NEW HAMPSHIRE MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION

NHMA BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Meeting Minutes
June 19, 2026
Approved: October 16, 2026

Board Members Attending

Connelly, Shelagh, Conservation Commission, Holderness
D'Avanza, Phil, Planning Board, Goffstown
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, Sandwich
Ham, Bonnie, Planning Board Member, Woodstock
Kretovic, Jennifer, City Councilor, Concord
Larsen, Holly, Finance Dir., Tax Collector, Berlin
Michaud, Jim, Chief Assessor, Hudson
Moore, David, City Manager, Somersworth
Mulholland, Shaun, Town Manager, Londonderry
Normand, Matthew, City Clerk, Manchester
Radke, Lori, Town Administrator, Milford
Rautiola, Lori, Town Administrator, Swanzey
Shanahan, Dennis, Mayor, Dover
Seymour, Thomas, Moderator, Hill
Stack, David, Town Administrator, Bow

Staff Members Attending
Burke Cohen, Sarah, Legislative Advocate
Byrnes, Margaret, Executive Director
Cowal, Jonathan, Legal Services Counsel
Deshaies, Brodie, Legislative Advocate
Johnston, Christine, Legal Services Counsel
Pellowe, Judith, Business Administrator
Valley, Pam, Administrative Assistant

Members of the Public Attending:

Christian Smith, Wipfli

Chair Dennis Shanahan opened the meeting at 9:30 AM followed by the pledge of allegiance.

1. **NHMA 2025 Audit**

Margaret Byrnes advised the board that NHMA included the 2025 audit in the board email last week.

Christian Smith of Wipfli introduced himself and presented the 2025 NHMA audit. Smith reported that NHMA has a clean audit and is in good shape. There are no recommendations for improvement.

Shaun Mulholland asked Mr. Smith how often his company sees reports with no findings. Smith replied about 50 percent. Their audits often find something and have suggestions for improvement in their reports.

Mulholland thanked Judith Pelllowe and the NHMA team for their hard work and congratulated them on a clean audit and job well done.

Shelagh Connelly asked about the current pension plan. Discussion ensued.

Jim Michaud asked how long NHMA has been using Wipfli for its audits. Byrnes stated NHMA had a five-year contract and then extended it for three years after discussion with the finance committee. NHMA is close to the end of that contract extension. Pellowe stated that she started with NHMA in 2017 and NHMA did an RFP for an audit firm that year.

Shanahan asked if there were any additional comments or questions. None raised.

MOTION by Shaun Mulholland, seconded by Steve Fournier, to accept the audit report as presented. Motion passes unanimously.

Christian Smith left the meeting at 9:45 a.m.

2. **Executive Director hiring process**

Shanahan stated that we have started the process of hiring a new executive director. Byrnes shared that NHMA hired Kittleman & Associates and are working with Suzy Cowen.

Shanahan shared that the organizational meeting on June 17, 2026, went well. The board members on the search committee are himself as chair, Steve Fournier, Jennifer Kretovic, David Moore, Shaun Mulholland, and Lori Radke. Marty Karlon is the NHMA employee representative.

Kittleman expects to advertise the position by early July. They will vet all the applicants, and the search committee will select about 6-8 candidates for interviews. The second round of interviews will be before the full board. Kittleman will reach out to set dates in October for finalist interviews. It is important that we have a quorum at that meeting. The board will select the next Executive Director of NHMA.

During the search process, it is important that board members refer potential applicants to Suzy Cowen at Kittleman. Confidentiality is vital to ensure fairness and equal access during this process. A position guide will be prepared and include contact information for board members. If there are any questions, please let Shanahan know.

Byrnes updated the board that Sarah Burke Cohen will serve as Interim Executive Director for NHMA. Transition work has already begun.

3. Administrative Report

Judith Pellowe reviewed the May financials with the board, including the income statement, balance and workshop expenses.

Shanahan asked if there were any questions on the financials or changes to the May board minutes.

MOTION by Steve Fournier seconded by Bob Edwards, to accept the administrative report as presented. Motion passes.

4. Legal Services Report

Jonathan Cowal reviewed the legal services report, including inquiry numbers and topics. Outside presentations by NHMA staff have increased greatly.

