

# STRATHAM, NH BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

## RULES OF PROCEDURE

### AUTHORITY

These rules of procedure are adopted under the authority of the New Hampshire Revised Statutes Annotated, 1983; Chapter 676:1, as amended in the most recent edition of the New Hampshire Statutes.

### OFFICERS

1. A **chairman** shall be elected annually by a majority vote of the board in the month of April. The chairman 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-chairman** shall be elected annually by a majority vote of the board in the month of April. The vice-chairman shall preside in the absence of the chairman and shall have the full powers of the chairman on matters which come before the board during the absence of the chairman.
3. A **secretary** shall be elected annually by a majority vote of the board in the month of April. The chairman or his designee (the clerk) shall maintain a record of all meetings, transactions and decisions of the board. The secretary shall be responsible for the management of the files at the meeting and shall read the correspondence and other materials and perform such duties as requested by the chairman.

### MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES

1. The board shall consist of **five members** who shall be appointed by the Board of Selectmen. Members must reside in Stratham. They 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 chairman as soon as possible. Members, including the chairman and the other officers of the board, shall participate in the decision making process and vote to approve or disapprove all motions under consideration.
2. Up to **five alternate members** shall be appointed by the Stratham Board of Selectmen. The alternates shall attend all meetings to familiarize themselves with the workings of the board. They shall be ready to serve as a voting member of the board whenever a regular member of the board is unable to fulfill his/her responsibilities.

### MEETINGS

1. Meetings may be held at the request of the chairman provided public notice and notice to each of the members and alternates 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 the place of members. The board will make every effort to ensure that a five member board is present for the consideration of any appeal. If any regular board member is absent from any meeting or hearing, or disqualifies himself from sitting on a particular case, the chairman 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 for an entire case or for an entire meeting.

3. **Disqualification.** If any member finds it necessary to disqualify himself from sitting in a particular case, as provided in RSA 673:14, he shall notify the chairman as soon as possible so that an alternate may be requested to sit in his place. When there is uncertainty as to whether a member should be disqualified to act in 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. The disqualified member shall absent himself from the board table during the public hearing and during all deliberation on the case.
4. **Order of Business.** The order of business for meetings shall be as follows:
  - a. Call to order
  - b. Open public hearing
  - c. Roll call by the chairman
  - d. New Case
  - e. Unfinished business/old case
  - f. Minutes of previous meeting
  - g. Communications and miscellaneous
  - h. Other board business
  - i. Adjournment

## **APPLICATION/DECISION**

1. **Applications**
  - a. Each application for a hearing before the board shall be made on forms provides by the board and shall be presented to the clerk of the board who shall record the date of the receipt over his or her signature.
  - b. Appeals from an administrative decision taken under RSA 676:5 shall be filed within 30 days of the decision.
  - c. 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 local newspaper and shall be posted at several locations within the Town Hall and Library not less than 5 business days before the date fixed for the hearing. Notice shall include the name of the applicant, description of the 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 days before the date of the hearing. Notice shall also be given to the Planning Board, Town Clerk and other parties deemed by the board to have special interest. Said notice shall contain the same information as the public notice.
  - c. The applicant shall pay for all required notice costs in advance.

### 3. **Public Hearing**

- a. The chairman shall call the hearing in session and ask the secretary to read the first case.
  - b. The secretary shall read the application and report on how the public notice and personal notice were given.
  - c. Members of the board may ask questions at any point during the testimony.
  - d. Each person who appears shall be required to state his name and address And indicate whether he is a party to the case or an agent or counsel of a party to the case.
  - e. Any member or alternate of the board, through the chairman, 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 chairman.
  - g. The applicant shall be called to present his 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 request in writing to the chairman 5 business days prior to the public hearing.
  - m. The board 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 chairman shall present a summary setting forth the facts of the case and the claims made for each side. Opportunity shall be given for correction from the floor.
  - o. The hearing on the application shall be declared closed. The board can make a decision at that time. The next case can be called up.
4. **Decisions.** The board shall decide all cases during the public hearing or within 30 days of the close of the public hearing. The board shall approve, approve with conditions, or deny the application.

### **RECORDS**

1. The records of the board shall be kept by the clerk and made available for public inspection at the Town Hall in accordance with RSA 676:17.
2. Final written decisions will be included in the minutes of the meeting and will be made available for public inspection with the clerk of the board within 6 business days after the decision is made. RSA 676:3
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 the public for inspection within 6 business days of the public meeting. Approval of the minutes of meeting will take place at a regularly scheduled meeting of the board.

## **AMENDMENTS**

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 vote is to be taken.

## **WAIVERS**

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 HEARING**

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 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 chairman 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 chairman shall chair the joint hearing. If the other board is not the planning board, then the board of adjustment chairman shall chair the joint hearing; and
- 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.