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DRAFT
DURHAM TOWN COUNCIL
MONDAY, JUNE 15, 2026
DURHAM TOWN HALL - COUNCIL CHAMBERS
7:00 PM

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Town Administrator Todd Selig, Town Assessor Darcy Freer,

I. Call to Order

Chair Friedman called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

II. Town Council grants permission for fewer than a majority of Councilors to participate remotely - No action taken at this time.

III. Roll Call of Members

Councilor Heather Grant, Councilor Jay Gooze, Chair Joe Friedman, Chair Pro Tem Darrell Ford, Councilor Michael Lehrman, Councilor Jim Lawson, Councilor Carden Welsh, Councilor Curtis Register

IV. Approval of Agenda

Councilor Lawson MOVED to approve the agenda. Chair Pro Tem Ford SECONDED the motion. The motion PASSED on a unanimous roll call vote of 8-0.

V. Special Announcements - None

VI. Approval of Minutes - June 1, 2026

*Chair Friedman MOVED to approve the minutes for the Town Council meeting of June 1, 2026. Councilor Grant SECONDED the motion. Councilor Gooze pointed out a change to his Agricultural Commission report that should indicate the tool would be used in the future to predict impact on crops. **The minutes were APPROVED with this change on a unanimous roll call vote of 7-0.** Councilor Welsh abstained because he did not attend the June 1st meeting.*

VII. Report from UNH Student Senate External Affairs representative

There was no UNH student representative present because the university is not in session.

VIII. Public Comment

Wayne Burton, 106 Madbury Road, Strafford 10 State Representative, said the Town Council was ridiculed for passing its resolution against the proposed campus carry

1 gun bill, but it was cited in many public hearings in Concord, and in newspaper reports.
2 He said it was not inconsequential and the bill was killed in the State Legislature. He said
3 it was important that the Council passed the resolution. He gave a brief update of the
4 Legislation that they may see in terms of education proposals in the next session.

5
6 **Chris Gowland, 28 Newmarket Road**, spoke about his tax abatement application, which
7 is on the meeting's agenda as part of the Unanimous Consent Agenda. He asked for no
8 vote on the item because he feels the market value of his home has changed because of
9 the Mill Pond dam removal project and because the waterfront surcharge no longer
10 applies to his property since the pond is being drained. He also said he thinks the
11 waterfront surcharge was disproportionately applied in his neighborhood of Tavern Way,
12 Laurel Lane, Mill Pond Road and Newmarket Road. He said the drawdown of Mill Pond
13 has already and the dam removal will result in a loss of recreational opportunities, the
14 beauty of the pond and the enjoyment of the wildlife at his home. Councilors advised him
15 that even if they approve the abatement and it is still not to his satisfaction his recourse is
16 to bring a lawsuit in Superior Court or appeal the decision to the Tax and Land Appeals
17 Board by Sept. 1.

18
19 Administrator Selig notified Councilors that Councilor Friedrichs joined the meeting on
20 Zoom at 7:15 p.m. Councilor Register *MOVED* that the Council give zir permission to
21 participate in the meeting remotely. Councilor Welsh *SECONDED* the motion. The
22 motion *PASSED* on a unanimous roll call vote of 8-0.

23
24 **IX. Unanimous Consent Agenda**

- 25 A. Shall the Town Council adopt **Resolution #2026-08** reaffirming Juneteenth
26 Independence Day as a legally recognized holiday and reaffirming Durham's opposition
27 to any form of oppression?
28 B. Shall the Town Council, upon recommendation of the Administrator, approve FY2025
29 Property Tax Abatement Recommendations of the Assessor at the local level totaling
30 \$55,266.59?
31 C. Shall the Town Council, upon recommendation of the Administrator, approve a Special
32 Event Permit Application submitted by Durham Parks & Recreation to close certain
33 sections of town roads for a Downtown Durham Day to be held on Thursday, Aug. 6,
34 2026?
35 D. Shall the Town Council schedule a Public Hearing for Monday, July 6, 2026 on
36 **Resolution #2026-09** authorizing the acceptance and expenditure of the Lead Service
37 Line Inventory (LSLI) Grant in the amount of up to \$60,000 from the New Hampshire
38 Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) for the LSLI Field Investigation Project
39 and authorize the Administrator to sign and submit grant paperwork on behalf of the
40 Town of Durham?
41 E. Shall the Town Council approve the submission of an application for a Wastewater State
42 Aid Grant (SAG) in the amount of \$185,662.20 for the Madbury Road Complete Streets
43 Phase 1 Water and Sewer Improvement Project and authorize the Administrator to sign
44 associated documents?

