



NHMA BOARD OF DIRECTORS
June 20, 2025
DRAFT MEETING MINUTES
Approved: October 17, 2025

Board Members Attending

Devine, Joseph, Town Manager, Salem
Drabik, Lisa, Human Resources Director, Manchester
Forrester, Jeanie, Vice Chair, Select Board Member, Meredith
Fox, Beth, Asst. City Manager/HR Dir., Keene
Girard, Dale, Mayor, Claremont
Ham, Bonnie, Planning Board, Woodstock
Larsen, Holly, Finance Dir./Tax Collector, Berlin
Maggiore, Jim, Heritage Commission Member, North Hampton
Milner, Judie, Town Manager, Meredith
Mulholland, Shaun, Town Manager, Londonderry
Radke, Lori, Town Councilor, Bedford
Rautiola, Lori, Town Administrator, Swanzey
Seymour, Thomas, Moderator, Hill
Shanahan, Dennis, Chair, Deputy Mayor, Dover
Stack, David, Town Administrator, Bow

Staff Members Attending

Burke Cohen, Sarah, Legislative Advocate
Byrnes, Margaret, Executive Director
Cowal, Jonathan, Municipal Services Counsel
Deshaies, Brodie, Legislative Advocate
Pellowe, Judith, Business Administrator
Valley, Pam, Administrative Assistant

Chair Dennis Shanahan opened the meeting at 9:30 a.m. Shanahan recognized Board member Jeanie Forrester attending remotely due to medical reasons.

Shanahan advised that it is Dave Caron's last meeting as the Derry Town Administrator which is up in a few days. He will stay on the Board as Trustee of Trust Fund member in the Town of Belmont. This is also Lisa Drabik's last Board meeting. She is moving on to work for a school department. Congratulations to Drabik and best wishes for her new career.

Drabik thanked her fellow board members for all she has learned from them and expressed her sadness in no longer being on the NHMA Board of Directors with them.

Shanahan let the Board know that decisions and votes would be made by roll call due to Forrester's virtual attendance.

The meeting began with the pledge of allegiance.

Margaret Byrnes introduced Christian Smith, NHMA's Auditor who would be presenting the NHMA 2024 audit.

Christian Smith introduced himself and Erica Barley, Staff Auditor. They are part of the team that does the audit for NHMA. The 2024 Report was reviewed by them. They were pleased to say it was a clean audit.

MOTION by Shaun Mullholland, seconded by Joe Devine to accept the NHMA 2024 Audit report.

Mullholland thanked NHMA's Margaret Byrnes and Judith Pellowe for all their work and an outstanding job year after year on the audit and NHMA financials.

Roll call was taken (listed at end of minutes) to accept the NHMA 2024 Audit Report. The motion passed unanimously. The audit team was thanked for their presentation and dismissed.

Judith Pellowe gave the financial overview. We are 41% way through the year. We have received \$1.265 million in dues, there are seven unpaid members as of the end of May 2025. Some of those are members that pay June/July due to their fiscal year. There are three unpaid pending Associate members that wish to continue their membership. Our sustaining sponsor program is at 119% of what was budgeted due to new sustaining sponsors brought in by our Communications Coordinator.

Jim Maggiore asked if NHMA is still at 100% municipal members.

Byrnes confirmed that NHMA is currently at 100% membership. However, we have outstanding membership dues pending for the four members that pay in the summer after their fiscal year starts.

Shanahan asked if there were any other questions related to financials. None stated.

Shanahan asked if there were any questions on the May 2025 Board minutes. None stated.

MOTION by Beth Fox, seconded by Tom Seymour, to accept the administrative report. Motion passed by roll call vote (see attached).

Shanahan turned to Jonathan Cowal for the Legal Services report.

Cowal discussed recent On Demands, webinars, the Local Officials Workshop held in Jaffrey, the Code Enforcement workshop that was presented by DrummondWoodsum, and the Municipal Trustees training. He also listed the top subjects of recent legal inquiries, upcoming workshops/On Demands, and the work to begin on the 2026 Municipal Calendars and NLC Staff conference.

Byrnes stated that the Wolfeboro Budget On Demand is the first one that Tammy Letson will be presenting at.