Jim Michaud asked about training on default budgets. Cowal stated that NHMA will be offering a free webinar on that topic in September.

Connelly asked if the On Demands NHMA has been presenting were in person or virtual. Cowal stated that the majority have been in person. Connelly stated that a virtual On Demand has positives due to less travel and more cost effective, but that means less time out in the communities in front of members. Discussion ensued.

5. NHMA Advocacy Report

Shanahan turned to Margaret Byrnes and the advocacy team for an update on legislation.

Byrnes stated that as of Thursday, NHMA is tracking 370 bills: 33 have been signed; 3 vetoed; 273 killed, tabled, or sent to Interim study; and 61 passed and pending action by the governor.

HB 1491/SB 661, risk pool regulation: Byrnes stated that we are waiting to see what happens with these bills. We should know very soon. If there is a good outcome with these bills, it will be due to member outreach. Byrnes thanked the board members for all their work. NHMA will give an update as soon as we hear more.

Brodie Deshaies and Sarah Burke Cohen gave updates on the following bills:

HB 340, (oppose) relative to electioneering by public employees. Burke Cohen stated that this bill has not been enrolled yet. Members have been sending letters in. Please continue to tell the governor to veto this bill.
HB 1184 (oppose), relative to the issuance of no trespass orders on municipal or school district property
SB 538 (support), extending net metering eligibility terms for municipal energy projects.

Byrnes discussed HB 1300 (oppose), requiring a vote on a school/SAU tax cap at the 2026 general election.

Deshaies and Burke Cohen continued with updates on the following bills:
HB 1588 (oppose), relative to the regulation of accessory parking for vehicles by local legislative bodies and multifamily housing within commercial districts by municipalities.
SB 564 (oppose), prohibiting certain municipal development restrictions
HB 1681 (oppose), relative to the definition, inspection, and local approval of tiny houses and yurts as innovative housing structures.
HB 1079 (oppose), allowing accessory dwelling units to be built within or attached to certain nonconforming structures.
HB 1195 (oppose), relative to municipal zoning requirements for child day care providers
Signed by the governor
HB 348 (support), relative to eligibility for local assistance
SB 593 (support), enabling the use of solid waste management funds by solid waste management districts

6. **Executive director's matters of interest**

Pension Matter Update

Byrnes updated the board where NHMA is regarding this matter. The attorney representing NHMA has determined there is a conflict of interest with his firm representing both NHMA and the small group of retirees at the same time. Notice has gone out to the retirees that NHMA cannot represent them. NHMA's executive and finance committees met jointly this morning to discuss further and agreed with this approach. NHMA's next step is to file an amicus brief.

Connelly asked if we should be hiring the new executive director with a retirement plan instead of pension plan. Byrnes stated that the pension requires all employees to participate. Shanahan stated that the Search Committee had preliminary discussions on this already.

Other Items

Byrnes shared that the Women's Leadership Conference will take place again this year with a new format. She stated there is incredible interest again this year. Byrnes thanked Mulholland for suggesting this program and all those that are involved with it.

Byrnes stated that was participating in Leadership NH this year and was nominated by Lori Radke. She stated that Scott Deroche of HealthTrust, Joe Devine of Salem, the Deputy City Manager of Keene, and a select board member of New London are all part of the cohort. NHMA provided two scholarships this year, and Leadership NH reported there was more local government interest in the program than before.

Byrnes announced that this is the last board meeting for Lori Ratioula and Beth Fox. Byrnes thanked them for their service and wished them well in their future endeavors.

At the end of her term, Shelagh Connelly will also be stepping down but has a couple more meetings to go.

Shanahan stated that we will have some vacancies to fill.

Byrnes asked board members to reach out to local officials who might be interested, especially elected officials.

Shanahan stated that today is Byrnes's last board meeting as NHMA's executive director. There are a couple more things to work on before she leaves mid-July. Board members thank Byrnes for her service and wished her well in her new endeavor.

MOTION by Steve Fournier, seconded by Phil D'Avanza, to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 10:58 a.m.

Minutes prepared by: Pam Valley, Administrative Assistant