45
46 Chair Friedman said he would pull Item B to make a correction and *MOVED* to approve

1 the Unanimous Consent Agenda without Item B, and read Items A, C, D and E. Chair Pro
2 Tem. Ford **SECONDED** the motion. The motion **PASSED** on a unanimous roll call vote
3 of 9-0.

4
5 Chair Friedman said he pulled Item B to correct the address for a property included in it.
6 The **Chair Friedman MOVED to approve Item B, the item which had been pulled, with**
7 **one change.** He said the address of the property listed as 283 Durham Point Road and
8 owned by the Miller Family Revocable Trust should be 297 Durham Point Road. He read
9 Item B. **Councilor Lehrman SECONDED the motion.**

10
11 Councilors discussed the tax abatement process with Administrator Selig and Town
12 Assessor Darcy Freer. Administrator Selig said the assessor reviews the applications for
13 abatements and makes a recommendation to the Council. He said it is appropriate for Mr.
14 Gowland to come to the Council and state his perspective to Councilors, and it is good
15 that the Councilors feel they have all the information they need and have the chance to
16 ask questions. He said a key point is this tax bill was for whatever was there on April 1st.
17 Ms. Freer pointed out that whether the abatement is approved or denied, the property
18 owner has the right to appeal the decision to the Superior Court or the Land and Tax
19 Appeals Board. Councilor Welsh asked if the Council could ask the Assessor to go back
20 and review the abatement application and the town's decision, and Administrator Selig
21 said it can. Administrator Selig said abatements have to be considered by July 1st, and if
22 not granted, it's an automatic denial after July 1. He said the Council can still grant an
23 abatement after July 1st. Ms. Freer reiterated that April 1, 2025 is considered the date of
24 value for the assessment of the property Mr. Gowland spoke about during the Public
25 Comment period. On that date, she said, the property had waterfront frontage on the Mill
26 Pond. She talked about the sale price of a comparable property that will be most affected
27 by the dam's removal, which she used in deciding on the abatement for Mr. Gowland's
28 property. She said neither she nor anyone else can predict what the area is going to look
29 like after the dam is removed. She explained the factors she took into consideration in
30 deciding the land value and the building value of the property in the abatement under
31 discussion.

32
33 At 7:31 p.m., the fire alarm in the Town Hall went off and Chair Friedman called a
34 temporary recess so Councilors could vacate the building. At 7:47 p.m., the alarm
35 stopped sounding, Councilors returned and Chair Friedman brought the Council into
36 session again.

37
38 Assessor Freer explained the process of a partial revaluation where the town could look at
39 a specific sector of properties in the town when Chair Friedman asked. Councilors
40 discussed the process of how the town might handle changes like the ones in the Mill
41 Pond neighborhood in the future, how homeowners could still file for abatements each
42 year, some of the factors that are taken into consideration when comparing properties,
43 what a partial reassessment would entail, the importance of maintaining equity across the
44 town, and when the Council should get involved.

45
46 In answer to Councilors' questions, Administrator Selig said the Town Assessor monitors

1 changing market conditions to see if one sector of properties is changing in an unusual
2 way from the rest of the market and then the town may consider a partial revaluation of
3 that one sector of properties. He said the Town Assessor would make a recommendation
4 to the Council during the budget process that the town should move forward with a
5 partial revaluation.
6

7 Administrator Selig said in this incidence it is really up to the individual property owners
8 to bring forward what they believe is inequitable.
9

10 He said there was consistent concern from property owners around the dam that its
11 removal would affect their property values, and it was the consensus earlier in the process
12 by the Town Assessor that it would so the Town Assessor has been keeping an eye on
13 that and has not seen an impact to this point. He said the jury is out on what the impact
14 will be on these values.
15