Shanahan asked if there were any questions on the legal services report. None stated.

Shanahan turned things to Byrnes for the Advocacy update.

Byrnes stated that next week is the last full session for the House and Senate to meet. They have a variety of committee of conference reports which means they have bills coming to them that have been approved in committee of conference and must vote either yes or no.

SB 297, risk pool regulation.

NHMA sent an email to Board members to let them know what happened with this bill. SB 297 died; the Senate non-concurred with the House amendment. NHMA thought the House amendment was a good compromise. This is going to be a topic for next session.

Byrnes asked if there were any questions on SB 297 and confirmed that nothing changes since the bill did not pass.

Shanahan asked if it would be reasonable to expect next year's bill to be introduced in the same time frame as most of the bills next session.

Byrnes stated given how things played out this session, it seems that whoever introduces it next year, it would be on a normal timeframe. The stated rationale for the late bill this year was that it was an emergency.

State budget update (HB 1 and HB 2)

The committee of conference finished their work yesterday. They got through the entire budget on Wednesday but planned to meet again on Thursday to have the reading on the surplus statement and get confirmation that their budget was balanced. But they caucused and came out with some amendments right before they finalized the budget.

The Governor has stated that she cannot sign the budget and cannot support it. If that does happen, we will have a continuing resolution. It is concerning what deals may have to be made in order to obtain a passable budget if that happens. The main concern for the Governor's office is the Group II retirement reform section. NHMA does not take a position on the budget as a whole. However, local officials who believe that we are in a better position by passing the budget as drafted and not going into a continuing resolution could make a difference by contacting the Governor's Office.

NHMA is focusing on the positives of the budget. It is not a perfect budget, and we did not get everything that we had hoped, but overall municipalities did well. If we look back to the beginning of the budget process and the House version of the budget, we did better than expected.

One of the last-minute deals was full repeal of motor vehicle inspections. There was already a section in the budget establishing a 5-year no inspection period for new cars and scaling back the requirements to pass an inspection. With that modification, plus a reduced projection in registrations of trailers and heavy trucks, there was a projected reduction in the highway fund, which also meant a reduction in the amount that municipalities get. With a full repeal, the entire municipal distribution will be reduced by about \$350,000.

Another loss for local welfare and municipal budgets is that the new Medicaid premiums were adopted. NHMA raised concerns with this because we know if people cannot afford the premiums, then they may turn to local welfare.

The first opportunity the legislature had to defund the Housing Champions Program they did. There was \$5 million in the current budget, and all that money has been allocated.

The budget also does not fund the Regional Planning Commission grants. These were only \$10,000 per RPC per year. NHMA advocated hard for these grants. This will result in downshifting to municipalities because the RPCs must make up for this loss in funding.

Major wins for municipalities:

Meals and Rooms distribution has been left alone at 30%.

State Aid grants were funded. NHMA advocated to continue the funding in some amount. They funded it at \$2.5 million per year so \$5 million for the biennium. These are the grants for local wastewater projects that have been completed and are eligible to receive those grants.

There were significant provisions about landfill expansions that would have overridden local ordinances. The House was not in favor with that section, and it was taken out.

The provision changing the way Keno is adopted locally was also taken out of the budget. There is a separate bill that is going to the floor next Thursday which NHMA will be opposing.

The retirement system changes. This is the Governor's major priority with the budget and the main reason she says she cannot sign the budget. The retirement changes in the committee of conference version of the budget are significantly less than what was originally proposed. The original proposal was close to \$300 million, but the committee of conference version will cost much less. Because these changes were so significantly different and because they were made at the last minute, we have no fiscal note. To address the municipalities, the committee of conference adopted an amendment that essentially says that the legislature will pay the normal costs associated with these changes for municipalities. However, that section of law has no appropriation in it and it is effective 2027. The stated plan is to get a formal actuarial analysis from NHRS and then amend the law to appropriate the amount of money that is needed for normal costs to cities and towns in the next biennium so that it does not get downshifted onto taxpayers. This is great in concept, but the problem is that it will be very easy for the legislature to simply repeal or modify this section before it ever goes into effect in 2027. We are on record in the committee of conference saying we will work with the legislature to have this section amended to appropriate the amount of money needed to ensure there is no downshifting on property taxpayers.

