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**DRAFT**  
**DURHAM TOWN COUNCIL**  
**MONDAY, APRIL 6, 2026**  
**DURHAM TOWN HALL - COUNCIL CHAMBERS**  
**7:00 PM**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chair Joseph Friedman, Chair Pro Tem Darrell Ford, Councilor Emily Friedrichs (who uses the pronouns ze/zir/zirs/zirself and the title Mx. Friedrichs), Councilor Heather Grant, Councilor Jim Lawson, Councilor Mike Lehrman, Councilor Curtis Register, Councilor Robin Vogt, Councilor Carden Welsh.

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** None

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Town Administrator Todd Selig, Town Assessor Darcy Freer, Planning Board Chairman Paul Rasmussen

**I. Call to Order**

Chair Friedman called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

**II. Town Council grants permission for fewer than a majority of Councilors to participate remotely - Not needed.**

**III. Roll Call of Members**

Councilor Heather Grant, Councilor Robin Vogt, Councilor Emily Friedrichs, Chair Joseph Friedman, Councilor Darrell Ford, Councilor Mike Lehrman, Councilor Jim Lawson, Councilor Carden Welsh

**IV. Approval of Agenda**

*Councilor Welsh MOVED that the Council approve the agenda. Councilor Lawson SECONDED the motion.* There was no discussion. *The agenda was APPROVED by a unanimous show-of-hands vote of 8-0.*

**V. Special Announcements - None**

**VI. Approval of Minutes - March 23, 2026**

*Chair Friedman MOVED to approve the minutes for the Town Council meeting of March 23, 2026. Councilor Vogt SECONDED the motion.*

Chair Pro Tem Ford said he had a few minor corrections. He noted on Page 8, Line 37, it should say "Town Council" not "City Council;" Page 11, Line 24, "unanimous" should be deleted as the vote was 8-1; Page 14, Line 27, it should read "Wetlands and Shoreland Overlay District." Councilor Welsh noted his name was misspelled on the last page.

*The minutes as amended were APPROVED on a unanimous roll call vote of 8-0.*

**VII. Report from the UNH Student Senate External Affairs Chair or Designee**

1 UNH Student Senate External Affairs Council Chair Deeba Ajamian said the recent  
2 survey of student opinion about HB 1793, the campus carry bill, found a large majority of  
3 students oppose it. She said the Student Senate will pass a resolution soon taking that  
4 stance. She said she and another Student Senate member will speak on behalf of the  
5 student body at the N.H. Senate hearing on the bill. She said the Student Senate is  
6 encouraging the university to use a different provider for Cat's Cache to make it easier  
7 and more affordable for local businesses to use and to encourage more students to shop at  
8 local businesses.

9  
10 Councilor Welsh asked how often the Student Senate does a survey of student opinion.  
11 Ms. Ajamian said it depends on the Student Senate council that needs the information.  
12 For example, the Campus Structure Council often surveys students about conditions on  
13 campus like snow clearing. She said the Senate felt it necessary in this case because the  
14 issue is so polarizing. Councilor Welsh said the survey's finding makes the Student  
15 Senate's resolution more powerful.

16  
17 Councilor Friedrichs asked what dorm UNH is closing and whether students feel it is less  
18 expensive to live on campus. Ms. Ajamian said it's either Christensen or Williamson and  
19 she believes it is for repairs. She said she will get more information about which dorms  
20 are closing for the next meeting.

21  
22 Chair Friedman thanked Ms. Ajamian for her report.

23  
24 Councilor Curtis Register arrived at the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

## 25 26 **VIII. Public Comment**

27  
28 **Bill Hall, 3 Smith Park Lane**, criticized Administrator Selig and recounted how about  
29 two decades ago Eversource was cutting trees along Durham Point Road, which the  
30 Planning Board was aware of and approved, and someone complained and Administrator  
31 Selig told the power company to stop, ignoring the Planning Board's decision. Later,  
32 during a storm, a tree fell on the power lines and the neighborhood lost power for an  
33 extended period. He also gave examples of how Seacoast business people were treated by  
34 the town, saying that's how town got its negative reputation as not being business-  
35 friendly..

36  
37 **Robert McManus, 26 Old Piscataqua Road**, a former budget director for Concord, said  
38 unissued debt is an obscure financial issue that rarely comes up, and defined it as a  
39 capital project where funding was authorized by resolution during the capital budget  
40 process, but that has not moved forward and used the funding. He said in the 2024  
41 Annual Report, on the second page, it shows a total of \$21.8 million has been authorized  
42 for projects as of December 2024. He urged the Council not to leave the projects on the  
43 books because they distort the budget, and don't go away until they are rescinded and  
44 unauthorized. He said projects no longer needed misrepresent spending commitments to  
45 residents and bond rating agencies; pose a financial risk because they create confusion;  
46 block transparency because authorizations should reflect actual intent; and rescinding

1 their authorization is a best practice and good governance.