16 Chair Friedman said this property is asking for a \$99,000 abatement in its application, but
17 may be looking for more subsequently as the dam is now in the process of being
18 removed.
19

20 Chair Friedman reiterated his motion on the table is to approve all the abatements in Item
21 B with the minor edit on the one property's address. ***The motion PASSED on a***
22 ***unanimous roll call vote of 9-0.***
23

24 **X. Citizen Committee Appointments**

- 25 A. Shall the Town Council, upon recommendation of the Historic District/Heritage
26 Commission Chair, appoint Elizabeth LaRocca, 10 Britton Lane, to an unexpired
27 alternate membership position on the Historic District/Heritage Commission with a term
28 expiration of 4/29?
29 B. Shall the Town Council, upon recommendation of the Zoning Board of Adjustment
30 Chair, appoint Chris Sterndale, 60 Mill Road, to an unexpired alternate membership
31 position on the Zoning Board with a term expiration of 4/29?
32 C. Shall the Town Council, upon recommendation of the Zoning Board of Adjustment
33 Chair, appoint Daniel Bean, 5 Valentine Hill Road, to an unexpired alternate membership
34 position on the Zoning Board with a term expiration of 4/27?
35

36 ***Councilor Welsh MOVED the Council approve Item A. Councilor Register***
37 ***SECONDED the motion.***
38

39 Ms. LaRocca introduced herself and talked about her experience in historic preservation
40 in Manchester, serving on the commission overseeing the retention of the city's look and
41 character ask its mill buildings were being redeveloped. ***The Council approved her***
42 ***appointment on a unanimous roll call vote of 9-0.*** Chair Freidman said the town
43 appreciate her willingness to serve.
44

45 ***Councilor Lawson MOVED the Council approve Item B. Chair Pro Tem Ford***
46 ***SECONDED the motion.*** Councilors Lawson, Gooze and Welsh said they have all

1 worked with Mr. Sterndale on various boards and recommended his appointment. *The*
2 *motion PASSED on a unanimous roll call vote of 9-0.* Chair Friedman thanked him for
3 serving.

4
5 *Councilor Lawson MOVED the Council approve Item C. Councilor Welsh*
6 *SECONDED the motion.* Mr. Bean introduced himself and spoke of his background of
7 running businesses, and his expertise in planning and operations. *The motion was*
8 *APPROVED by a unanimous vote of 9-0.* Chair Friedman said the town appreciates his
9 willingness to serve.

10
11 **XI. Presentation Items**

12 **A. Report on Strafford County operations, budget and tax rate from County**
13 **Commissioner Chair George Maglaras and County Administrator Raymond Bower.**

14
15 Commissioner Maglaras introduced himself, Mr. Bower and Sheriff Kathryn Mone. He
16 said it's a difficult time with changes in healthcare, in Medicare and Medicaid, and the
17 state shifting a \$500,000 Medicaid cost to the county just two days before its budget was
18 due to the towns in the county. He said the commission is increasingly taking the heat for
19 costs like this that it has no control over.

20
21 He talked about how some of these changes are affecting the county's budget and how it
22 came to the recent decision to close Hyder Family House Hospice Care. He and Mr.
23 Bower said they are working to have it reopen under Wentworth Douglass, not the
24 county. He said the county has updated its dispatch center and is now working to get a
25 grant to upgrade radio equipment for the towns' police departments and the Sheriff's
26 Department. Councilor Gooze, who volunteers to help the town's IT Department and
27 works with the police department, outlined some of the problems.

28
29 Councilors discussed a decrease in the Sheriff's Office budget due to a one-time
30 significant medical cost for an inmate that skewed the budget numbers. Councilor
31 Lehrman brought up the defeat of the new nursing home proposal and they said they are
32 researching possible grant funding for it and noted a regional approach often is more
33 favorable to receive funding.

34
35 Mr. Maglaras and Mr. Bower both said they are sensitive to taxpayers' plight of rising
36 property taxes. Mr. Bower suggested the commissioners come back to the town during
37 the budget process for questions and so the town understands exactly what the impact
38 will be.