Byrnes asked if there were any questions or further comments on the budget. None asked.

Byrnes turned the meeting over to Brodie Deshaies.

Deshaies shared that there are still a lot of bills, but a lot less, and some good news.

Deshaies gave an updated status on the following Zoning Mandate bills:

HB 577, detached ADU mandate

This bill is going to the Governor's desk. It is most likely going to get signed. NHMA is still going to advocate for a veto. We encourage you to reach out to the Governor and ask that it be vetoed.

HB 631, residential in all commercial zones

This bill is going to the Governor's desk. This bill was also included in our initial veto letter.

HB 457, congregate / group living in all residential zones

It barely passed the House. We were missing about 10-15 of our biggest advocates. NHMA is still going to advocate for a veto.

SB 284, one parking space per housing unit

This bill is headed to the Governor's desk. NHMA will make a push for a veto. We hope to bring another bill back next year tying parking space requirements to bedrooms in housing units, which would be more reasonable.

HB 296, mandated 30-day appeal period for zoning boards

This bill started as a bill that we supported that made it easier to allow development on private ways. They added a mandated 30-day appeal period for zoning boards. We think the Governor will sign this bill. It affects abutters the most in the appeals process.

HB 685, requiring manufactured homes and trailers in all residential zones

This bill died yesterday in committee of conference.

SB 291, expansion of religious property tax exemption (zoning exemptions for housing owned by religious organizations has been removed)

This bill was amended during committee of conference, and it is not a real concern anymore.

HB 342, exempting specific properties from density and lot coverage requirements

This bill died in the House by roll call vote.

SB 170, plethora of bad zoning mandates

This bill was tabled.

SB 174, preventing municipalities from considering number of bedrooms

It was a close vote, but this bill also died.

SB 163, ending local building moratoria (and HB 685 language attached)

This bill was tabled.

Deshaies turned the meeting over to Sarah Burke Cohen on the following bills.

SB 188, relative to the state building code

Burke Cohen stated that NHMA received a lot of input from stakeholders on this bill and we worked hard with them on this bill. The building officials felt it will be used only in larger developments.

SB 245, prohibiting surprise ambulance billing and regulating ground ambulance reimbursement.

This has been ongoing debate throughout the session. We have been involved with two bills: HB 316 and SB 245, which set the rates at approximately 200% and 325%, respectively. Stakeholders came together and passed SB 245. It was amended to end balanced billing. The rate for participating in enrolling services is 325%. The compromise is that ground ambulance services need to start the enrollment process to become in network providers. Because contracts are usually large, part of the deal was that health insurance providers need to streamline their contracts.

If it does not work to be in network, the ambulance provider can only get the out of network price that the insurance carrier is offering or Medicare rate, whichever is higher. Another cost study is being done to see what the actual cost is for ground service providers.

HB 143, relative to the issuance of no trespass orders on municipal or school district property, the responsibility of local school districts to provide meals to students during school hours, and reimbursing schools for meals provided to students at no cost, and relative to expanding the crime of endangering the welfare of a child.

The House version established more of an appeal process so that a Town Administrator, Library Director, Superintendent of School could issue a no trespass order, and it could be appealed to the governing body.

HB 143 is still alive, but now it is a replace all amendment with no provisions about no trespass orders.

HB 132, relative to local welfare.

This bill was not on the agenda, but we wanted to touch on it. The bill was repealing the statute that allowed local welfare officials to contact immediate family members for reimbursement. The sponsor of the bill didn't like the criminal penalty if a family member stated that they did not have the money or couldn't help right now. NH Local Welfare Administrators and NHMA worked with the House to come up with a compromise that took out that language but kept the purpose of the statute.

Burke Cohen asked if anyone had any questions. None asked.

HB 67, relative to agreements with the secretary of state for the use of accessible voting systems.

HB 613, relative to use of accessible voting systems (formerly alternative default budgets)

HB 67 and HB 613 are now interrelated bills about accessible voting systems. HB 67 makes the PILOT program allowing the use of accessible voting systems by municipalities for local elections permanent. Municipalities will have to pay the programming fees for the accessible voting systems. The Secretary of State's office has requests out to look at new accessible voting systems and their hope is that they can bring the programming cost down. HB 613 allows municipalities to opt out of using the accessible voting system if they don't have anybody using them or the governing body believes that no one will use them. There was call from membership to have that language in there because their accessible voting systems weren't being used and there was a high programming cost because of the number of ballots they had.

