TOWN OF NEWFIELDS SELECT BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 15, 2026

Select Board Present: Chairman Hoby Harmon, Mark Kasper & Catherine (Cat) Tarnowski
Absent: Mark Kasper
Others Include: Tom Conner, Jeff Buxton, Jeff Feenstra, Drew Marshall & Police Chief Young

The meeting to order at 7:00pm.

Hoby stated that Select Board member Mark Kasper was unable to attend tonight and advised anyone wishing to speak or address the Board would need to come to the podium and speak into the microphone.

Before proceeding, Hoby extended his deepest appreciation and gratitude to everyone who helped on Election Day. He thanked those who arrived first thing in the morning to help set up the room, those who stayed until approximately 9:00 p.m., and especially Sue, Kisha, and all the volunteers who came forward to assist.

Hoby emphasized that participation is what the local democratic process is all about—taking part, making one's vote count, and registering one's vote. He noted that local elections can have a greater impact on people's daily lives than state or federal elections. Hoby concluded by thanking everyone who participated and helped make Election Day a success.

Emergency Management Director, Tom Conner Retirement

Jeff Feenstra recognized Tom Connor's 40 years of service and retirement with the following remarks:

"Good evening, everyone. We gather here tonight to celebrate a career that is quite literally defined by being there for this community through thick and thin.

After 40 remarkable years of service, our Emergency Management Director, Tom Connor, is officially hanging out, hanging up his radio and entering a well-deserved retirement.

Four decades. To put that into perspective, when Tom first started public safety, Emergency Management looked very different.

But while technology, the radios, and the weather-tracking systems have changed, one thing remains absolutely constant: Tom's steady leadership.

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The job of an Emergency Management Director is a unique burden. While the rest of the community is taking shelter, seeking safety, or sleeping soundly, Tom has spent 40 years running toward the storm.

He's been the voice of reason in the middle of chaos, the strategist coordinating our emergency services, and the calm anchor keeping our community grounded through floods and blizzards, fires and Seabrook Station drills.

Most people only see the flashing lights or hear the sirens. But those of us who have worked alongside him know about the thousands of invisible hours: the endless planning, the endless emails and phone calls, the missed family dinners, and the relentless training to ensure that if a disaster ever struck, we were ready.

Tom, you've spent 40 years protecting our families, our homes, and our community.
You've carried a heavy weight with grace, humility, and absolute integrity.

You leave behind a legacy of safety, an agency that is stronger because of you, and a community that owes you a debt that it can never fully repay.

As you step into this next chapter, we wish you clear skies, calm weather, and no after-midnight calls.

On behalf of the Town of Newfields, the State of New Hampshire, and every single citizen you've protected, thank you.

It's our highest honor to present you with this plaque commemorating your 40 years of extraordinary service.

Congratulations on your retirement."

Emergency Management Funds
Hoby stated that, while on the subject of Emergency Management, the Town received a letter dated September 2, 2026, from Homeland Security and Emergency Management advising that $16,480 in funds will be forwarded to the Town of Newfields for use as Emergency Management resources. He noted that these are reimbursement funds, but it is always appreciated to receive the notification and the associated funding.

Fire Chief Buxton
Hoby and Jeff Buxton discussed the current status of the Fire Department, including call volume, staffing, and equipment. Jeff confirmed that the new fire truck will fit in the existing fire station, addressing a rumor that the truck would not fit. The Department reported 448 calls in 2025 and 429 calls to date in the current year, including fire, medical, and in-service calls.

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The Board discussed ongoing volunteer staffing challenges and potential future use of per-diem or full-time personnel, as well as the need for an appropriate facility to support staffing. Jeff provided an update on the new fire truck purchase and discussed options for the existing truck, including selling it or retaining it as a reserve apparatus. Hoby noted that retaining the truck would involve additional insurance and other expenses.