39
40 **B. Annual report on the Conservation Commission activities and projects – Dwight**
41 **Trueblood, Chair**

42
43 Mr. Trueblood said it's been a busy and productive year for the Conservation
44 Commission. He gave an update on the Wetlands and Shoreland Overlay District. The
45 commission has been working on it since 2022 and developed a draft that they presented
46 to the Planning Board, Town Council and the public last fall. After hearing the feedback,

1 it formed three work groups to push pause on it and address the public's comments
2 appropriately. The commission decided to draw on the Shoreland Water Quality
3 Protection Act, which pertains to tidal waters, rivers and streams. It has a 250-foot
4 setback from the waterfront that the commission incorporated. The commission is also
5 applying for a Piscataqua Region Estuarine Partnership grant to increase its public
6 engagement about the ordinance changes. This effort also serves the Town Council goal
7 of increasing its public engagement. The Land Stewardship Subcommittee has also
8 partnered with SELT and the Nature Conservancy to conserve 28.9 acres in the Crommet
9 Creek and Lubberland Creek watersheds, which was purchased for \$50,000. He said
10 having a full-time land stewardship coordinator has allowed the town to catch up on the
11 maintenance of its town properties including upkeep, invasive species removals and trail
12 maintenance. The town has been able to build benches, repair bog bridges and kiosks on
13 key trails. It also hosted a Bio Blitz with 60 participants who identified 127 different
14 species and 42 species of birds. He said the commission also reviews and provides input
15 on development and this year did five permit reviews. He said the commission also began
16 providing a weekly Conservation Corner for the Friday Updates and is contributing to the
17 town's new sustainability newsletter. Councilor Register praised the commission's work
18 and Chair Friedman thanked Mr. Trueblood for his report.

19
20 **XII. Unfinished Business**

21
22 **XIII. Councilor and Town Administrator Roundtable**

23
24 **Councilor Ford**

25 He asked Councilors to be cognizant of how long they're speaking out of respect for their
26 fellow Councilors and to just provide the highlights of their board or commission's
27 meeting. Councilor Welsh agreed with him and said Administrator Selig can be more
28 selective in his report to the Council, too.

29
30 **Councilor Gooze - Agricultural Committee**

31 He said he was not able to attend the last meeting so he has nothing to report. He
32 mentioned the Heritage/Historic District Commission had an interesting discussion of a
33 map showing the town's farms from the late 1800s up to 1930.

34
35 **Councilor Grant - Planning Board**

36 She said the board met on June 10 and talked about a subdivision and Riverwoods trail
37 extensions, set a Public Hearing on the ADU amendment for July 8, with the change the
38 owner has to live in the ADU or primary home, reviewed the architectural standards and
39 set the Public Hearing for July 24. The night lighting Public Hearing will be in July.

40
41 **Councilor Friedrichs - Cemetery Committee**

42 Ze said the committee will meet the week of June 15.

43
44 **Councilor Friedrichs - Durham Business Administration**

45 Ze said the DBA met last week. There will be free parking downtown during July. They
46 are working on a member drive and developing more concrete benefits for members with

1 a modest fee. New owners of Wildcat Pizza attended and said they hope to open later in
2 the summer as Wildcat Public House. There'll be a Dog Scavenger Hunt on July 25 from
3 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. The town is helping by advertising it at Wagon Hill Farm where many
4 walk their dogs. They cited the latest housing data is there's 4,500 off-campus beds, and
5 more demand for studio or one-bedroom furnished units, utilities included. They
6 discussed how graduate students and undergraduate students sign leases at different times
7 of the year. Ze said UNH is closing one major dorm in Fall 2027 and believes it can
8 absorb all those students in on-campus housing. The Farmers' Market is 2:30 to 6 p.m.
9 Monday and ze will be handing out yellow lightbulbs at the market on June 29.

10
11 **Councilor Friedrichs**

12 Ze said ze talked with a resident concerned about the disorderly housing ordinance being
13 out of date. They felt the fines aren't high enough to discourage behavior. Councilor
14 Gooze recounted how these complaints used to be handled by a former chief. He said he
15 has talked with police about the increase in day partying and about calling in owners
16 when there is a complaint. He believes that anything reported is very under-reported.

