; the final location will be determined. Chief White will be in communication with the school. The other sign will be delivered in a month as repairs were needed. The solar powered sign will be mounted permanently at the school, and neighbors will be consulted to avoid any lighting issues. Chief White welcomes any suggestions or comments on the location.

The Police Department reported that the Wood Island fireworks event went smoothly and without any issues. They would like to thank everyone involved for helping make it a successful event with an excellent turnout. The only negative feedback concerned the trash that was left behind in the dumpster and the bathroom building, but otherwise it was a very successful event. BI Bookholz noted that he spoke with the organizer, Ms. Garvey who stated that even before the music started Gather had collected \$600.00.

Police Department Traffic Safety Notice

The Police Department would like residents to be aware that, beginning August 25, the State will be milling and repaving Route 1B for approximately two weeks. Residents should plan ahead for possible delays.

Mr. McGuckin wanted to make sure that the paving was not being done in lieu of raising the Causeway project. He was assured by Chief White that the paving was a separate project.

Fire Department:

Note: Chief White stated this was a good time to acknowledge Mark Wooley who is now the Interim Fire Chief. Chair Stewart announced Mark's new position, noting that Mark has been with the Department for a long time which provides a measure of continuity and continuation of established policies.

The Fire Department continues to conduct in-service water rescue training. New member/ joint training manual and sessions are being refreshed.

The Fire Department is conducting on-hydrant pump training Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. Residents may see crews out throughout late summer/ fall, flowing small amounts of water in public areas.

Note: Chair Stewart expressed concern that if there is any chance of brownish water due to the flushing that the public be given notice. Director Robillard stated he would work with Chief Wooley on this issue.

The Fire Department has taken lots of calls about expired flare and extinguisher disposal. The FD does not accept drop offs of these items and refers all parties to the hazardous disposal day in the fall. Store materials in a dry area away from combustibles in the meantime.

Chief White was asked to read the following message from Former Fire Chief Ted Hartmann:

Dear residents of New Castle,

It has been an honor to serve as your Fire Chief for the last seven years. The kindness so many of you have shown, the support you have lent and the time you took to listen will always be something I'll be grateful for. Please know the fantastic group of dedicated professionals that comprise your fire department are well positioned to continue to deliver high-quality emergency services now and in perpetuity.

With my eternal gratitude,

Ted Hartmann

DPW:

Note: TC/Chief White advised that there is an issue with parking blocking the entrance to the Ocean Street property and asked Director Robillard about signage. It is also becoming an issue on the weekends as well. The residents are also part of this problem. Ms. Finn thought a chain was supposed to be put up on the weekends. Chair Stewart feels it's important to get together and have a plan for all the parking issues in that area. People walking their dogs are also another issue. FEMA work is also due to start at the Ocean Street, and there was a brief discussion about permitting and start dates.

Roads

Installed various replacement signs at Rec and Common

Organizing yard at Pit Lane

Buildings/ Rec

Town Hall

Director Robillard met with the Committee and contractors regarding work to be performed to the building

Public Safety

DPW

Historical Society

Duplex

Working through remaining items on punch list (smoke detectors, tables and chairs, etc.)

Common

Great Island Common sign installed; cleanup and staining in the coming weeks.

Note: The sign can now be seen from both sides and is an improvement.

Received quotes for debris loader anticipated in the CIP request. Looking for feedback and authorization to purchase from Eliot Small Engine if agreeable. Chair Stewart and Director Robillard discussed the funding issue and CIP and indicated the purchase can probably be taken care of operationally. If the payment comes out of the trust funds, there will need to be a vote of the Select Board.

Eliot Small Engine: \$9,536.40

MB Tractor: \$13,215.00

Water N/A

Sewer N/A

Stormwater

Replaced collapsed catch basin on Walbach St

TAP Grant

FEMA

Finished revetment at Walbach St. Fence and road shoulder are remaining items to complete

Other: Note: Chair Stewart questioned the Director about whether or not he is ready with whatever is needed regarding manholes in relation to the paving of Rte. 1B project. The Director noted the contractor for the State is going to replace 7 of our manholes. The cost will come out of the sewer operating budget.

