MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 17, 2026 SELECT BOARD MEETING

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

ALSO PRESENT: Town Administrator Tim Roache, Finance Administrator Lori Ruest, Police Chief Anthony King, Sgt. Michael Doucette, Director of Public Works Trevor Batchelder

At 7:00pm Ms. Knab opened the meeting and asked for a motion on the minutes. Mr. Anderson motioned to approve the August 3, 2026 minutes. Mr. Tramaloni seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Ms. Knab moved to the MS-434 review. Ms. Ruest explained that the 434 report provides estimated revenues for 2027, based on prior years and using a conservative approach. She noted that estimated revenues are $192,000 lower than last year, largely due to a decrease in motor vehicle permit fees. Based on actual activity through July 31 and projecting for 12 months, the estimate is $2,300,000.

She spoke with the Town Clerk, who also observed that motor vehicle revenue is down. While the cause is not entirely clear, last year saw higher activity from new car purchases, which is not occurring this year.

Other revenue lines are generally straightforward. A modest increase is anticipated in building permits, reflecting the new fee structure.

Ms. Ruest reported that last year's revenue included significant motor vehicle payments from UPS and another fleet. UPS revenue typically arrives in November, and the second fleet paid early—in December 2025—so those amounts are not reflected in 2026. She noted the Town Clerk could not estimate how much November revenue might exceed a typical month, though past reports could be reviewed to identify the registrations.

She added that any updated figures will be revisited with the DRA representative during tax rate setting. Rooms and meals and the highway block grant are generally level-funded; the rooms and meals number is received in October, and preliminary DOT figures show it is $2,000 lower than last year. Ms. Ruest will check on a discrepancy in the 2023 rooms and meals actuals.

She highlighted a new revenue line for the solid waste surcharge reimbursement, representing three quarters of the year due to the program's start-up timing. Recreation year-end fees remain level, and she will confirm whether these reflect salary support revenue.

Revenue from renewable energy credits has begun, estimated at $300–$400 per quarter. Investment income remains unchanged, anticipating a full year of interest from CDs and the investment pool. Rental revenues will be updated once the October rate increase figures are available.

The MS-434 report is due to DRA on September 1, and Ms. Ruest will review updated activity through August 27–28 to capture any changes.

Mr. Batchelder reported that Emery Lane will be paved by late August or early September, followed by Benjamin Road. The church parking lot will also be paved, and there will be no expansion of Emery Lane. Milling depth will vary depending on underlying concrete conditions. After Benjamin Road receives a full top coat, work will move to the Jason Drive neighborhood for leveling. The Town is still awaiting confirmation on Academic Way regarding its portion of paving. Once paving is complete, a quote will be obtained from Industrial Traffic Lines for line striping, including stop bars and parking lots.

Roadside mowing is approximately 95% complete, delayed slightly due to Summerfest and equipment issues. On Union Road, Eastern Pipe has evaluated the culvert and is confident it can be lined; the Town is awaiting pricing and scheduling, with hopes to complete the work before cold weather.

Public Works will address several potholes in-house.

The summer intern, Quinlan, performed an impressive amount of work, completing a full inventory of catch basins, logging approximately 910 inlets, outlets, and basins into GIS (up from about 140 previously). He also logged cemetery data into the app before returning to school.

The department is awaiting upfitting of the new 5500 truck, expected in late October or early November. Staff continue maintenance at Town facilities and the Lane property. Heating and cooling work at the tannery is scheduled to begin this week. Mr. Roache will provide details separately.

Mr. Batchelder noted he has the John Deere loader bids ready for the Board's review.

Ms. Knab moved to the Police presentation. Chief King provided an overview of the department's evaluation of their sidearms, noting national and New Hampshire concerns regarding the SIG P320. A working group of officers conducted extensive research. Sgt. Doucette explained that although Stratham adopted the P320s in 2020, the model has been associated with uncommanded discharges, litigation, and design issues, including the lack of a trigger safety found on other manufacturers' duty pistols. Several officers reported they do not feel comfortable continuing to carry the weapon.

Trade-in options are limited due to engraving on the slides and market reluctance to accept P320s. White Birch Armory offered $160 per pistol. Quotes for transitioning to the Walther PDP—the preferred alternative—range from $23,000–$24,000, including optics, lights, holsters, and required training. Additional range time and red-dot certification would be needed for qualification.