Ex-Officio Report
Cat provided an update on the September 10 Planning Board meeting. The Planning Board discussed potential revisions to the Subdivision Regulations to clarify requirements and address "spaghetti" or "finger" lots. Proposed language is still under review, with a formal hearing anticipated at a future meeting.

The Board also discussed recording the Muddy River Smokehouse mylar, the Home Fashions site plan and a pending RPC survey proposal, and the proper documentation of motions and votes. Impact fees were reviewed, with the Board noting that they appear unlikely to be needed based on current development potential in Newfields.

The Board discussed updating the Town Plan, including potentially forming a committee to review survey information, land use, natural resources, transportation, and other community priorities. Transportation priorities discussed included improved crosswalks, wider shoulders on Routes 85, 87, and 108, and drainage improvements on Route 85 and Summer Street.

The Board also discussed whether a formal statement regarding data centers was necessary and reviewed permitted uses within the industrial area. Potential additional uses, including healthcare or schools, were discussed; any changes would require a zoning amendment.

Public Safety Building Meeting
Hoby reported on the September 2, 2026, Public Safety Building meeting. The Fire and Police Departments initially developed a concept for an approximately 17,000-square-foot facility, with a review underway to determine whether the size can be reduced while maintaining an efficient and functional building. Approximately 20–25 residents attended the meeting.

The proposed facility would serve the Police, Fire, and Emergency Management Departments and could also provide multipurpose space for emergency shelter, cooling/warming, and power outage needs. Environmental and wetlands assessments have been completed and are being reviewed with the architect for site planning.

The Board discussed emergency vehicle access, potential alternative properties, Route 87 and Route 108 traffic concerns, and the limited space available at the existing fire station for expansion. The proposed site is approximately 14.2 acres, with 3–4 acres potentially needed for the facility. The possibility of conserving the remaining acreage and adding access from Meadow Road was also discussed.

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Hoby also reported that the Town may have an opportunity to host an ALS/paramedic response vehicle in the future, which could improve emergency response times and potentially provide rental revenue to the Town.

Drew Marshall Correspondence - 25 Runaway Rd

Hoby reported that the Select Board had received several emails from Drew Marshall regarding concerns 25 Runaway Rd which abuts his property – a shed and a bridge, both which are located on wetland property. Hoby stated that the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (DES) had contacted the Town seeking information and that he had returned the call and was awaiting a response. Hoby also spoke with the Building Inspector regarding whether a permit had been issued for a shed on the property, and the Building Inspector agreed to research the matter.

Drew Marshall, who was in attendance, outlined his concerns regarding potential environmental contamination, noting that the driveway slopes toward the neighborhood's natural drainage and that the area appeared to have been constructed in or near wetlands. He expressed concern that potential runoff, vehicle fluids, or spills could enter the wetlands and potentially reach the Piscassic River. He also raised safety concerns regarding a bridge stating that he considered it hazardous and that the condition should be properly evaluated, particularly before a potential property purchaser assumes responsibility.

Hoby stated that the environmental concerns fall within DES's area of responsibility and that the Town was awaiting additional information. He noted that certain matters related to the purchase and sale of the property are civil issues between the property owners and prospective purchasers and are outside the Town's authority. Regarding the safety concerns, Hoby stated that the Town would review the matter after the appropriate information and research had been obtained.

Drew referenced a prior 2023 investigation involving his property and requested that similar review procedures be considered for the property in question. Hoby stated that he had contacted DES and the Rockingham County Conservation District (RCCD) and was awaiting responses. The matter remains under review.

Right to Know Fees

Hoby reported on discussions with Town Counsel regarding the Town's Right-to-Know/FOIA fees. The current fee of $0.25 per page was determined to be low compared with other communities. Hoby motioned to increase the fee to $0.80 per page for all FOIA requests. The motion was seconded by Cat, and all were in favor. The motion carried.