2  
3 **Jeff Berlin, 3 Cowell Drive**, commented on statements made at the last Council meeting  
4 and in email exchanges after the meeting about his proposal for his 10 Cowell Drive  
5 property. He said Mr. Richman's comments proposed a new zoning category. Mr.  
6 Bebbington spoke in favor of redevelopment of his lot, but was concerned with possible  
7 commercial use and suggested the Council send it back to the Planning Board. Mr. Smith  
8 talked about the positive aspect of residential uses in commercial zones; and Councilor  
9 Welsh said rezoning his lot is putting the cart before the horse because the zoning  
10 requirements are about to change and you can't make a decision until the Council knows  
11 what they will be in the future. He said Chair Friedman said the timeline for working on  
12 the new zoning is not to wait forever, but to get it going. Mr. Rasmussen outlined the  
13 possibility of creating a new zoning designation for high-density, multi-unit housing with  
14 commercial use. Mr. Berlin said Town Planner Michael Behrendt said he disagrees with  
15 that in response to a question from him. Mr. Berlin said the responsibility belongs to the  
16 Town Council. He noted the closure of Wildcat Pizza and said that pattern doesn't  
17 change without people living downtown year-round. He said high-density residential  
18 infill is how you get there. He asked the Council to clarify its direction to the Planning  
19 Board and if 10 Cowell Drive would belong in the new zoning.  
20

21 **Robin Mower, 6 Britton Lane**, said she feels the priority for the Planning Board, which  
22 the Council is discussing tonight, is reviewing the town's architectural standards. She  
23 said the second is requiring ADUs to be owner-occupied with relief for short-term  
24 absences. She noted the hearing on HB 1793 is on Tuesday, April 14 and said residents  
25 can register their opposition to the campus carry bill at [gc.nh.gov](http://gc.nh.gov) under Meeting  
26 Resources. They can also watch it remotely there.  
27

28 **Julian Smith, 3 Chesley Drive**, thanked Councilors for appointing him to the  
29 Conservation Commission, but said he is resigning because no more than two members  
30 of the Planning Board can serve on the commission, something that has happened in the  
31 past without anyone finding the RSA law barring it. He talked about how the consultants  
32 who wrote the dam removal report did know what the town wanted and questioned why  
33 the town hired expensive consultants to tell it what it needed to do, especially the  
34 consultants who will actually do the work the report recommended. He asked again that a  
35 public informational meeting about the dam's removal be held.  
36

### 37 **IX. Unanimous Consent Agenda**

- 38 A. Shall the Town Council approve on **First Reading Ordinance #2026-04** amending  
39 Chapter 175 "Zoning," Article II, "Definitions," and Article XII.1, "Use and Dimensional  
40 Standards," Section 175-53, "Table of Uses," of the Town Code to permit electric vehicle  
41 charging stations as an accessory use in all zoning districts and as a principal use in all  
42 commercial zoning districts, and schedule the Public Hearing for Monday, April 20,  
43 2026?  
44 B. Shall the Town Council adopt **Resolution #2026-05** authorizing the acceptance and  
45 expenditure of private donations, grant funds, and unanticipated revenues totaling

1 \$70,360.02 received by the Town of Durham between January 1, 2024 and December 31,  
2 2025?

3 C. Shall the Town Council, upon recommendation of the Administrator, approve a special  
4 event permit application submitted by Durham Parks & Recreation to close certain  
5 sections of town roads for a Memorial Day Ceremony to be Held on Monday, May 25,  
6 2026?

7 D. Shall the Town Council, upon recommendation of the Administrator, approve FY2026  
8 Property Tax Abatement recommendations of the Assessor at the Local Level and for  
9 outstanding appeals before the Board of Tax and Land Appeals (BTLA) or NH Superior  
10 Court totaling \$14,258?

11  
12 Chair Friedman said he had been asked to pull Item 9D by Councilor Lawson so  
13 Councilors could discuss it separately. **He MOVED to approve Items A, B and C and**  
14 **read them. The motion PASSED on a unanimous roll call vote of 9-0.**

15  
16 Chair Friedman recognized the donations totaling about \$70,000 are from residents and  
17 businesses in town and are greatly appreciated.

18  
19 Councilor Lawson said he requested Item 9D be pulled because Town Assessor Darcy  
20 Freer recommended the Council take no action on one property's abatement because of  
21 pending litigation in the Council pack and believed if the Council passed it as part of the  
22 Unanimous Consent Agenda that would be taking action. Mr. Selig explained a non-  
23 action by the town on the abatement by July 1 is a denial and so to be consistent the  
24 Council should note the discrepancy and take no action on No. 8, 180 Piscataqua Road.  
25 Ms. Freer said she is handling this matter the way the town has handled it in the past, but  
26 she is OK with just denying it.

27  
28 Councilor Register asked Ms. Freer if she received anything from the owners of Tideline  
29 Public House, and she replied she had, but she has not acted on it yet.

30  
31 **Chair Friedman MOVED to approve Item D and note that the property described in**  
32 **No. 8 in the Council Communication will be denied. Councilor Grant SECONDED the**  
33 **motion. The motion PASSED on a unanimous roll call vote of 8-0.** Councilor Ford  
34 recused himself because the property owners are close neighbors.

35  
36 Councilor Register asked Ms. Freer what the process is if someone feels they were denied  
37 an abatement incorrectly. She said they can appeal to the Board of Tax and Land Appeals  
38 or the Superior Court, not both, until Sept. 1.