The department is nearing its annual qualification period, so some officers may qualify on the SIGs before transitioning. Ms. Knab raised concerns about where traded weapons may ultimately be sold; Chief King emphasized due diligence and stated that, given officer safety concerns, he does not wish to retain the SIGs.

Ms. Knab asked whether traded SIG P320s could end up on the black market. Sgt. Doucette explained that White Birch Armory would handle all transfers, fully removing liability from the Town. The department would request immediate removal of the Town's patch from the slides, and White Birch—being federally regulated—would manage resale under stringent requirements. Chief King added that reputable vendors would not risk improper transfers.

Chief King noted that the golf fund currently holds $41,000, with another $30,000 anticipated from the fall tournament. With Board approval, he could purchase the new weapons—estimated at $25,000–$26,000—from that fund. This would allow acquisition before annual qualification. White Birch is also willing to take abandoned firearms held by the department in trade, as they are well past the statutory 180-day retrieval period.

Mr. Tramaloni asked for confirmation that the trigger mechanism on the Walther PDP would not compromise safety. Sgt. Doucette confirmed the design is safe and functions naturally.
In response to Ms. Knab's question about quantity, Chief King stated the department would purchase 14–15 pistols to cover 13 full-time officers plus several spares. No additional ammunition would be required, and Sgt. Doucette anticipates a smooth transition.

Ms. Knab asked that the Board's appreciation be conveyed to the working group, noting their thorough research and due diligence.

Mr. Anderson motioned to authorize the Police Chief to expend up to $26,000 from the First Responder Golf Fund for the purchase of new Walthers firearms. Mr. Tramaloni seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

At 7:32pm Ms. Knab motioned to go into a non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II (a) to discuss employment matters. Mr. Tramaloni seconded the motion. Roll call: Knab-yes; Anderson-yes; Tramaloni-yes

At 7:56pm Mr. Anderson motioned to come out of the non-public session. Ms. Knab seconded the motion and motioned to seal the minutes noting failure to do so may render a proposed action invalid. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. Roll call: Knab-yes; Anderson-yes; Tramaloni-yes

Under Old Business, Ms. Knab reopened discussion on the Stratham Hill Park Association. Mr. Roache reviewed updates made since July, noting that the group met in early August to refine the draft charge. At the Association's request, the name was changed to the Stratham Hill Park Association Committee. The revised charge outlines seven voting members, two appointed liaisons (Select Board and Parks & Recreation Director), staggered terms, and a treasurer position.

Association members Dan Crow and Greg Blood supported the updated charge. Mr. Anderson requested additional language and membership changes, prompting discussion about whether Select Board liaisons should vote on committee matters that may later come before the Board.

Members noted that liaisons often abstain depending on the committee and issue. Ms. Knab emphasized the importance of collaboration on major Stratham Hill Park matters.

Further discussion addressed committee membership. The Board clarified that committee applications must be submitted. Mr. Roache agreed to incorporate requested edits, including seven voting members with the Select Board liaison included, revised staggered terms (two three-year, two two-year, two one-year), and allowing three alternates. He will add signature lines and a date and bring the updated charge back for review. Ms. Knab motioned adoption of the charge and operating procedures for the Stratham Hill Park Association Committee as amended. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Ms. Knab moved to the Lane property update. Mr. Roache reported significant progress on repairs and said the house should be rentable soon, with remaining work able to occur while occupied. He recommended keeping the existing oil furnace for now, noting it can be made functional for about $1,500, avoiding an $18,500 replacement this year and preventing exposure of a new system to construction debris.

He reviewed exterior work authorized at $54,500 and noted additional structural and masonry repairs still needed. From the initial $200,000 allocation, $43,744 has been spent, $6,510 earned, leaving $162,766. His recommendation is to maintain the existing furnace, proceed with structural work on the tannery roof, complete septic replacements, and pause exterior work once the $54,500 threshold is reached unless the Board chooses to use Heritage Commission funds. Discussion followed regarding Heritage Commission funding. Ms. Knab asked for clarification on the Commission's earlier commitment of $50,000. Mr. Merrill confirmed the Commission voted to expend the funds, not loan them, but noted the Select Board must authorize use of the Capital Reserve Fund. Rental income currently goes to the general fund rather than the maintenance fund as originally envisioned.