Maeve's Mobile Cocktails – September 13th

Hoby reported that the Select Board received notice approximately two weeks prior from Maeve's Mobile Cocktail Service regarding an event scheduled for the 13th at Vernon Family Farm. The liquor license approval was required prior to the event. All three Select Board

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members were consulted and agreed to the request, and the signed approval was submitted to the Liquor Commission. The Board formally addressed the matter at tonight's meeting.

Girard Correspondence
The Board read the attached correspondence received from the Girards who reside at 298 Piscassic Rd. (attach)

Oil Bids
Hoby reported that two oil bids were received: Palmer Gas & Oil at $3.889 per gallon and Harris, Franconia Fuel at $4.509 per gallon. Hoby recommended and motioned to award the bid to Palmer Gas & Oil. Cat seconded and the motion carried.

Veteran's Credits
Hoby motioned, seconded by Cat to approve the Veteran's Credits for tax maps 205/6 and 210/5. Both were in favor and the motion carried.

Contra Dance
Hoby motioned, seconded by Cat to approve the Town Hall rental application for the Contra Dance on October 2nd. Both were in favor and the motion carried.

Prior Meeting Minutes
Hoby motioned, seconded by Cat, to approve the 8/25/26 Select Board Meeting Minutes. Both were in favor and the motion carried.

MS-535
Hoby reported that the 2026 DRA MS-535 Financial Report of the Budget for the period ending December 31, 2025, had been reviewed and was found to be accurate and complete and was now signed.

ALS Services
Hoby also provided an update on ALS services. The proposed membership fee would begin at $15,000 in 2027 and increase annually, reaching approximately $81,244 in Year 5, with the per-call fee increasing from $115 to $250. Additional information and financial charts will be provided during the upcoming budget process. The Town currently has approximately $37,400 in its ALS warrant article fund, a donor has contributed nearly $28,000 toward ALS-related expenses. ALS funding will be further discussed during budget season.

Hoby reported on the Governor's Office of New Opportunities and Rural Transformational Health (GO NORTH) grant program and noted that Newfields may be eligible for available funding. He has contacted the Police Department and will notify other Town departments so potential grant opportunities can be identified and pursued.

Tom Grella Correspondence

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Tom Grella reported continued concerns regarding increased truck traffic and activity at the commercial property which abuts his house. He noted that seven trailers were currently on site, with several remaining for multiple days, and that tractor trailer and trash collection activity occurred as early as 3:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m. He provided photographs and offered additional documentation with dates and times to assist the Town in addressing the ongoing issue.

Hoby stated that the Town would continue to monitor the situation and gather sufficient documentation to determine the next appropriate steps.

Library Trustees Correspondence

Mike Mackey, representing the Library Board of Trustees, confirmed receipt of correspondence from Win Fream to the Select Board. Hoby confirmed that the correspondence had been received. The Select Board will review the information, conduct additional research, and prepare for further discussion at the next meeting. It was noted that a non-public session may be necessary for portions of the discussion under RSA 91-A.

At 8:13pm, Cat motioned, seconded by Hoby, to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Kisha Therrien

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Girard Letter:

September 12, 2026

Dear Select Board Members,

We would like to thank you for your cooperation in finalizing our updated Easement Deed and Termination of Temporary Driveway. We have enclosed both recorded documents, along with the recorded plan showing the new driveway, for the Town's records.

As we have worked toward establishing a good working relationship with SELT, we would also like to take this opportunity to express our disappointment with how the Conservation Commission handled matters involving our easement.
By way of brief background, in 2006, Dorothy Haughton granted approximately 14 acres of land to the Town of Newfields for conservation purposes. She retained approximately 1.8 acres outside of conservation, referred to as the "Exclusion Area," for future development. She also granted SEL T an easement across her property to provide access to the Piscassic Greenway. The documentation allowed SELT to utilize a "Temporary Driveway" until the property owner constructed a new driveway within the designated SO-foot Right of Way for development of the Exclusion Area. We initially asked the Conservation Commission to work with us regarding safety concerns associated with SELT's use of the easement across our property in 2020. By 2022, we recognized the significant increase in recreational use of the Piscassic Greenway and Rockingham Recreational Rail Trail following COVID and made efforts to explore a mutually beneficial solution. Specifically, we offered to place our 1 .8-acre Exclusion Area into Town conservation, together with the approximately 14 acres already conserved, in exchange for working toward a resolution of our safety concerns.