39  
40 **X. Citizen Committee Appointments**

41 Annual appointments and re-appointments of citizens to various town boards,  
42 commissions, and committees.

43  
44 **Agricultural Commission:** Reappointment of both Alberto Manalo, regular, and Bryan  
45 Cassidy, alternate

- 1           **Conservation Commission:** Reappointment of both Neil Slepian, regular, and Steve  
2 Moyer, alternate.  
3           **Energy Committee:** Reappointment of both Matthias Dean Carpentier, regular, and  
4 Steve Holmgren, regular  
5           **Historic District/Heritage Commission:** Reappointment of Charlotte Hitchcock, regular  
6           **Human Rights Commission:** Reappointment of both Richard Belshaw, regular, and  
7 Janet Perkins-Howland, regular  
8           **Integrated Waste Management Advisory Committee:** Reappointment of both Naomi  
9 Kornhauser, regular, and Susan Richman, regular  
10          **Library Board of Trustees:** Reappointment of three alternates, Martha Gooze, Laura  
11 Mason and Joe Warzin  
12          **Parks & Recreation Committee:** Appointment of Lynda Kuhne, moving from alternate  
13 to regular member  
14          **Planning Board:** Reappointment of Paul Rasmussen, regular, and Sally Tobias, regular  
15          **Strafford Regional Planning Commission:** Reappointment of Michael Lehrman,  
16 regular, and new appointment of Curtis Register, regular  
17          **Trustees of the Trust Funds:** Reappointment of both James Bubar, alternate, and Victor  
18 Sosa, alternate  
19          **Zoning Board of Adjustment:** Reappointment of James Bubar, regular

20  
21          Chair Friedman invited discussion on any of the proposed appointments.

22  
23          Councilor Welsh said he had heard concerns from constituents about Mr. Rasmussen in  
24 his role as chair as opposed to being a committee member. He said he spoke with him and  
25 he agreed to take the concerns under advisement.

26  
27          Chair Friedman said there is a vacant regular seat and three alternate seats available on  
28 the Parks & Recreation Committee and invited residents to volunteer.

29  
30          Councilor Friedrichs said ze had heard the same concerns and appreciated Mr.  
31 Rasmussen's time and dedication to the town. Ze noted the Planning Board hears the  
32 more controversial discussions that have real effects on residents and their property. If he  
33 becomes chair again or someone else, ze said the board should use a minute taker to  
34 ensure that the public feels that they are being heard. Ze said part of being the Chair is  
35 not just about completing the ordinance, but facilitating a community discussion and  
36 making sure people feel they're getting a fair and unbiased hearing. Whoever is the chair,  
37 ze said it's important to take this seriously.

38  
39          Councilor Register said Mr. Manalo and Mr. Cassidy have been great additions to the  
40 Agricultural Committee, holding educational sessions for the public and working on the  
41 farm use and crop capstone project, and he's excited to see them step up. He encouraged  
42 residents to volunteer for the two vacant spots on the Agricultural Committee. He  
43 thanked Mr. Rasmussen for his service.

44  
45          Administrator Selig noted all the three town spots on the Strafford Regional Planning  
46 Commission will be filled after the appointment of Councilors Lehrman and Register

1 with Mr. Rasmussen serving as Chair, which gives Durham great representation in that  
2 body.

3 ***Chair Friedman MOVED to adopt the roster of appointments and read the list.***

4 Councilor Friedrichs called a point of order that the Council doesn't appoint the chair of a  
5 board or commission. Each body elects its own chair. Chair Friedman retracted the word  
6 "chair" from his motion. ***Councilor Vogt SECONDED the motion. The motion***  
7 ***PASSED on a roll call vote of 9-0.*** Chair Friedman thanked all the citizens for serving  
8 the town.

9  
10 **XI. Presentation Items - None**

11  
12 **XII. Unfinished Business - None**

13  
14 **XIII. Councilor and Town Administrator Roundtable**

15  
16 **Chair Pro Tem Ford - Conservation Commission**

17 The commission has not met since the last Council meeting so nothing to report.

18  
19 **Councilor Lehrman- Strafford Regional Planning Commission**

20 He said the budget process has been challenging and it is running a slight negative loss  
21 for the first six months of the year.

22  
23 In regard to the School Board, he asked Administrator Selig to inquire if the  
24 Superintendent could give the Council an updated impact statement in the wake of the  
25 elementary school improvement project's failure to pass in the March election and what  
26 that will mean for the town in terms of taxes. It would be helpful as the Council looks at  
27 the town budget to know the impact of the school budget changes.

28  
29 He said the failure of the county budget means it defaults to the Commissioners'  
30 requested budget for this year, not last year's budget, which is an increase of 5.97%.

31  
32 Chair Friedman said he learned that Portsmouth is paying the mid-year School Care  
33 health insurance increase under protest. He said the county gave a bill to the town in the  
34 middle of the year because of its cost overruns. The county also is closing Hyder Family  
35 Hospice House. He said he appreciates Councilor Lehrman keeping an eye on the county  
36 and suggested the town ask the school district if School Care is the right insurance for  
37 them.

