

STRAFFORD COUNTY COMMISSIONERS PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

THURSDAY, AUGUST 6, 2026

Zoom: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88076078990?pwd=XhfZv74QrC78qR5pDjpARV2GadmFIV.1>

Meeting ID: 880 7607 8990 Passcode: 391058

A public meeting of the Strafford County Commissioners was held Thursday, August 6, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. in the Commissioners' Conference Room, Justice and Administration Building, 259 County Farm Road, Suite 204, Dover, New Hampshire. It was noted that meeting notices and agendas had been sent to all interested parties, as well as posted on the County Website. Present were Commissioners Maglaras and Leavitt. Also present were Administrator Raymond Bower, HOC Superintendent Chris Brackett, IT Specialist Kelly Parker, Susan Rice, and Executive Assistant/Deputy Treasurer Janet Hilber. Commissioner Feliciano joined from Clearwater, Florida alone in a room via Zoom and she is allowed to vote as permitted by law.

1. Approve Minutes of July 30, 2026: Commissioner Leavitt motioned to approve the minutes of July 30, 2026 as written. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Feliciano, and approved unanimously (3 to 0) by a roll call vote.
2. Affordable Housing Discussion: The Commissioners discussed the County's potential role in helping address the region's affordable housing shortage following recent state legislation encouraging political subdivisions to evaluate publicly owned land for housing opportunities. The Chair stated that, given the amount of County-owned property, the County should identify parcels that may be suitable for affordable housing development. He emphasized that the County should not operate or manage housing projects itself, but instead make land available through long-term leases or a Request for Proposals (RFP) process, allowing private developers or nonprofit organizations to construct and manage the housing. Commissioners agreed that the ongoing housing crisis has made it increasingly difficult for working families, service industry employees, and even some County employees to find affordable housing. It was noted that the County's role would be limited to leveraging existing assets, with no direct County funding or additional tax burden placed on taxpayers. The discussion referenced previous regional affordable housing initiatives and acknowledged efforts by municipalities such as Dover, Rochester, Somersworth, and Durham to encourage housing development through policy changes. Commissioners recognized that rising construction costs and broader economic conditions continue to limit the supply of affordable housing, making some level of public participation necessary to encourage development. The Chair proposed reviewing County properties, consulting with local housing authorities, and exploring the possibility of issuing an RFP for suitable sites, while noting that any future proposal would ultimately require approval by the County Delegation. Commissioner Feliciano expressed full support for the initiative, emphasizing community need and offering to co-lead the effort. Chairman Maglaras mentioned that EDA grants no longer exist but similar grant programs may be available to offset construction costs. The Board expressed unanimous support for pursuing the evaluation of County-owned land as a potential resource to help expand affordable housing opportunities throughout Strafford County.
3. Upcoming Events: Chairman Maglaras asked if there were any upcoming events to discuss. The following events were discussed:
 - a. Summer Exploration Program Graduation and Awards, Thursday, August 13, 2026
4. Old and New Business: Chairman Maglaras asked if there was any old or new business to discuss. A brief update was provided on the status of the new warming center construction project and it was reported that steel is in place and rafters were being installed. Chairman Maglaras noted he had a conversation with Chief Driscoll, who will lead emergency management coordination for the facility's opening. The contractor confirmed the project remains on schedule with a target opening date of November 15, 2026. Chairman Maglaras discussed the question of retaining the current vendor with the Tri-City mayors who expressed satisfaction with the existing operation and did not wish to change vendors.
5. Questions and Comments from the Public Related to this Agenda: Chairman Maglaras asked if there were any questions from the members of the public or other. Mrs. Rice expanded on the affordable housing discussion by emphasizing the need for a broader mix of housing options throughout the region, particularly starter homes and smaller cottage-style developments rather than primarily apartment units. She shared observations from recent travel where neighborhoods had been successfully redeveloped with compact homes featuring efficient layouts, rear access roads, and shared infrastructure, suggesting similar concepts could benefit Strafford County. She also noted the growing need for senior housing and encouraged the county to work collaboratively with municipalities and Strafford Regional Planning to develop long-term housing solutions.

STRAFFORD COUNTY COMMISSIONERS PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

THURSDAY, AUGUST 6, 2026

Page 2

The Commissioners agreed that homeownership remains an important goal for many residents but acknowledged that restrictive local zoning, increasingly stringent building codes, high land values, and rising construction costs continue to make affordable housing difficult to develop. The Chair observed that communities must provide a diverse housing mix and recognized that some municipalities are more receptive to higher-density or smaller-home developments than others. He reiterated that the County's contribution could be limited to making suitable county-owned land available to help reduce development costs, while recognizing that construction expenses remain the largest obstacle. The Commissioners agreed that continued discussions with municipalities, regional planning organizations, and the private sector would be necessary to identify practical, long-term solutions that could help expand affordable housing opportunities across Strafford County.

