

Board of Adjustment Unincorporated Places of Coös County NH

Rules of Procedure

AUTHORITY

1. These rules of procedure are adopted under the authority of New Hampshire Revised Statutes Annotated, 1983, [Chapter 676:1](#), and the zoning ordinance and maps of the Unincorporated Places NH.

OFFICERS

1. **A chair** shall be elected annually by a majority vote of the board in the month of March. The chair shall preside over all meetings and hearings, appoint such committees as directed by the board and shall affix his/her signature in the name of the board.
2. **A vice-chair** shall be elected annually by a majority vote of the board in the month of March. The vice-chair shall preside in the absence of the chair and shall have the full powers of the chair on matters which come before the board during the absence of the chair.
3. **A clerk** shall be appointed annually by a majority vote of the board in the month of March. The clerk's position may be assumed by someone hired by the board to perform such duties. The clerk shall maintain a record of all meetings, transactions and decisions of the board and perform such other duties as the board may direct by resolution.
4. All officers shall serve for one year and shall be eligible for re-election.

MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES

1. Up to **five alternate members** shall be appointed, as provided for by the local legislative body, and should attend all meetings to familiarize themselves with the workings of the board to stand ready to serve whenever a regular member of the board is unable to fulfill his/her responsibilities.

At meetings of the ZBA, alternates who are not activated to fill the seat of an absent or recused member or who have not been appointed by the chair to temporarily fill the unexpired term of a vacancy may participate with the board in a limited capacity. During a public hearing, alternates may sit at the table with the regular members and may view documents, listen to testimony, ask questions and interact with other board members, the applicant, abutters and the public. Alternates shall not be allowed to make or second motions and shall not participate in any way during the deliberations by the board. Upon the close of the public hearing, any alternate not acting in place of another member shall remove themselves from the table and sit with other members of the public. During work sessions or portions of meetings that do not include a public hearing, alternates may

fully participate, exclusive of any motions or votes that may be made. At all times, the chair shall fully inform the public of the status of any alternate present and identify the members who shall be voting on the application.

3. Members must reside in Coös County and are expected to attend each meeting of the board to exercise their duties and responsibilities. Any member unable to attend a meeting shall notify the chair as soon as possible. Members, including the chair and all officers, shall participate in the decision-making process and vote to approve or disapprove all motions under consideration.
4. Removal of Board Members – The board will comply with RSA 673:13 pertaining to the removal of members of the board. However, any member who fails to attend three (3) consecutive regular meetings of the Board of Adjustment, without an adequate reason for such absences, may become subject to removal from the Board of Adjustment. The chair, with the concurrence of not less than three (3) members, may recommend to the Coös County Commissioners that a vacancy be declared and that the vacated position be filled.

MEETINGS

1. **Regular meetings** shall be held on an as needed basis as called by the chair. Other meetings may be held on the call of the chair provided public notice and notice to each member is given in accordance with [RSA 91-A:2, II](#).
2. **Quorum.** A quorum for all meetings of the board shall be three members, including alternates sitting in place of members.
 - a. The chair shall make every effort to ensure that all five members, and one or two alternates, are present for the consideration of any appeal or application.
 - b. If any regular board member is absent from any meeting or hearing, or disqualifies himself from sitting on a particular case, the chair shall designate one of the alternate members to sit in place of the absent or disqualified member, and such alternate shall be in all respects a full member of the board while so sitting.
 - c. If there are less than five members (including alternates) present, the chair shall give the option to proceed or not to the applicant. Should the applicant choose to proceed with less than five members present that shall not solely constitute grounds for a rehearing should the application fail.
3. **Disqualification.** If any member finds it necessary to disqualify himself/herself from sitting in a particular case, as provided in [RSA 673:14](#), he/she shall notify the chair as soon as possible so that an alternate may be requested to sit in his/her place. When there is uncertainty as to whether a member should be disqualified to act on a particular application, that member or another member of the board may request the board to vote on the question of disqualification. Any such request shall be made before the public hearing gets underway. The vote shall be advisory and non-binding.

- a. Either the chair or the member disqualifying himself/herself before the beginning of the public hearing on the case shall announce the disqualification. The disqualified member shall absent himself/herself from the board table during the public hearing and during all deliberation on the case.

4. **Decorum**

a) Each member of the Board shall cooperate with the Chair in preserving order and decorum and no member shall, by conversation or otherwise, delay or interrupt the proceedings of the Board nor disturb any member while speaking or fail to abide by the orders of the Board or its Chair, except as specifically permitted by these Rules of Procedure.

b) Any person who shall disturb the peace of the board, make impertinent or slanderous remarks or conduct himself in a boisterous manner while addressing the Board shall be forthwith barred by the Chair from further audience before the board, except that if the speaker shall submit to proper order under these rules, permission for him to continue may be granted by a majority vote of the Board. Evidence of a violation of this subsection may be grounds for removal under NH RSA 673:13 Removal of Members

5. **Order of Business.** The order of business for regular meetings shall be as follows:

- a. Call to order by the chair.
- b. Roll call.
- c. Minutes of previous meeting.
- d. Public hearing.
- e. New business.
- f. Communications and miscellaneous.
- g. Other business.
- h. Adjournment.

APPLICATION/DECISION

1. **Applications**

- a. Each application for a hearing before the board shall be made on forms provided by the board and shall be presented to the clerk of the board of adjustment who shall record the date of receipt over his/her signature.