Byrnes clarified that NHMA did not ask for the amendment, but we knew we had some members, especially from small towns, upset about being required to use the system given the programming costs.

HB 554, clarifying the placement of advertising signs on state-owned property.

Burke Cohen stated this bill died. It will be coming back next year so we can get some clarity in the law about whether political advertising can be placed on public property, specifically municipal property and where and how it can be placed. There were three bills this session about political advertising on property.

SB 43, removing articles of clothing from the definition of electioneering and the use of electronic poll book devices.

This bill was amended to add language authorizing the use of electronic pole devices at local business at town meetings. There was membership support for the law to allow electronic poll books to be used at school district meetings and town meetings.

SB 213, (new title) relative to electioneering by public employees.

This bill is still alive, but we are hoping to kill it. This bill is really bad; it's going to chill free speech for public employees by redefining "electioneering" in a broad and far-reaching manner.

Lori Radke asked if this would eliminate voter guides as well.

Burke Cohen stated that was a good question. It could.

NHMA is advocating against the committee of conference report.

Jim Maggiore mentioned that a lot of communities use charrettes. Is that considered crossing the line?

Byrnes stated that it could be. Almost everything under this bill is "a maybe." If there was one bill other than the budget to reach out to your representatives about, it is SB 213. You can reach out to senators also, but we think the Senate is more inclined to pass it because it has the underlining absentee voter provision.

Burke Cohen stated the only saving grace is that enforcement is through the Attorney General's office. The bill does not allow just anybody to bring a suit against a municipality for electioneering.

Shaun Mulholland stated that it is important to remember that most towns have codes and internal processes that reference following the statutes. Violations have to be investigated internally and that would be far more expensive than what the AG's office would do.

Beth Fox stated that it sounds like the point of the bill is to allow people to spread things that are untrue and limit the ability of communities to respond.

Deshaies stated that while this bill came up because of a specific library, it also has to do with school districts and making motions during the business meeting. It prevents administrators or superintendents from providing information at the meeting.

David Stack asked for clarification that you can reply with information if asked.

Deshaies confirmed, yes, if asked.

Cowal pointed out that there is a much higher standard to prove that someone engaged in electioneering under current law. The new language shifts the legal burden. Right now, a complainant would have to have actual evidence.

Byrnes moved on to municipal budgeting and assessing.

HB 475, changes to default budget calculations and budgeting

NHMA tried to get this killed on the Senate floor. This is the bill that makes three really bad changes to the default budget calculations. It defies basic authority of select boards to spend money in the budget. NHMA and the police and fire chiefs have asked the Governor to veto this bill. It is worth it for local officials to send a letter or have your select board or town council send a letter to the Governor's office.

Mulholland asked if it applies to towns that have a charter that define their default budget differently than statute.

Byrnes asked if their charter adopts SB 2 or does the charter outline their own process.

Mulholland stated that they adopt a portion of SB 2 but have their own definition of default budget.

Byrnes stated that is a great question. If Londonderry has a locally adopted definition of default budget, they may not be bound by HB 475. That could be something legal services could weigh in on if you send them the question.

Deshaies provided updates on the following bills:

HB 200, 3/5s vote to override any additional spending over the tax cap

SB 105, 3/5s vote to adopt, override, or leave a CPI tax cap

HB 71, prohibiting the school facilities to be used to provide shelter for aliens, relative to department of health and human services contracts, **requiring the use of public notices before re-assessment of property values for tax purposes (Language from SB 225)**, and relative to construction of a public pier on Hampton Beach and making an appropriation therefor

This was amended to delete the individual mailing requirement for municipalities with 10,000 or more residents from law. Now the requirement is to choose from two different public notice methods for reassessments.

HB 421, relative to notice of tax exempt-status filing procedures by town officials or offices

This was a mailing requirement. It required two mailings to go out to folks that get property tax exemptions like charities or religious organizations. The bill is now dead.

