

How the Select Board makes appointments to Boards and Committees

Effective June 22, 2021 through December 31, 2021

Under RSA 41:8, the Select Board is to “manage the prudential affairs of the town and perform the duties by law prescribed.” This includes appointing members to boards and committees when vacancies occur. Traditionally in Temple, committees and boards have assessed their membership needs and recruited and vetted candidates given the determined needs. Recommendations have then gone to the Select Board for consideration, in keeping with RSA 41:8. This process frees the Select Board from the enormous responsibility of keeping these boards and committees properly staffed and functioning and conveys the value of collaboration between the Select Board and the various boards and committees. It also recognizes the autonomy and respect for the committees. However, making appointments is ultimately the Select Board’s responsibility.

Using a standard procedure to make appointments to the Town’s boards and committees is critical to maintaining Temple as a vibrant community. There are currently twelve active Temple committees and boards whose approximately 85 members are appointed by the Select Board. Several elected boards and committees follow their own RSAs when filling vacancies, as noted at the end of this document.

An open, transparent, and inclusive process is essential as is the appointment of qualified individuals with a strong interest in each board’s and committee’s subject matter.

In making nominations and appointments, the following factors shall be considered:

- Commitment to the mission of the board or committee
- Qualifications to serve
- Time availability and interest in serving
- Impartiality
- Commitment to attend any appropriate training
- Commitment to comply with state laws

A. Committee Process:

1. Each committee and board will review the member terms annually and determine which existing members are willing and able to continue to serve. In the event that openings occur during the year, the same process will be followed.
2. Current members should discuss what experience or skills in candidates would be helpful for the committee or board. Committees and boards should consider the need to retain and pass on institutional history while looking to new members as a source of new ideas.
3. Interested candidates should attend a committee or board meeting or speak with the chair of the committee or board so they can understand the role of the committee/board and the commitment involved.
4. If an individual wishes to be considered for an appointment or re-appointment they will submit a statement of interest to the committee or board, saying why they would like to be appointed or re-appointed.
5. The board or committee shall discuss the candidates in a public meeting per RSA 91-A, and vote on which candidates to recommend to the Select Board.
6. The board or committee will send its nominations to the Select Board with the all statements of interest received from candidates.

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7. All discussions of nominations shall be at public meetings conducted in accordance with RSA 91-A, whose agenda lists the topic of nominations or re-nominations to the committee or board.

Select Board Responsibilities

1. The Select Board will publicize the openings for volunteers on all committees and boards, in collaboration with the committee or board.
2. If the Select Board receives any statements of interest, it will send them to the relevant committee or board chair for their consideration.
3. The Select Board will generally support the work of each committee and board. In most cases, this means approving the committee or board nominations.
4. Once recommendation(s) for appointments are received by the Select Board, they will be considered and discussed at a regularly scheduled Select Board meeting, with appointments to the specific committee or board listed in the agenda, in accordance with RSA 91-A.
5. If any nomination is rejected, the Select Board will state the reason at a public meeting conducted in accordance with RSA 91-A. The minutes will include the reasons the nomination was rejected, subject to RSA 91-A.
6. Particular attention must be paid to the potential conflict of interest when the Select Board makes appointments to the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

RSA 674:33, I.(a)(1) states that the ZBA has the power to “Hear and decide appeals if it is alleged there is error in any order, requirement, decision, or determination made by an administrative official in the enforcement of any zoning ordinance adopted pursuant to RSA 674:16.” This includes decisions made by the Select Board, Planning Board, or Building Inspector. Any appearance of a conflict of interest when appointing a ZBA member could jeopardize the decision of case and cause the town to be vulnerable to legal challenges.
7. All discussions of nominations shall be at public meetings, conducted in accordance with RSA 91-A, whose agenda lists the topic of nominations or appointments of members to a specific committee or board.
8. The vote on appointments shall be in a public meeting.
9. The Select Board will notify the nominees and the board or committee of its vote, in writing.

Additional Information

The RSAs concerning several elected boards or committees state specifics about vacancy appointments:

- a. Library Trustees—RSA 202-A:10, RSA 669:75.
- b. Cemetery Trustees—RSA 289:6.
- c. Other appointments for elected officials—RSA 669:75.
- d. Note: The Planning Board and the Supervisors of the Checklist fill any vacancies in their membership. See RSA 673:2, II(b) for Planning Board and RSA 669:64 for Supervisors of the Checklist.

This policy is effective immediately, and will be in place until December 31, 2021 when it will be revisited.