Appeals from an administrative decision taken under [RSA 676:5](#) shall be filed within 30 days of the decision or when such decision becomes known or reasonably could have been known by the petitioner as determined by the board.

At each meeting, the clerk shall present to the board all applications received by him/her at least 7 days before the date of the meeting.

- b. All forms and revisions prescribed shall be adopted by resolution of the board and shall become part of these rules of procedure.

2. **Public Notice**

- a. Public notice of public hearings on each application shall be given in a newspaper(s) of general circulation and shall be posted not less than five (5) days before the date fixed for the hearing. Notice shall include the name of the applicant, description of property to include tax map identification, action desired by the applicant, provisions of the zoning ordinance concerned, the type of appeal being made, and the date, time and place of the hearing.
- b. Personal notice shall be made by certified mail to the applicant and all abutters not less than five (5) days before the date of the hearing. Notice shall also be given to the planning board, county administrator and other parties deemed by the board to have special interest by regular mail. Said notice shall contain the same information as the public notice and shall be made on forms provided for this purpose.
- c. The applicant shall pay for all required notice costs in advance.

3. **Public Hearing.** The conduct of public hearings shall be governed by the following rules:

- a. The chair shall call the hearing in session.
- b. The Chair shall read the application and report on how public notice and personal notice were given.
- c. Members of the board may ask questions at any point during testimony.
- d. Each person who appears shall be required to state his/her name and address and indicate whether he/she is a party to the case or an agent or counsel of a party to the case.
- e. Any member of the board, through the chair, may request any party to the case to speak a second time.
- f. Any party to the case who wants to ask a question of another party to the case must do so through the chair.
- g. The applicant or designee shall be called to present his/her appeal.
- h. Those appearing in favor of the appeal shall be allowed to speak.
- i. Those in opposition to the appeal shall be allowed to speak.
- j. The applicant and those in favor shall be allowed to speak in rebuttal.
- k. Those in opposition to the appeal shall be allowed to speak in rebuttal.
- l. Any person who wants the board to compel the attendance of a witness shall present his/her request in writing to the chair not later than 3 days prior to the public hearing.
- m. The board of adjustment will hear with interest any evidence that pertains to the facts of the case or how the facts relate to the provisions of the zoning ordinance and state zoning law.
- n. The chair shall present a summary setting forth the facts of the case and the claims made for each side (see Findings of Facts form in Appendix C). Opportunity shall be given for correction from the floor.

o. The hearing on the appeal shall be declared closed and the next case called up.

4. **Decisions.** The board shall decide all cases within 30 days of the close of the public hearing and shall approve, approve with conditions, or deny the appeal. Notice of the decision will be made available for public inspection within 5 business days, as required by [RSA 676:3](#). If the appeal is denied, the notice shall include the reasons therefore. The notice shall also be given to the planning board, the board of selectmen, town clerk, property tax assessor and other town officials as determined by the board.
5. **Voting.** The chair may assign the task of drafting a motion to a board member who shall bring a draft motion to the board at the continuation of the deliberative portion of the meeting for the consideration of the board. Should a motion result in a tie vote or not receive the necessary 3 votes to decide in favor of the applicant, the opposite of the failed motion does not automatically prevail. The board must put forth a new motion to affirmatively set forth a decision.
6. **Reconsideration by the Board.** The board may reconsider a decision to grant or deny an application or grant or deny a motion for rehearing provided such reconsideration is within the appeal period of the original decision as per [74 Cox Street LLC v. City of Nashua](#), September 21, 2007. Motions for Rehearing can only be received in the office of the board during normal business hours. (See [Cardinal Development v. Winchester](#), October 2008)

RECORDS

1. The records of the board shall be kept by the clerk and made available for public inspection at the Commissioners' Office at the Coös County Nursing Hospital, West Stewartstown in accordance with [RSA 673:17](#).
2. Final written decisions will be placed on file and available for public inspection within 5 business days after the decision is made. [RSA 676:3](#) and attached to the minutes of the meeting.
3. Minutes of all meetings including names of board members, persons appearing before the board, and a brief description of the subject matter shall be open to public inspection within 5 business days of the public meeting. [RSA 91-A:2 II](#).

AMENDMENTS

1. These rules of procedure may be amended by a majority vote of the members of the board provided that such amendment is read at two successive meetings immediately preceding the meeting at which the vote is to be taken.

WAIVERS

1. Any portion of these rules of procedure may be waived in such cases where, in the opinion of the board, strict conformity would pose a practical difficulty to the applicant and waiver would not be contrary to the spirit and intent of the rules.

JOINT MEETINGS AND HEARINGS

1. [RSA 676:2](#) provides that the board of adjustment may hold joint meetings or hearings with other “land use boards,” including the planning board, the historic district commission, the building code board of appeals, and the inspector of buildings, and that each board shall have discretion as to whether or not to hold a joint meeting with any other land use board.
2. Joint business meetings with any other land use board may be held at any time when called jointly by the chair of the two boards.
3. A public hearing on any appeal to the board of adjustment will be held jointly with another board **only** under the following conditions:
 - a. The joint public hearing must be a formal public hearing on appeals to both boards regarding the same subject matter; and
 - b. If the other board is the planning board, [RSA 676:2](#) requires that the planning board chair shall chair the joint hearing. If the other board is not the planning board, then the appropriate agencies which are involved shall determine which board shall be in charge.
 - c. The provisions covering the conduct of public hearings, set forth in these rules, together with such additional provisions as may be required by the other board, shall be followed; and
 - d. The other board shall concur in these conditions.