



NHMA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DRAFT Meeting Minutes

January 16, 2026

Approved: February 20, 2026

Board Members Attending

Branley, Michael, Town Administrator, Windham
Buono, Laura, Town Administrator, Hillsborough
Connelly, Shelagh, Conservation Commission, Holderness
D'Avanza, Phil, Planning Board Member, Goffstown
Devine, Joe, Town Manager, Salem
Forrester, Jeanie, Select Board Member
Fournier, Steve, Town Manager, Newmarket
Fox, Elizabeth, Asst. City Manager/HR Dir., Keene
Haight, Joanne, Select Board Chair, Sandwich
Ham, Bonnie, Planning Board, Woodstock
Kretovic, Jennifer, City Councilor, Concord
Larsen, Holly, Finance Dir., Tax Collector, Berlin
MacIver, Conner, Town Administrator, Barrington
Moore, David, City Manager, Somersworth
Mulholland, Shaun, Town Manager, Londonderry
Normand, Matthew, City Clerk, Manchester
Radke, Lori, Town Councilor, Bedford
Rautiola, Lori, Town Administrator, Swanzey
Seymour, Thomas, Moderator, Hill
Shanahan, Dennis, **Chair**, Mayor, Dover
Stack, David, Town Administrator, Bow

Staff Members Attending

Burke Cohen, Sarah, Legislative Advocate
Byrnes, Margaret, Executive Director
Johnston, Christine, Legal Services Counsel
Pellowe, Judith, Business Administrator
Valley, Pam, Administrative Assistant

Chair Dennis Shanahan opened the meeting at 9:30 am. followed by the pledge of allegiance. Shanahan confirmed that we had a quorum for the meeting.

1. Administrative Report

Judith Pellowe reviewed the 2025 year-end financials comprised of the income statement, balance sheet, and workshop revenue.

Chair Shanahan asked if there were any comments or questions on the drafted October 2025 nonpublic session minutes or December 2025 minutes. There were no questions.

MOTION by Stephen Fournier, seconded by Phil D’Avanza, to accept the administrative report as presented. Motion passes unanimously.

2. Legal Services Report

Christine Johnston reviewed the legal services report, upcoming events and publications in progress.

Sarah Burke Cohen gave an update on the new DEI law in HB 2 (2025), the court case, and the recent letter sent out by the attorney general’s office.

Margaret Byrnes asked if any board member’s town or city would be willing to respond to the letter and ask about the preliminary injunction.

Steve Fournier of Newmarket and Jennifer Kretovic of Concord will report back to NHMA once they hear back from the AG’s office regarding the letter.

Burke Cohen shared that HB 1788, which was heard in the legislature on January 15, has language in it that establishes a right of action against entities that engage in DEI and would make contracts with DEI provisions void. The language is confusing and unconstitutional.

3. NHMA Advocacy Report

Byrnes stated that 2026 is a legislative policy process year. There will be three committees (General Administration and Governance, Finance and Revenue, and Infrastructure, Development and Land Use), and NHMA is asking Board members to participate if interested. NHMA will need a board member to serve as chair and vice chair for each committee at minimum. The organizational day is April 3, 2026. Each committee will meet three or four times during April and May. There will be a policy conference in September for all members.

Shanahan stated that it is a good opportunity for board members to participate and share their input. Board members should ask other local officials to participate.

Recent floor action:

Byrnes gave an update on recent floor action on key NHMA bills.

HB 314, (oppose) prohibiting advocacy & lobbying with public funds. This bill was killed last week in the legislature, and it was a real victory. The work and efforts done by the advocacy team and local officials made it possible.

HB 173, (oppose) requiring that the purpose of a petitioned warrant be maintained (passed House)

HB 340, (oppose) relative to electioneering by public employees (passed Senate)

HB 707, (oppose) overriding local ordinances relating to landfills (passed Senate)

Committee hearings/action this past week:

HB 1474, changing the Meals & Rooms tax distribution

Byrnes shared that this bill makes a change to the method of calculating the municipal distribution. The sponsor wishes to amend the bill and produced a spreadsheet showing the estimated distribution (which will be in the *Bulletin*). Based on the spreadsheet, many towns would get nothing, and almost half would receive less than in the past, while others would get more. Byrnes stated she was looking for guidance on how NHMA should proceed. NHMA's policy is to not take a position when it places members above or below one another.

Byrnes asked for the board's input whether or not NHMA should get involved or stay neutral if the committee adopts the amendment. Board discussion ensued.

MOTION by Shaun Mulholland, seconded by Joe Devine, to direct the executive director to provide guidance to legislators on this issue. Motion passes unanimously.

SB 627, toll rate adjustment: Byrnes shared that the Senator that proposed the bill has reached out looking for NHMA's support. In the past, NHMA has not taken a position on the policy of where the state gets its revenue.

MOTION by David Moore, seconded by Jennifer Kretovic, to not take a position on this bill. Motion passes unanimously.

SB 634, (support) allowing municipalities to adopt an occupancy fee

Burke Cohen stated this bill goes hand in hand with HB 1607. Municipalities may need to obtain a grant to update their storage structures. There are reports that contamination is in the ground water. DES is moving to the use of brine, and less salt.

There was further discussion regarding contamination of municipal wells and environmental impacts.

HB 1810, (oppose) relative to a road salt fee to support certified winter road maintenance practices. Sarah Burke Cohen will keep the board updated on the outcome of this bill.

NHMA land use bills, property tax exemption bills, and local optional tax cap bills

Byrnes shared that the House Housing committee met recently on land use and zoning related bills, most of which were bills we worked with legislators to get filed.

Board members were asked to look at the *Bulletin* to see bills coming up next week. Member support, whether online or with your representatives, would be good.

