



NHMA BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Meeting Minutes February 20, 2026
Approved: March 20, 2026

Board Members Attending

Branley, Michael, Town Administrator, Windham
Buono, Laura, Town Administrator, Hillsborough
D'Avanza, Phil, Planning Board Member, Goffstown
Devine, Joe, Town Manager, Salem
Dorsett, Andrew, Zoning Board of Adjustment, Lyman
Edwards, Robert, Select Board member, Antrim
Forrester, Jeanie, **Vice Chair**, 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
Michaud, Jim, Chief Assessor, Hudson
Normand, Matthew, City Clerk, Manchester
Rautiola, Lori, Town Administrator, Swanzey
Seymour, Thomas, Moderator, Hill
Stack, David, Town Administrator, Bow

Staff Members Attending

Burke Cohen, Sarah, Legislative Advocate
Cowl, Jonathan, Legal Services Counsel
Deshaies, Brodie, Legislative Advocate
Pellowe, Judith, Business Administrator
Valley, Pam, Administrative Assistant

Vice Chair Jeanie Forrester opened the meeting at 9:30 am. followed by the pledge of allegiance.

1. Administrative Report

Judith Pellowe reviewed the January income statement, balance sheet, and workshop revenue with the board.

Holly Larsen and Jim Michaud asked about the AI conference. Jonathan Cowl shared that AI was very popular at last year's annual conference. NHMA has been working with an organization that has offered to team up with us to co-host a conference in the fall.

Forrester asked if there were any other questions about the financials. None raised.

Forrester asked if there were any questions or changes to the January 2026 minutes and nonpublic session minutes. None asked.

MOTION by Beth Fox, seconded by Joe Devine, to accept the administrative report as presented. Motion passes unanimously.

Jennifer Kretovic arrived at 9:36 a.m.

2. Legal Services Report

Jonathan Cowal reviewed the legal services report. Discussion included workshops that have been completed and upcoming, number of inquiries and top categories, and publications in progress.

Steve Fournier arrived at 9:41 a.m.

3. NHMA Advocacy Report

Brodie Deshaies gave an overview of the following bills:

HB 1196 (oppose), repealing the Housing Champions Program
HB 1002 (oppose), repealing the solar exemption
HB 1474, change the municipal meals & rooms tax distribution
HB 1491 (support), changing the manner of regulation of risk pools
SB 661 (oppose), establishing new rules and requirement for risk pools under SOS
SB 605 (support), allowing 36 months for payment of a risk pool assessment

Deshaies shared that Margaret Byrnes will give a more in-depth review on the risk pool bills at the next meeting.

Bonnie Ham arrived at 9:46 a.m.

Sarah Burke Cohen gave an update on the following bills:

HB 1064, relative to liability of governmental units. Jim Michaud asked if there was a way that this bill could be pulled from the consent calendar. Deshaies and Burke Cohen stated no.

Burke Cohen continued with updates to the following bills:

HB 1184, relative to the issuance of no trespass orders on municipal or school district property
HB 1607 & HB 1810, road salt storage and fee
SB 626, limiting right-to-know requests to persons domiciled or maintaining a permanent residence in New Hampshire

Deshaies reported on the following bills:

HB 1704, permitting public employees to bargain individually with public employers without any intervention
HB 1195, mandating childcare centers by right in all residential units
SB 564, prohibiting certain municipal development restrictions

Burke Cohen continued:

HB 348 and SB 441, eligibility for local assistance. Burke Cohen shared that NHMA has been working with the NH Local Welfare Administrators Association on these bills. The language in HB 348 is better and preferred than in SB 441.

HB 1300, nongermane amendment (oppose), perpetual tax cap question on the general election ballot

HB 1359 & HB 1360 (oppose), anti-NHMA bills

Burke Cohen provided an update on the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) HB 2 language litigation. On February 18, 2026, a pending case in federal court relative to an Executive Order, pertaining to DEI in education, issued by President Trump, was dismissed after an order was issued invalidating the directive. With that said, the HB 2 language litigation is still pending. A preliminary injunction has been issued in that case, and NHMA has posted on its website guidance relative to it. Further, NHMA understands that members will receive updated information from the Attorney General's Office that will service as an addendum to their January 7, 2026. The attorney general's email will include information about the pending case and preliminary injunction.

Steve Fournier shared that he had reached out to the AG's office at least two times regarding their email to municipalities, but he never received a response from them.

Deshaies gave an update on the following bills:

HB 1357 (oppose), permitting manufactured housing by right in all zoning districts that permit residential uses. Phil D'Avanza and Bonnie Ham shared thoughts and concerns and inquired whether we were working with others on these bills, including the NH Planners (NHPA) or the Office of Planning and Development (OPD). Deshaies shared that NHMA has been communicating regularly with the NHPA but unfortunately OPD does not communicate with us on legislation.

4. Executive Director's matter of interest

Cowal stated that Byrnes will go over these matters of interest in the next meeting.

Pension matter update

Legislative policy committees and policy proposals

NHMA Works! Campaign

Forrester asked if members had responded to the call for legislative policy committees.

Deshaies and Burke Cohen shared that NHMA is receiving correspondence from those willing to serve on the three policy committees; there is still room for volunteers. The first meeting will be in April.

Forrester welcomed Andrew Dorsett to his first board meeting. Dorsett introduced himself and shared his background.

Forrester asked if there were any other items for discussion.

MOTION by Steve Fournier, seconded by Phil D'Avanza to adjourn the meeting.

Forrester declared the meeting adjourned at 10:15 a.m.

Minutes prepared by: Pam Valley, Administrative Assistant