Ms. Knab expressed concern about delaying bat mitigation due to potential biohazard issues. Mr. Roache noted mitigation and cleanup could total $13,000–$20,000, which would place the trust fund in a small deficit if done now. She also noted DPW has been contributing substantial labor and emphasized the need to establish a dedicated rental-income line for future maintenance.

Mr. Roache outlined recommended expenditures to stay within the initial $200,000: repair the Lane furnace, convert the cobble house to propane, complete septic work, and authorize tannery repairs. Exterior work by Mr. Bedard will pause once the remaining $15,000 of the approved $54,500 is spent, unless Heritage funds are used to continue.

The Board agreed to authorize Mr. Roache to proceed with the items in his memo. Ms. Knab requested he obtain Ms. Ruest's opinion on the full proposal. Mr. Merrill asked to be notified of any additional questions before the Heritage Commission's September meeting.

Ms. Knab moved to the Communications and Community Engagement update. Mr. Anderson reported on resident feedback received through the committee's outreach. He noted that only one respondent was under age 40, while approximately 15 seniors participated. The most significant negative feedback concerned the Town website. He, Mr. Hickey, and Ms. Richard have been working to address identified issues, though he feels the Town lacks the technical expertise needed for comprehensive fixes. He hopes a resident with website expertise may be able to provide guidance.

Mr. Anderson stated that the newsletter continues to be well-received and is a key source of information for residents. He identified the need for improvements in social media and suggested adding electronic message boards inside and outside the Municipal Center, broadcasting Select Board agendas, and using Alerts more frequently to enhance communication.

Mr. Roache provided background on the Curbside Collection RFP, noting that the Town's contract with Casella expires in November. The Board discussed service frequency and the pros and cons of recycling options.

Mr. Roache reported on updates to the Mailbox Damage Replacement Policy, noting it is consistent with surrounding towns. Mr. Anderson requested changing "Selectmen" to "Select Board," then moved to approve the policy as amended. Mr. Tramaloni seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Ms. Knab moved to the road-naming item for 170 Portsmouth Avenue. After brief discussion, she motioned to authorize the use of Greenwood Lane. Mr. Tramaloni seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Roache reported that Ms. Sawyer has been doing an excellent job. She and Mr. Hickey have addressed the phone issues. We will be ready for the drill. He will follow up with candidates for the Emergency Management Director volunteer position; the Board would like an informal conversation with candidates before appointments.

Mr. Roache reported progress continues on the keyless access system.

Mr. Roache provided an update on the CIP, stating that Ms. Fowle is doing a great job working with department heads to gather project information and dollar amounts. The Town will be ready for budget season. He explained that Stratham continues to handle CIP as a special article, and if they wanted to transition to a capital-reserve-fund model, it would require substantial research.

Mr. Anderson gave a brief update on the Employee Manual.

He requested a calendar of important dates leading up to Town Meeting. Mr. Roache said it is complete and will be distributed; he and Ms. Ruest have improved the spreadsheet.

Mr. Anderson asked about the status of the public hearings; September remains the target.

RESERVATIONS
Regarding the Cornerstone cross country meet. Ms. Knab motioned support for Cornerstone and the Cooperative Middle School using Stratham Hill Park for their cross country meet on Tuesday

September 22 and waiving the fee and asking them to coordinate with the Fire Department to ensure they have EMT personnel there. Mr. Tramaloni seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Anderson motioned to approve the Life Connections Specialized Support Services to use the Front Pavilion on September 15, 2026 if they leave the pavilion in a neat and clean condition, remove all trash they created and return tables to the original arrangement. Mr. Tramaloni seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

APPOINTMENTS
Matthew Malone is up for consideration for the Zoning Board of Adjustment. The Board would like confirmation that he's attended a ZBA meeting and that the committee recommends him.

Regarding the Planning Board application, Mr. Anderson didn't think the term was correct. Mr. Tramaloni motioned to appoint Jameson Paine to the Planning Board for a one year term expiring at Town Meeting 2027. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

At 9:39pm Ms. Knab motioned to go into a non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:a3, II(d). Mr. Tramaloni seconded the motion. Roll call: Knab-yes; Anderson-yes; Tramaloni-yes

At 9:50pm Ms. Knab motioned to come out of the non-public session and adjourn. Mr. Tramaloni seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard
Recording Secretary