38  
39 **Councilor Lehrman - Strafford County Commission**

40 Councilor Lehrman said he believes School Care is a self-insured pool and entities have  
41 agreed to contributing more if there's shortfalls. He said the county did do a supplemental  
42 budget request to the town, which he believes was driven by the expenses of one prisoner  
43 who was at MGH for months that were about \$500,000, which is connected in some ways  
44 to higher health care costs, but not the cost of the insurance for employees. He said the  
45 cumulative budget deficit of the county nursing home over the last two years was \$66  
46 million. In the minutes of the County Commissioners meeting, it was reported the deficit

1 at Hyder House was \$3 million. He said the average daily census was 3.3, which means  
2 three people on average were being served a day. He said that service can be absorbed  
3 into the nursing home instead of operating separately.  
4

5 Councilor Lehrman said he finished his orientation on the day of the meeting and thanked  
6 all the department heads. He said he was extremely impressed with the caliber and  
7 professionalism of all the department heads. Chair Friedman agreed.  
8

9 **Councilor Lawson**

10 He said the parking survey begins this week and will continue for most of the month. He  
11 said he will let volunteers know when he needs them to work.  
12

13 **Councilor Lawson - Energy Committee**

14 He said the committee is meeting on April 7 and electing a new chair and vice chair. It  
15 will discuss the C-PACER program and get updates on the thermal camera use at the  
16 library, CPC-NH and the EV Charging ordinance.  
17

18 He noted he lives off Durham Point Road and said Administrator Selig advocated for  
19 getting spacer cable along Durham Point Road to create a redundant loop during the  
20 Seacoast Reliability Project. He is not aware of any outage associated with that cable  
21 since it was installed, though there was one tree down that closed the road and brought  
22 down cables. He knows there are criticisms, but he said Administrator Selig's help in  
23 advocating for that cable improved the electricity situation on that road.  
24

25 **Councilor Welsh - Historic District and Heritage Commission**

26 The commission is meeting April 9 so he said there is nothing to report at this time.  
27

28 **Councilor Register - Oyster River School Board**

29 He said the School Board met March 31. Matt Bacon was re-elected as chair; Heather  
30 Smith was elected vice-chair. He said Al Howland was installed as moderator. He said it  
31 was a tense meeting because of some of the dynamics between teachers, residents and  
32 administrators in the district. It discussed the funding issue and budgeting issue, and HB  
33 1815, which was signed April 3 and redefines what the state must fund for an adequate  
34 education. He said it is now based on performance goals, which will further widen the  
35 gap between affluent and less affluent districts. He said it also attempts to sidestep  
36 judicial review of education policy. Moharimet's Pancake Breakfast was a success with  
37 over a thousand attendees. April 20 to 24 is School Volunteer Week. April 28 is Bus  
38 Driver Appreciation Day. Kindergarten registration begins May 18. Dr. Shaps'  
39 resignation letter was accepted by the board. He will retire at the end of academic year  
40 2027, next June. Chair Friedman asked for any insight he has. Councilor Register said  
41 there is a significant amount of pushback by residents and teachers against items he had  
42 on the school district's agenda. He said in his unprofessional opinion Shaps feels like  
43 he's not a good fit for the district. He said that's not to say he hasn't served honorably in  
44 his capacity as a career educator and administrator. Next meeting is April 15 in the Morse  
45 Recital Hall at the Oyster River Middle School.  
46

1           **Councilor Register - Integrated Waste Management Advisory Committee**

2           He said he was not able to attend his first meeting because of illness. He said the minutes  
3           indicate it discussed the Sustainable Nature Friendly Lightbulb Project, which is the  
4           yellow lightbulbs that don't kill insects. He said there is a NH Recycles Expo in Concord  
5           on May 18. It discussed a potential screening at a local venue of "Plastic Detox," a  
6           documentary on Netflix. It is working through the Sustainability Newsletter for residents.  
7           Seven of nine committees have responded to their request for content and input. They  
8           discussed Sips of Science, a UNH initiative that brings scientists together at a brewery to  
9           discuss issues with members of the public, and considering a local event. Several  
10          members are reading "The Problem with Plastic" by Adam Mahoney. The next meeting  
11          is April 15.

12  
13          **Councilor Register**

14          He said he will be absent from the next Council meeting because he was invited to  
15          participate in the Ukraine Action Summit in D.C. from April 19 to 22. April 12 is the  
16          Grange Breakfast in Lee and Aug. 1 is Farm Day, he added.

17  
18          **Councilor Grant - Planning Board**

19          It met March 25 and approved the two-lot subdivision at Strafford Avenue. Issues with  
20          the driveway are still being worked out. It held the Public Hearing on the increase to five  
21          stories and 60 feet height limit in the Central Business District 1. She said due to some  
22          miscommunication the board had the Public Hearing on Option C, and the board thought  
23          it had voted on Option A. It communicated to the public there was a misunderstanding  
24          and it intended to vote down Option C. It will set another Public Hearing so it can move  
25          forward on creating five stories where appropriate. It ran out of time to discuss the zoning  
26          amendments suggested by the Housing Task Force. Next meeting is April 8.