Coming up next week:

Byrnes gave an update on bills being heard next week.

HB 1359, (oppose) substantially altering how and whether municipalities can join/receive services from NHMA and the manner in which NHMA provides services. This bill requires municipalities to take a ballot vote to join NHMA and a separate vote to join our lobbying services. A super majority roll call or secret ballot vote is also required. The language also requires NHMA to allow schools to join us for lobbying purposes.

HB 1360, (oppose) establishing a legislative commission to oversee NHMA. This bill would allow legislature to take over NHMA and also suspend our lobbying, among other things.

Byrnes asked board members to sign in to oppose these bills. NHMA will send out a resolution template and draft letter that municipal boards could consider adopting. It is important that your letter or email go to your own representatives before the bills go to the floor, we have input.

Town meeting & elections

Byrnes described the following bills.

HB 1131, (oppose) putting the SB 2 question on the ballot
HB 1224, (oppose) changing the default budget calculation

HB 1272, (oppose) requiring partisan local elections. This is a local option for towns to adopt a process to put the candidate's party affiliation on the ballot, including if they are undeclared. The implementation of this process could be problematic.

Lori Radke stated that that information is already available by looking at the books at town hall. Why make it a requirement when it is something that already exists.

HB 1392, (oppose) removing the ability of governing bodies to include recommendations on warrant articles. Johnston explained the current law on recommendations on warrant articles.

HB 1418, (oppose) requiring 15 percent of registered voters to cast a ballot to pass any appropriation.

HB 1427, (oppose) prohibiting municipalities from using bonds.

Byrnes reviewed the new nongermane amendment proposed to HB 1300 that would establish a recurring tax cap question on the ballot for the general election. Byrnes noted that HB 675, establishing a school tax cap, was recently defeated by a large margin.

Right to Know Law

SB 626, (support) restricting right-to-know requests to persons domiciled or maintaining a permanent residence in New Hampshire and requiring proof of domicile or residency to file right-to-know requests.

Burke Cohen shared that this bill will go to the Senate the third week of February. Please watch the weekly *Bulletin* and sign in for support.

Board discussion ensued.

Lori Radke asked the status of HB 488. Her town clerk brought it to her attention. Byrnes stated that NHMA is opposed. It is a re-write of the incompatibility of offices statutes. There was an amendment that somewhat improved the bill. We hope to work on it or kill it in the Senate.

Steve Fournier stated that Town Administrator is not statutorily defined. Byrnes stated that NHMA has discussed that with the legislature.

4. Executive Director's Matter of Interest

- Committee appointments

Byrnes shared that we are still looking for board members to serve on the Governance and Finance subcommittees. We currently have four members for Governance but none for Finance. Please let NHMA know if you would like to serve on one of those committees.

- Other

Byrnes reminded board members to fill out their acknowledgement forms and contact/mileage forms.

5. Nonpublic Session

Shanahan called for a motion to enter nonpublic session under RSA 91-A:3, II(l) for consideration of legal advice provided by legal counsel.

MOTION made by Joe Devine, seconded by Steve Fournier, to enter nonpublic session. Pam Valley called the roll. Motion passed by roll call vote (attached).

The Board entered nonpublic session at 11:01 a.m.

The Board reentered the public meeting at 11:23 AM.

MOTION by Shelagh Connelly, seconded by Jennifer Kretovic, to affirm the Executive Committee's recommendation to file a motion to intervene in the Bureau of Securities Regulation administrative enforcement action, Case No. INV-2023-0026, relative to the HealthTrust/NHMA pension issue. Motion passed unanimously.

Seeing no further business, Chair Shanahan declared the meeting adjourned.

Minutes prepared by: Pam Valley, Administrative Assistant

NHMA Board of Directors Meeting
 Roll Call
 January 16, 2026

Following regular board meeting / 25 Triangle Park Dr., Concord

	Board Member	Title/Municipality	
1	Branley, Michael	Town Administrator, Windham	Yes
2	Buono, Laura	Town Administrator, Hillsborough	Yes
3	Connelly, Shelagh	Conservation Commission, Holderness	Yes
4	D'Avanza, Phillip	Planning Board Member, Goffstown	Yes
5	Devine, Joseph, Treasurer	Town Manager, Salem	Yes
6	Dorsett, Andrew	ZBA Member, Lyman	NP*
7	Edwards, Robert	Select Board Member, Antrim	NP*
8	Forrester, Jeanie, V. Chair	Select Board Member, Meredith	Yes
9	Fournier, Steve	Town Manager, Newmarket	Yes
10	Fox, Elizabeth, Past Chair	Asst. City Manager/HR Dir., Keene	Yes
11	Girard, Dale	Mayor, Claremont	NP*
12	Haight, Joanne	Select Board Chair, Sandwich	Yes
13	Ham, Bonnie	Planning Board Member, Woodstock	Yes
14	Kretovic, Jennier	City Councilor, Concord	Yes
15	Larsen, Holly	Finance Director/Tax Collector, Berlin	Yes
16	MacIver, Conner	Town Administrator, Barrington	Yes
17	Michaud, Jim	Chief Assessor, Hudson	NP*
18	Moore, David	City Manager, Somersworth	Yes
19	Mulholland, Shaun	Town Manager, Londonderry	Yes
20	Normand, Matthew	City Clerk, Manchester	Yes
21	Radke, Lori	Town Councilor, Bedford	Yes
22	Rautiola, Lori	Town Administrator, Swanzey	Yes
23	Seymour, Thomas	Moderator, Hill	Yes
24	Shanahan, Dennis, Chair	Mayor, Dover	Yes
25	Stack, David	Town Manager, Bow	Yes

*NP = Not Present