While we fully understand that SELT is a separate organization, the Town had previously worked with SELT and the homeowner when the property was placed into conservation and the easements were established. At the same time, the Town was actively working with SELT in an effort to conserve the Fort Rock property. Given that relationship, we were disappointed that a similar effort was not made by the Conservation Commission to bring the Town, SEL T, and our family together to explore a potential resolution that could benefit all parties.

We recognize that our proposed contribution involved only 1.8 acres. However, that land sits among more than 100 acres of conserved and publicly utilized land. Conserving the Exclusion Area would have prevented future development in that location, including the associated daily vehicle traffic crossing recreational areas, overhead utility lines, a septic system, and other impacts within an area otherwise surrounded by conserved land. From our perspective, there appeared to be a

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greater focus on acquiring additional conservation land than on addressing the management and practical impacts of conservation land already under the Town's care.

Of additional concern, inaccurate and judgmental comments regarding our situation were made during public meetings by Commission members. We also later learned that our willingness to place the Exclusion Area into Town conservation had not been fully communicated to all members of the Commission.

We made efforts to correct the record and explain our concerns at both Select Board and Conservation Commission meetings in 2024. We specifically clarified that, although we had retained an attorney to help us better understand the deeds and navigate our safety concerns, we had not initiated, and have never initiated, legal action against SELT. We reiterated that our goal was to work with the Town and SELT to find a solution that would best benefit all parties. We felt it was important to make that clarification publicly because a different narrative had developed regarding our intentions.

While clarifying our position during the June 19, 2024, Conservation Commission meeting, we were disappointed when Co-Chair Chris Griffith did not allow a fellow Commission member to respond to our question regarding her thoughts on future development occurring among conservation lands. We understand that it is the Chair's responsibility to manage the meeting; however, we also believe that open discussion and freedom of expression are important components of the public process, and that Commission members should have a reasonable opportunity to express their own views and respond to residents' questions and concerns, particularly when a question is directed to them.

We were further disappointed when Mr. Griffith accused us of "setting a bad precedent." We were left questioning what precedent he believed we were setting. Our efforts were focused on working collaboratively with the Town, SELT, and other involved parties to reach a solution that would protect the land while also considering the interests and safety of those who own, abut, and recreationally use it. We did not believe that seeking cooperation and a mutually beneficial resolution should have been characterized as setting a bad precedent.

We have also experienced situations in which current Commission members have recused themselves from matters involving our property or SELT on certain occasions, but not on others, while other members with affiliations with SELT have chosen not to recuse themselves at all. That inconsistency has made it difficult for us to understand what standards are being applied and has further contributed to our concerns regarding fairness and impartiality.

We are sharing these concerns not simply to revisit the past, but because we believe Newfields is a beautiful small town with a great deal to offer its residents. We recognize and appreciate the significant time and effort that volunteers devote to

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serving on Town boards and commissions. At the same time, these positions carry considerable responsibility and can directly affect residents, their property, and their relationship with the Town.

As the Select Board considers appointments to the Conservation Commission and other Town boards in the future, we respectfully ask that you give careful consideration not only to an applicant's interest and experience, but also to their integrity, judgment, willingness to treat all residents fairly and respectfully, and ability to thoughtfully and objectively consider reasonable options in the best interests of the Town.

Thank you for taking the time to consider our concerns and for keeping the enclosed recorded documents with the Town's records.

Sincerely,

Mark and Lynn Girard

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