6. Non-Public Session for the Purpose of Discussing Personnel Issue(s) and Contract Negotiations Pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II: Commissioner Leavitt motioned to go into non-public session at 9:19 a.m. for the purpose of discussing a personnel issue(s) and contract negotiations pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II. Commissioner Feliciano seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously (3 to 0) by a roll call vote.
7. Return to Public Session: Commissioner Leavitt motioned to return to public session at 10:25 a.m. Commissioner Feliciano seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously (3 to 0) by a roll call vote.
8. Motion to Seal Non-Public Session Minutes: Commissioner Leavitt motioned to seal the minutes of the non-public session. Commissioner Feliciano seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously (3 to 0) by a roll call vote.
9. Adjournment: The Commissioners signed paperwork as appropriate. Commissioner Leavitt motioned to adjourn the meeting at 10:29 a.m. Commissioner Feliciano seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously (3 to 0) by a roll call vote.

Respectfully submitted,

George Maglaras, Chairman
Leslie A. Feliciano, Vice Chair
Sean M. Leavitt, Clerk

Strafford County Board of Commissioners
Non-Public Session

Date: AUGUST 6, 2026

Members Present: George Maglaras, Chairman and Sean M. Leavitt, Clerk. Leslie Feliciano, Vice Chair, alone in a room in Clearwater, Florida joined via telephone.

Motion to enter Nonpublic Session: Commissioner Leavitt seconded by Commissioner Feliciano.

Specific Statutory Reason cited as foundation for the nonpublic session:

X RSA 91-A:3, II (a), **Discussing Personnel Matters.** *The dismissal, promotion, or compensation of any public employee or the disciplining of such employee, or the investigation of any charges against him or her, **unless** the employee affected (1) has a right to a public meeting, and (2) requests that the meeting be open, in which case the request shall be granted.*

 RSA 91-A:3, II (e), **Discussing Contract Negotiations.** *Consideration or negotiation of pending claims or litigation which has been threatened in writing or filed by or against the public body or any subdivision thereof, or by or against any member thereof because of his or her membership in such public body, until the claim or litigation has been fully adjudicated or otherwise settled. Any application filed for tax abatement, pursuant to law, with any body or board shall not constitute a threatened or filed litigation against any public body for the purposes of this subparagraph.*

Roll Call Vote to enter nonpublic session:

YEAS: Maglaras, Feliciano, and Leavitt

NAYS: None

Entered non-public session at 9:19 a.m.

Other persons present during nonpublic session: Administrator Ray Bower and Superintendent Chris Brackett. Description of matters discussed, and final decisions made. **Note:** Any votes taken must be recorded "in such a manner that the vote of each member is ascertained and recorded": No votes were taken; Personnel issues and security infrastructure at HOC were discussed.

Note: Under RSA 91-A:3, III. *Minutes of proceedings in nonpublic sessions shall be kept and the record of all actions shall be promptly made available for public inspection, except as provided in this section. Minutes and decisions reached in nonpublic session shall be publicly disclosed within 72 hours of the meeting, unless, by recorded vote of 2/3 of the members present, **taken in public session**, it is determined that divulgence of the information likely would affect adversely the reputation of any person **other than a member of this board**, or render the proposed action of the board ineffective, or pertain to terrorism. In the event of such circumstances, information may be withheld until, in the opinion of a majority of members, the aforesaid circumstances no longer apply.*

Motion to leave nonpublic session and return to public session by: Commissioner Leavitt; seconded by Commissioner Feliciano.

Motion: PASSED / DID NOT PASS (circle one)

Nonpublic meeting tape removed; public meeting tape replaced (if applicable). Not Applicable.

Public session reconvened at 10:25 a.m.

Motion to seal non-public minutes: Commissioner Leavitt motioned to seal the minutes of the non-public session; seconded by Commissioner Feliciano, because it is determined that divulgence of this information likely would:

X Affect adversely the reputation of any person other than a member of this board

Roll Call Vote to seal minutes:

YEAS: Maglaras, Feliciano, and Leavitt

NAYS: None

Motion: PASSED / DID NOT PASS (circle one)

These minutes recorded by: Janet Hilber, Executive Assistant

Commissioners' Initials