Finance Administrator

N/A

Action Items:

Phones lines were repaired at Town Hall.

Update on ADA at Historical Society from Town Attorney.

TC/Chief White stated that legal counsel responded on this issue and the next steps in the process can go forward. He will check with Primex, the Town's insurer regarding this matter.

Chair Stewart asked that the trailer at Town Hall be removed. TC/Chief White said it is out as of tomorrow and referenced a communication problem for the delay. We were not charged for the month.

Health Officer paperwork was submitted on 08/13/2026. TC/Chief White noted that the matter is pending State approval. Nolan Godfrey, who is with the Fire Department, is the new officer.

Building Inspector Russ Bookholz, to talk about Laural Lane tree on French property over hanging and possibly a safety issues, see deed attached.

BI Bookholz informed the Board that the tree is on the French property, (not the Town or right of way) and after brief discussion, Eversource will be contacted to assist with the removal of the overhanging branches. TC/Chief White will follow up with the property owner. Select Board Member Cullen thanked both Chief White and BI Bookholz for responding. Property location: 66 Laurel Lane.

Ms. Cullen asked about the status of PFPOPE, which is a private retirement plan proposed by former Chief Hartmann for employees to opt in. Interim Chief Wooley had no update as he was not involved with this effort. Chair Stewart recalled that the Finance Administrator was reviewing the matter and initially expressed some concerns about the amount of potential paperwork and responsibilities for administration costs. He suggested tabling the matter for the time-being. Ms. Finn asked Chief Wooley if any of the employees had signed up, but he was not familiar with the program. No action was taken today. Ms. Cullen asked to have the matter placed on the next meeting's agenda.

Chair Stewart reviewed action items with TC/Chief White, including parking on Ocean Street and related parking issues at the Common, removal of trailer, manholes, paving of Rte. 1B (tried to postpone to after Labor Day), and signage issues. Director Robillard noted there are a couple of construction projects that are planned. Chair Stewart TC/Chief White and the Director need to get a working group going on projects coming and parking issues. BI Bookholz noted construction will be starting fairly soon at the very end of Ocean Street.

NEW BUSINESS:

Introduction of New Employee- DPW.

Director Robillard introduced Matt Russell, who has been on board for a week and a half as a full-time employee for DPW. Chair Stewart and the Select Board welcomed him.

Property Address: 66 Laurel Lane, Regarding Tree Removal. (Covered earlier in Agenda)

OLD BUSINESS:

Town Hall Committee Update.

Select Board Member Finn reported that the contractor, Steve Pailin, and structural engineer, Dan Martel, who were recommended and approved at the last Select Board meeting for a cost of \$5,000.00, did come and do work with the walls at Town Hall but at a reduced cost of \$3000.00. The Committee is awaiting the architect's report. The Committee is scheduling a meeting with the Select Board and all staff who will be occupying the new facility for August 27, 2026, to get a better understanding of their spaces and needs. Committee Member Farrar has submitted paperwork regarding one of the grants which may be available. (NH Preservation Alliance). Ms. Finn indicated the Committee would like to schedule a series of public meetings on September 7th and 28th, and October 19th.

Chair Stewart asked to combine two of the September meetings to cover findings and initial design. These meetings will be in the evening and at BI Bookholz's suggestion, can be accessed via Zoom. Committee Member McGuckin suggested additional lights be provided at Town Hall during renovations. A final schedule will be forthcoming from TC/Chief White and Ms. Finn regarding August 27th meeting with Select Board. Note: Ms. Finn will make sure final dates for public meetings are posted and on the website.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Dawn Lake, President of New Castle Historical Society, asked for update on NCHS ADA access issue, and was advised that the Town received the requested legal opinion, and includes some solutions. The next step is TC/Chief White will speak with the homeowner to come up with a solution.