27  
28          **Councilor Vogt - Land Stewardship Subcommittee**

29          The committee will next meet Wednesday, April 8, which will be his first meeting. On  
30          the agenda is a discussion by the kiosk group of the preliminary blueprints it has  
31          received. He said it looks like funding will come from private donors. He said he is going  
32          to propose seven different logo concepts for the Land Stewardship Committee and the  
33          Conservation Commission.

34  
35          **Councilor Vogt - Human Rights Commission**

36          He said the commission will meet in mid-April.

37  
38          **Councilor Friedrichs - Durham Business Association**

39          Ze said the DBA has not met since the last meeting so nothing to report.

40  
41          **Councilor Friedrichs - Cemetery Committee**

42          Ze said the committee has not met since the Council's last meeting.

43  
44          **Councilor Friedrichs**

45          Ze proposed having a discussion around term limits for town offices and if that would be  
46          helpful to encourage new blood to serve the town, perhaps as part of the goals discussion.

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**Administrator Selig**

He said the Egg Hunt was a success and 500 people attended. He said it's important to keep that kind of turnout in mind when looking at the budget and what services people really use.

He said Business Manager Gail Jablonski has officially announced she will retire next fall on Oct. 16 after 39 years, and the hiring process has started. He said the position's ad posted Friday with 80 days to respond, and he wants to begin pulling together a group to work with him on the search with several Councilors participating. Councilors discussed volunteers and it was decided Councilors Register, Friedrichs and Welsh would serve.

He said the town is updating its current website and opted to remain with the company that developed the current website, CivicPlus, because of cost. Behind the old site, a new one is being developed that will look the same, but be easier to navigate. A Chatbot feature will be added after the new site launches. He said Manager of Information Technology Luke Vincent, Administrative Assistant Karen Edwards, DCAT Media Coordinator Craig Stevens and he are working with the developer. He said he is hopeful the new website will transition to a .gov address, followed by the town's email addresses. He said the Friday Updates will be transitioned to a software suite within the new website.

He said on the Bickford-Chesley House apartment at Wagon Hill Farm, the town contracted with Arthur Thomas Properties to market the rental. He said the rent will be \$2,350 monthly and includes water and sewer, but not electricity for heating and cooling.

He said he and Police Chief Rene Kelley will attend the N.H. Senate hearing on the campus carry bill on April 14 at 1:45 p.m. to deliver the Town Council's resolution on the issue.

UNH Police Chief Steven Lee had been on administrative leave and the university has informed the town he has resigned in the wake of his DUI arrest, he said, and Capt. Mark Collopy has been filling in as acting chief and will continue to do so for the time being. Councilor Register said he met with Chief Collopy and was impressed with him.

He said Mill Pond Dam removal information was in the last Friday Update and a meeting will be held in May about road closures. Details will be available soon. The town has signed the Memorandum of Agreement with the Army Corps of Engineers and the state's historic preservation office. The MOA outlines the steps the town has to take to preserve the historical aspects of the site such as recording the sound of the water and making a documentary film about the dam as well as installing interpretative signage at the site after the project is complete and retaining some of the structure so people can see an example of the structure of this type of dam. He said construction can begin after the completion of the fish run at the end of June. He described the steps that will be taken after that to prepare for removal. He said the construction site has to be protected from water coming downstream and ocean water. Councilor Friedrichs asked about the town's

1 planning for its land there after removal and suggested it start talking about what will  
2 happen with the two parks at the site after removal. Ze said it might be a matter for the  
3 Land Stewardship Sub-committee and Parks and Recreation. Chair Friedman said this is  
4 not on the Parks and Recreation Committee's radar as of now. Administrator Selig said  
5 most of it will be an unmaintained natural area. He said that there was discussion of  
6 pursuing a grant to create a boardwalk system there, but those grant funds have not come  
7 through. He will get more information and let the Council know. Councilor Friedrichs  
8 said ze hoped the Land Stewardship Sub-committee might discuss the possibilities.

9  
10 Administrator Selig said ticks are out in full force and everyone should take precautions.  
11 Councilor Register more than Lyme disease, he thinks people have to worry about the red  
12 meat allergy you can contract from the Lone Star tick. Councilor Welsh asked if there'd  
13 been any reports of bear sightings and Administrator Selig said not that he's heard of.

14  
15 He said longtime resident Diana Carroll will talk about The Milnes and Their Legacy at  
16 the library on April 7. He said the Milnes were the keepers of the swans in Mill Pond and  
17 there is a statue of them on the grounds of the library.

18  
19 He announced the town's longtime labor attorney Joe McKittrick is retiring after 45  
20 years. He's been a part-time contractor to the town. He said he is looking for a  
21 replacement who ideally would be a specialist in the collective bargaining process and a  
22 single attorney who really gets to know the bargaining unit, the issues and the town  
23 thought he said it could be a firm, too.

24  
25 He said if a resident is unhappy with their local assessment, they can file an appeal to the  
26 town. If it is denied at the town, they can appeal to Superior County in a more formal  
27 process that requires an attorney, or they can appeal to the state Board of Tax and Land  
28 Appeals themselves. The decision by either is appealable to the state Supreme Court.