17
18 Ze suggested the town create an FAQ about the dam removal project. Administrator Selig
19 said he would look into doing that.

20
21 **Councilor Register - Oyster River Co-operative School Board**

22 The School Board reviewed the first three parts of its strategic plan on June 3. It will
23 review the rest on June 17. Superintendent Shaps moved his resignation to this June 30, a
24 year earlier, and a search for a new superintendent will begin soon.

25
26 **Councilor Register - Integrated Waste Management Committee**

27 It hasn't met since last Council meeting. It will meet July 15. Susan Richman is working
28 on a two-acre lot for composting and details will be available soon.

29
30 **Councilor Register - Land Stewardship Subcommittee**

31 Met June 10, and held a walking meeting in Thompson Forest to showcase the trail
32 restoration. On July 2nd there will be a walking conversation in Oyster River Forest.
33 Next meeting is July 8 at 8:30 a.m.

34
35 **Councilor Register - Strafford Regional Planning Commission**

36 The commission has not met since last Council meeting, but will meet June 19.

37
38 **Councilor Register - Town Gown Collaborative**

39 The collaborative met on June 10 and discussed its Housing Needs Assessment. It created
40 a subcommittee on it. Next meeting is July 15.

41
42 **Council Register**

43 He pointed out he reports on seven committees and will try to be brief, but understands
44 the Roundtable is for public outreach and wants to continue to report. Councilor Lawson
45 suggested the Council consider what the purpose of the Roundtable is and in the past it
46 wasn't seen as a very effective way for community outreach because it doesn't reach the

1 broad community. He wondered if it should just be for what the Councilors need to
2 know. Councilor Welsh agreed.

3
4 Chair Friedman said with the prohibition of discussing issues outside of a meeting, he
5 feels the Roundtable is a time to discuss topics and new ideas, and to weigh in on them
6 with each other as opposed to reporting and no conversation.

7
8 **Councilor Welsh - Historic District/Heritage Commission**

9 The commission met June 6. The commission will look at destruction of facilities at
10 UNH, including the Wolf House, that may be of historic significance. Mr. Behrendt is
11 looking at possible funding sources to preserve it. The commission looked at the
12 architectural standards from the Planning Board, and made suggestions. Larry Brickner-
13 Wood was chosen to serve on the search for a new planner. The committee hopes they
14 will have a background in historic preservation.

15
16 He praised the text of the Juneteenth resolution, and Administrator Selig said it was a
17 team effort. Councilor Friedrichs said ze, Administrator Selig and former Councilor
18 Wayne Burton had written it.

19
20 **Councilor Lawson - Energy Committee**

21 The committee met in June. There'll be a Council communication on C-PACER in July,
22 which will rescind Resolution #2010-18. A Public Hearing on C-PACER and also one on
23 the new ordinance. It has also begun discussing how best to be a resource on data centers
24 for the community and Council.

25
26 Chair Friedman asked if it had talked with CPC. He said the committee will have to
27 decide. New rate structure comes out Aug.1. He said some residents received a
28 misleading letter from Clean Choice Energy, which he feels maybe should be mentioned
29 in the Friday Update to educate residents that it is not something they have to sign up for.

30
31 **Councilor Lehrman**

32 He said he felt the County Commissioners have more issues going on that the Council
33 should discuss at some point. Councilor Lawson said the Council needs to have a pre-
34 meeting before they present next time to pinpoint questions and issues important to
35 Durham.

36
37 **Chair Pro Tem Ford - Conservation Commission**

38 He had nothing to report.

39
40
41 **Chair Friedman - Parks and Recreation Committee**

42 He said Parks and Rec is busy with summer camps, will meet June 23, and they'll present
43 the rink renovation plan to its neighbors and get their feedback on it.

44
45 **Chair Friedman - Tri-Region Economic Development Stakeholders**

46 They will meet on Tuesday. The strategy committee made its recommendation and there

1 will be a vote to adopt the 2026-2030 Economic Development Plan on Friday, June 19.