William Kingston spoke about issues with Emergency Services here in New Castle and mentioned that many of the public do not understand what is going on. He noted that some of them believe Portsmouth should take over the Fire Department. He noted there are only 1 or 2 people available to answer calls at the Fire Department. He proposed stopping the practice of private conversations about the future of the Fire Department and have more public input. He believes the Board should level with the public about the limited resources New Castle has. He would like consensus from the public on what we want for a Fire Department. He would like a long-term plan for the Department. There could be a resolution drafted to present at the next Town Meeting. Chair Stewart thanked Mr. Kingston and related that there is an interim plan which gives the Town continuity of service, however, it does give us the opportunity to look at hiring and other issues. He noted that the private meetings were related to personnel. Chair Stewart looks forward to the discussions involved in coming up with a plan, and the public will be involved. There was an interim plan done with the former chief which is currently in place. Select Board Member Cullen encouraged people who claim they don't know what's going on to come to the meetings and to read the minutes which are posted on the website. Curt Springer requested that the Interim Plan referred to be posted on the website. Chair Stewart does not believe the Interim Plan should be put on the web just yet, but it is available at Town Hall for the public to review.

DPW: Bid Process F-350

After discussion and at the Director's request, a sealed bid was opened for the DPW 2015 F-350 truck. A bid of \$5,000.00 was submitted by Resident Matt Taylor. The Director noted that the trade in value is substantially higher. Chair Stewart and the Director will review this matter prior to any final action.

OTHER:

Chad Roberge, Avitar, Property Revaluation.

Chair Stewart stated that this subject will be in public session to start, then may go into non-public session. The matter is the revaluation which is done every five years for the Town's properties, according to statutes. Mr. Roberge of Avitar serves as the Town's Assessor. This is the basis for the taxes we pay to the County and State. Avitar has recently been coming around doing the revaluation. We now have some preliminary numbers, which of course can change. Mr. Roberge is here to talk about his findings. Chair Stewart asked Mr. Roberge for his presentation.

He began by noting there have been a good amount of sales, representing all segments. It's a good representation of the community. Overall, he stated the Town is looking at a 70% increase in value covering 2021 to present. He explained their process and feedback. The properties closest to "downtown" reflected a preference and that helped to cause the increase. Two sales were directly on the river. He gave some other comments on various properties and the sales, noting that the State will come by to review everything that Avitar did in terms of amount of assessment. He spoke of the uniqueness of some properties (Formerly Tarbell). It sold with a frontage lot you could build on. The next step is sending out letters to the property owners. The letters should go out today. Meetings with owners could start two weeks from Friday. A million-dollar house five years ago will be assessed at \$1.7 million now. Chair Stewart and Mr. Roberge indicated that the tax rate will be going down significantly as a result of this revaluation. Chair Stewart explained the equalization rate process to better understand the gradualness of the increase. The tax rate is set in October/November time frame. Curt Springer inquired about the effects of having an ADU on the valuation. According to Mr. Roberge, if its attached or detached makes the difference in evaluation. Further discussion took place, prior to going into a non-public session to discuss an abatement case.

At 11:08, Select Board Member Finn made a Motion to go into Non-public Session pursuant to NH RSA 91-A: 3: 5II(e) Legal. Select Board Member Cullen seconded. (Chair Stewart, Aye, Ms. Finn, Aye, Ms. Cullen, Aye). Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the Select Board, Chair Stewart called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION: Adjourn

MOTION:
SECOND:
UNANIMOUS
MOTION CARRIED

Meeting Adjourned at PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Bette Jane Riordan
Recording Secretary

Next Selectmen's Meeting– Tuesday, September 1, 2026, 10:00 am

Public Safety Building- (Second Floor)

Non-Public Session RSA 91-A:3 (Roll Call Vote Required)	
1	II. (a) Personnel
2	II. (b) Hiring of a public employee
3	II. (c) Matters affect adversely a person's reputation – extends to abatements – inability to pay.
4	II. (d) Acquisition, sale or lease of real or personal property
5	II. (e) Consideration or negotiation of pending claims or litigation
6	II. (i) Matters relating to emergency function, release of information – cause damage to property or life
7	RSA 91-A: 5 IV. Records that would constitute an invasion of privacy, including welfare.
<i>Vote to seal the minutes of nonpublic session – 2/3/ vote required</i>	

Chairman William Stewart; Selectwoman Jane Finn; Selectwoman Pamela Cullen; Town Coordinator, Don White