29  
30 He said the feedback from resident Robert McManus about bonds, notes and unissued  
31 debt was valuable. He said the annual audit by the business office does provide a list of  
32 projects that are not moving forward. He said it is good to discuss them, and noted a  
33 number of projects on Mr. McManus' 2024 list have been cleaned up, but said the  
34 Council should look at that list. He described several projects that have been authorized,  
35 but the money has not been disbursed.

36  
37 He said the correspondence received from resident Doug Bencks about the building scale  
38 on Main Street was very helpful and encouraged Councilors to review that.

39  
40 He said Councilor Lehrman wrote to him on the day of the meeting with the question  
41 about the school and county budgets, and he was able to act on part of it, but not on all of  
42 it. He said he spoke with Amy Ranson, school district business manager, and will follow  
43 up with her about clarifying what the district's request is and follow up with the county.  
44 He said some of the numbers may not be available until later in the year.

45  
46 On the School Care issue, he said it is a pool risk management organization and

1 HealthTrust is another. He said three of the town’s bargaining units have HealthTrust,  
2 and two have School Care. HealthTrust projects ahead, builds in more substantial  
3 reserves, and the trimming up comes as part of setting the rate for the next year. School  
4 Care has a smaller reserve and if it has a shortfall, it can reach out mid-cycle for more  
5 money and participants are legally bound to pay. Durham had to find an extra \$500,000  
6 mid-year, which it did. He said the N.H. Legislature is looking at it.  
7

8 Another issue with School Care, he said, is it provides a set health insurance package for  
9 the town, and it said it isn’t going to provide that anymore and there are increases, which  
10 he notified everyone about and extended the deadline for ending to June 30. That timing  
11 will make it tough to let police know what to expect while negotiations are still ongoing.  
12 On a positive note, the revised School Care plan is less expensive to the town.  
13

14 He referred to the earlier comments during Public Comment about his decision on tree  
15 trimming on Durham Point Road and said they have been made for 20-plus years now  
16 and contain many inaccuracies. He said over his 25 years, there have been numerous  
17 instances where Eversource began trimming without permission and had to be referred to  
18 the Planning Board. He said Durham Point Road residents love their scenic road and  
19 work diligently to protect it, but Eversource does need to trim and there’s a process, so  
20 the town is always balancing those two.  
21

22 **Chair Friedman - Parks and Recreation Committee**

23 The committee met on March 24, discussed its strategic plan and continued to work on its  
24 draft committee goals. He said the committee is looking for a regular member and three  
25 alternates. He said the next meeting is April 28 and a chair and vice chair will be elected.  
26 He said longtime Chair Cathy Leach is stepping down. Discover Durham Trails has an  
27 Astronomy Night at Wagon Hill Farm on April 24 from 7:30 to 9 p.m. May 16 is a Bio  
28 Blitz at the Oyster River Forest. The rink report will be presented at the next meeting.  
29

30 **Chair Friedman - Tri Region Economic Development Stakeholders**

31 He said the group met March 24 and discussed demographic trends and the economy.  
32 The next meeting is April 28.  
33

34 **Chair Friedman - Durham Business Association**

35 The DBA will meet next on April 8 at 5:15 p.m. at Clark’s.  
36

37 **Chair Friedman - Economic Development Strategy Committee**

38 The Committee is part of the SRPC, and is working on the Comprehensive Economic  
39 Development Plan for the county for 2026 to 2030. It further reviewed its draft of  
40 “Lenses, Themes and Goals.” The next meeting is April 24 with a wrap-up meeting on  
41 May 29. The group is looking for economic development stories, direct quotes and  
42 examples that illustrate the themes they’re working on, and they can be submitted with  
43 name and title by April 10. He said he would ask the ZBA, too.  
44

45 **XIV. New Business**

1       **A. Discussion of Administrator’s Progress Report (as of March 31, 2026) on the list of**  
2       **approved 2025/26 Town Council Goals adopted on June 16, 2025.**

3  
4       Administrator Selig said he goes through it on a quarterly basis and distributes it to the  
5       departments so they can report back, and he collects the responses. He hopes it keeps the  
6       Council up to date on how things are going.

7  
8       Chair Friedman said the proposed arts council is mentioned in the progress report, but  
9       said he is not pushing it anymore because he has not found much enthusiasm for it.

10  
11       Administrator Selig said he has also asked department heads for goals for the coming  
12       year and has received some, and will incorporate them for the Council to review at the  
13       next goals conversation.

14  
15       Councilor Friedrichs asked if Chair Friedman had asked the Durham Public Library or  
16       Riverwoods about the arts council. He said he didn’t reach out, that he didn’t find any  
17       enthusiasm on the Council to get it started, and that he was waiting to see if there would  
18       be one before inviting participation.

19  
20       Chair Friedman said the suggestions the Council received from Treasurer Karl Van  
21       Asselt at the last meeting were considered at the agenda-setting meeting, and will be  
22       considered with some maybe included in the Council’s goals.

23  
24       **B. Initial discussion regarding development of the 2026/27 Town Council goals.**

25       Councilors discussed how to proceed. Councilor Lehrman asked as mentioned in Goal 2  
26       what the status of the fire department moving or renovation is. Administrator Selig said  
27       the complete demolition of the kitchen and bunkrooms is on hold right now. He said he  
28       feels developing a new fire station is many years away because both UNH and the town  
29       are not ready for it, and described the decisions that would have to be made to move the  
30       fire department to another building to be more centrally located.