2
3 Councilor Welsh commented that if there is no financial plan for the rink renovation,
4 perhaps the town shouldn't waste time or money on developing it and going through the
5 process. Chair Friedman said there would have to be significant fundraising, but the rink
6 has been self-sustaining in its way and a new facility will increase that ability to pay back
7 a bond for the renovation. He said the committee is seeing if it fits, seeing what it might
8 cost, seeing how much it thinks it can raise and then make a decision on a proposal to
9 bring to the town. He said there is some semblance of a financial plan. It is in accordance
10 with the ARC report that UNH did looking at the town's parks. Councilor Lawson said
11 it's difficult to do fundraising without an architectural concept to show the project. Chair
12 Friedman said you also need the civil engineering done that says it is feasible on the site.

13
14 **Administrator Selig**

15 The Town Hall server room's two air conditioners - one failed, one has issues - are
16 forcing the town to look for HVAC options for that room.

17
18 He thanked Councilors Lehrman, Lawson and Register who are participating in the
19 business manager search process. Two candidates were interviewed and they chose one.
20 A background investigation is being conducted and the conversation about compensation
21 will begin soon if it comes back OK.

22
23 On the Town Planner search, the informal deadline was June 15 and 14 candidates have
24 applied, nine are from New Hampshire. He said it's a very strong pool. The consultant
25 MRI is reviewing the applications and will telephone screening.

26
27 With DCAT Manager Craig Stevens retiring June 25, he feels they've come up with a
28 good solution for reconfiguring his job responsibilities and three staff members have
29 stepped up to take on some of those. He said longtime DCAT part-timer Rachel Stevens
30 has informed him she is also leaving. He said the Town Council, Planning Board and
31 Zoning Board of Adjustment meetings will be handled just as they are now, living with
32 Zoom capability. The boards who meet during the day will be broadcast live with Zoom
33 capability. Other boards will be live, recorded and posted after the meeting. The new
34 schedule goes into effect Aug. 1. He said evening board meetings have the opportunity to
35 move to the day if they'd like. He said this year there won't be savings, but next year the
36 new plan may save \$20,000.

37
38 He said before the next Council meeting, the Council will meet at 6:15 p.m. with the
39 town's new labor attorney and begin discussion of the police collective bargaining
40 agreement.

41
42 He said at its next meeting the Council will consider a proposal for paid parking at
43 Wagon Hill Farm for those who don't live in Durham, Lee or Madbury. The town is also
44 developing a proposal to add permit parking on Technology Drive.

45
46 He said he and Chair Friedman met with Mr. Behrendt and he is developing a proposal

1 for the Planning Board about the PUD that will meet the needs of the EDGE. He said
2 there wasn't anything new to report about 66 Main St.

3
4 Councilor Welsh asked about the dam removal. He said the town has received a lot of
5 wildlife inquiries about the dam removal process and concern about turtles and muskrats
6 dewatering. He said Fish and Game have been involved and said the turtles can handle
7 this and the kits are large enough to migrate. He said there was initial vandalism of the
8 site, and game cameras identified a local juvenile who was involved, and it has been
9 addressed. He said many people are monitoring the area and the process is progressing.
10 Councilor Lawson said when the town had to draw the Mill Pond down before, he didn't
11 recall any wildlife issues then. Administrator Selig said the Oyster River's natural state is
12 a free-flowing river that was damned for four centuries.

13
14 Councilor Gooze noted the letter Administrator Selig received from an administrator in
15 Oregon after his op-ed about being a 25-year administrator was very enlightening. He
16 said he was exactly parroting how Administrator Selig said things have changed. He said
17 except the Oregon administrator had gotten death threats, and Administrator Selig hasn't.
18 Administrator Selig said he has, but it was when he was in another town, not in Durham.

19
20 **XIV. New Business - None**

21
22 **XV. Nonpublic Session (if required) - Not needed.**

23
24 **XVI. Adjourn (NLT 10:30 PM)**

25
26 ***Chair Pro Tem Ford MOVED to adjourn the meeting. Councilor Welsh SECONDED***
27 ***the motion. The motion PASSED on a roll call vote of 9-0.***

28
29 The meeting was adjourned at 9:57 p.m.

30
31 *- Jane Murphy, Minutes Taker*
32
33
34
35