The final bill Deshaies mentioned was **HB 737**, which changes the Keno adoption process from opt in to opt out. Municipalities must vote to opt out by 2027; otherwise, Keno will be permitted.

Deshaies asked if anyone had questions on the zoning bills. None were asked.

Shanahan expressed kudos to the advocacy team and thanked Margaret, Brodie, and Sarah for their hard work on the bills this session.

Shanahan moved to the last agenda item, the Executive Director's matters of interest. Shanahan brought up that the Board has a tentative meeting scheduled for September 19, 2025. The purpose of that meeting is to review the NHMA draft 2026 budget that the Finance Committee will produce over the summer. The question for the board is whether we want that meeting for the sole purpose of reviewing a draft budget or do we want to do all of our work at the October meeting to review it and act upon it.

Byrnes stated that in the past we have done the work and in October the Finance Committee presents the budget and the board adopts the budget. Does the board wish to have a September meeting to review the

budget or is the board comfortable having the Finance Committee drafting the budget for review and consideration at the October board meeting?

Mulholland suggested that the board continue the process we have been using and recommended getting the information out in advance of the October meeting so questions can be asked.

Beth Fox concurred and said the process works.

Shanahan stated that the consensus is that we do not need a September meeting. The Finance Committee will do its business and present their work to the full board in October.

Byrnes stated that the next board meeting will be in October, but Finance and Governance will be meeting over the summer and fall to do our normal work.

Shanahan asked if there were any other matters of interest from the board. None raised.

Byrnes stated that Deshaies also wanted to mention **HB 457**. NHMA is asking for a veto, and a letter has been sent to municipalities to ask for sign ons. If you want to sign onto it, please email Brodie or Todd Selig.

Mulholland asked when to expect the webinar for the legislative recap.

Byrnes stated that it has not been scheduled yet, but we normally do it in the summer after the session is over. We will get an announcement out about that. The *Final Bulletin* with all the changes usually comes out in September.

Shanahan asked if there were any other comments. Seeing none, he looked for a motion to adjourn.

MOTION by Joe Devine, seconded by Tom Seymour. Without objection, the meeting adjourned at 10:56 a.m.

NHMA Board of Directors Meeting

Roll Calls

June 20, 2025

9:30 a.m. / 25 Triangle Park Dr., Concord

	Board Member	Title/Municipality	Audit Report	Administrative Report
1	Buono, Laura	Town Administrator, Hillsborough		
2	Caron, Dave	Town Administrator, Derry		
3	Connelly, Shelagh	Conservation Commission, Holderness		
4	D'Avanza, Phillip	Planning Board, Goffstown		
5	Devine, Joseph, Treasurer	Town Manager, Salem	Yes	Abstain
6	Drabik, Lisa	HR Director, Manchester	Yes	Abstain
7	Forrester, Jeanie, Vice Chair	Select Board Member, Meredith	Yes	Yes
8	Fournier, Steve	Town Manager, Newmarket		
9	Fox, Elizabeth, Past Chair	Asst. City Manager/HR Dir., Keene	Yes	Yes

10	Girard, Dale	Mayor, Claremont	Yes	Yes
11	Haight, Joanne, Secretary	Select Board Chair, Sandwich		
12	Ham, Bonnie	Planning Board Member, Woodstock	Yes	Yes
13	Kretovic, Jennifer	City Councilor, Concord		
14	Larsen, Holly	Finance Dir., Tax Collector, Berlin	Yes	Yes
15	MacIver, Conner	Town Administrator, Barrington		
16	Maggiore, Jim	Heritage Commission, North Hampton	Yes	Yes
17	Michaud, Jim	Chief Assessor, Hudson		
18	Milner, Judie	Town Manager, Meredith	Yes	Yes
19	Moore, David	Town Administrator, Stratham		
20	Mulholland, Shaun	Town Manager, Londonderry	Yes	Abstain
21	Radke, Lori	Town Councilor, Bedford	Yes	Yes
22	Rautiola, Lori	Town Administrator, Swanzey	Yes	Yes
23	Seymour, Thomas	Moderator, Hill	Yes	Yes
24	Shanahan, Dennis, Chair	Deputy Mayor, Dover	Yes	Yes
25	Stack, David	Town Manager, Bow	Yes	Yes