31  
32       Councilor Welsh said he and Councilor Lehrman visited the fire department and were  
33       impressed about the improvements made to aesthetics and safety, and how they’ve  
34       stretched a buck. Councilor Register spoke in support of finding efficiencies and  
35       collaboration with local towns.

36  
37       Councilor Welsh said the impact of this year’s budget won’t be felt by residents until  
38       December and thinks the Council has to be very rigorous with the budget and set a goal  
39       of being below inflation on the budget for the coming year.

40  
41       Councilor Lawson noted the challenge the town faces became apparent when he asked  
42       for an updated fiscal forecast. He said the projects that the Council approved for this  
43       fiscal year require a bond of \$6.75 million and place the bonds with the New Hampshire  
44       Municipal Bond Bank in July of 2027, which means the principal and interest doesn’t hit  
45       until 2028, and the Council needs to look at not next year, but 2028 when the principal  
46       and interest charges will result in a budget increase of \$1.8 million. He said the Council

1 needs to start thinking about this now and find opportunities for efficiency or  
2 regionalization, not when it hits the pressure point.

3  
4 Councilors discussed the need to consider reducing expenses substantially, which means  
5 considering not just what events or services can be cut, but what positions can be cut or  
6 not filled when they come open. They talked about the rate of inflation and trying to  
7 make up for HR and insurance costs that have hit the town hard, and that are not going to  
8 decrease, only increase. They talked about how it owes its employees and residents to be  
9 concise and effective.

10  
11 Councilor Welsh noted the town spent a million dollars less than budgeted in 2025 and  
12 councilors agreed the town has to keep building that bank up.

13  
14 Administrator Selig said the town does manage staffing numbers through attrition, and he  
15 has had conversations already with the fire and police chief. He recommended discussing  
16 this sooner rather than later so it can be done in a planned manner. Councilor Lehrman  
17 added it is easier to prune things thoughtfully rather than when desperate, and stressed the  
18 town's duty to give residents a full view of costs from school, county and town, and of  
19 what is transpiring, and to help the public be better informed about what the full impact is  
20 going to be so they can understand.

21  
22 Councilor Lawson said when pruning there is an opportunity to re-architect how the town  
23 does things because the town's staff is very talented. He said the town has good examples  
24 of how regionalization works well with UNH, with the fire department, with wastewater,  
25 and he thinks the town needs to look for more opportunities for collaboration and that one  
26 of town's biggest ticket items is the police department. He said the town needs to have  
27 good conversations.

28  
29 Councilors discussed the process of setting its goals for the year.

30  
31 Councilor Register recommended that the Council first see if there are goals that can be  
32 eliminated, then look at others recommended by Councilors or department heads to add  
33 or not, and then vote on the finalized list. Councilor Lawson said another step is to decide  
34 which goals to keep, but refine.

35  
36 Administrator Selig said there's been a great deal of conversation about housing, the  
37 changes in state law, and several zoning proposals that have received feedback from the  
38 public, who clearly expressed that they value a sense of community in their  
39 neighborhoods and want to make sure that is preserved. He said it would be helpful to  
40 provide guidelines about housing and programs, how they connect with neighborhoods,  
41 and frame the priorities for the Planning Board in the Council's goals to avoid the back  
42 and forth with the board so that it gives the Council proposals that have a high chance of  
43 success.

44  
45 Councilor Lawson said he's been reflecting on the town's Master Plan and recent events,  
46 and the state RSA that says the vision statement drives a Master Plan and everything

1 should align with it. He read the first statement of the Master Plan, which says “ In 2025,  
2 Durham is a balanced community that has successfully maintained its traditional  
3 neighborhoods.”

4  
5 Chair Friedman invited other comments.

6  
7 Administrator Selig asked councilors to review the current goals and let Karen Edwards  
8 know what to drop and what to add, and she’ll compile a new draft for this year’s goals,  
9 adding input from departments, boards and commissions.

10  
11 Councilors discussed the process. Councilor Grant said the Council needs to simplify and  
12 take things out of the goals, where there’s a lot of nice-to-haves, but not necessarily  
13 goals. Councilor Lehrman agreed that ongoing operational statements shouldn’t be in  
14 there at all.

15  
16 Councilor Register said he hopes to streamline the current document, which he likes, and  
17 have it become an efficient checklist. Councilors discussed how to prioritize goals, give  
18 them a timeframe, and whether to break them into phases.

19  
20 Administrator Selig said it is helpful to have a little breadth around goals as many  
21 unpredictable events happen to throw off timeframes. He said it is helpful for him to have  
22 more guidance in the budget goal as it relates to the Council’s other goals so he can bring  
23 the Council a budget proposal that they want and will approve.

24  
25 Councilor Welsh said they trust Administrator Selig to make the budget and encouraged  
26 an ongoing conversation during the budget process.

27  
28 **C. Discussion of the priorities for future Planning Board amendments to the Zoning**  
29 **Ordinance.**

30 Chair Friedman reminded Councilors that Mr. Rasmussen had sent them a list of issues  
31 before the Planning Board on March 21 that he asked them to prioritize so the board has  
32 guidance about what to tackle first.

33  
34 Councilor Welsh said given that the town just made changes to its zoning, he feels the  
35 review of its architectural standards should be done first and shouldn’t be difficult to  
36 complete. Councilors discussed how the architectural standards do already exist, can be  
37 used for projects that come up until the Council can take it up, that they do need updated,  
38 but perhaps don’t need to be the first priority. Councilor Friedrichs said some of the  
39 changes have altered the standards, which is causing angst at the Planning Board, and  
40 board members and residents need to feel like their concerns are being addressed.

41 Councilor Grant noted the many priorities facing the Planning Board.

42  
43 Planning Board Chair Paul Rasmussen spoke about his reason for asking for direction  
44 about where to start - working on rural area housing or downtown housing. He said he is  
45 looking for confirmation of whether the Council is more interested in trying to fix the

1 infill situation downtown or working on rural zones. He said the Planning Board is trying  
2 to work on the architectural standards because they are contrary to the zoning ordinance.

3  
4 Councilors discussed how to accomplish infill of zones, how to identify lots that would  
5 be good for multi-unit developments without commercial use, and have potential for  
6 subdividing.

7 Mr. Rasmussen ?? said creating higher density without a commercial element means  
8 writing a new zone or carving out a new type of zone, and playing with zone boundaries.  
9 He said that would give the town the most value in terms of time spent and results. He  
10 said it would make sense to work hand in hand with the town's economic development  
11 efforts.

12  
13 Councilor Friedrichs said the town needs to prioritize issues that support downtown while  
14 supporting the character of Durham and the neighborhoods. The rural zone issues can be  
15 addressed last.

16  
17 Council Grant said one of the issues that came up in creating the overlay district for  
18 affordable housing was single family homes and those that need to be in the areas outside  
19 of downtown, but she said downtown should be first.

20  
21 Councilor Lawson encouraged the Council to put feedback in writing and have clarity  
22 and consensus out of respect for the Planning Board that has to implement it.

23  
24 Councilor Register said the town is in a time of challenging, competing crises, so the  
25 Council needs to give clear guidance, do more observing at Planning Board meetings,  
26 interrogate more perspectives, and create a closer relationship between the chairs of the  
27 two boards. He agreed with Councilor Lawson and said the West Edge PUD has to be top  
28 priority because it's the only tangible project on the horizon that will produce revenue for  
29 the town and can't be delayed by the town. He felt the second priority is the housing  
30 crisis and creating high density as it's the only way to fix it rather than colonizing the  
31 rural areas, then upgrading the commercial core, and then the architectural design  
32 standards. He said the downtown initiatives are more important than the Wetlands and  
33 Shoreland Overlay District and the Conservation Subdivision.

34  
35 Chair Friedman agreed with Councilor Register's prioritization, and said the West Edge  
36 is important but won't take a ton of time. He said the board has done what it needs to do  
37 up to this point, and the project will be getting back to the town in the fall.

38  
39 Councilor Lawson said he feels the architectural standards should be at the top of the list  
40 and it's not going to take long. He said he disagrees with Mr. Rasmussen that Durham  
41 has the most stringent in the state. He said other communities have very significant  
42 standards, and even boards to review projects. He would move WSOD to the bottom of  
43 the list. He said the town's wetland protections are the most stringent in the state, aren't  
44 a priority because they are already in place and will be very controversial when they are  
45 taken up.

46

1 Councilor Lehrman said he agrees with Councilors Register and Lawson, and feels  
2 because of the bay's water quality the town should look at the possibility of a septic  
3 ordinance, which would identify and locate all the septic systems in town, give residents  
4 time to have them inspected and if not viable, remedy them, and then require pumping  
5 every three years. Research shows the nitrogen in the bay is all around Durham,  
6 Barrington, the Oyster River and Lamprey watersheds, and even inland septic systems  
7 impact the bay.

8  
9 Councilors discussed putting architectural standards first or second, followed by  
10 increasing density, and that the West Edge project is on hold for a little bit. Councilor  
11 Lehrman said working on infill in the downtown core would be the "biggest bang for the  
12 buck."

13  
14 Administrator Selig suggested prioritizing issues where there is already consensus such as  
15 architectural standards and the ADU owner-occupied requirement.

16  
17 Councilors discussed subdivision and potential impacts on neighborhoods. Councilor  
18 Friedrichs said the town has to thoughtfully consider what it is incentivizing in the market  
19 and agreed working on issues that have consensus first could build positive momentum.

20  
21 Mr. Rasmussen invited Councilors to attend the May 13th Planning Board meeting to hear  
22 a presentation about the Planning Board's capstone project.

23  
24 **XV. Nonpublic Session (if required)**

25  
26 **XVI. Adjourn (NLT 10:30 PM)**

27  
28 ***Councilor Welsh MOVED to adjourn the meeting. Councilor Grant SECONDED the***  
29 ***motion. The motion PASSED on a unanimous hand vote of 9-0.***

30  
31 The meeting was adjourned at 10 p.m.

32  
33 - Jane Murphy, Minutes Taker