



# **Town of Amherst, NH**

## **BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES**

**Barbara Landry Meeting Room  
2 Main Street  
Monday, March 13, 2017**

### **1. Call to Order**

Chairman Dwight Brew called the public meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

Attendees: Chairman Dwight Brew, Vice Chairman Reed Panasiti, Selectmen Nate Jensen, Tom Grella, and Peter Lyon. Also present: Town Administrator, Jim O'Mara, and Suzanne Beauchesne taking minutes.

**2. Pledge of Allegiance** – Rita Donaldson, MRI Finance Consultant, led the pledge.

### **3. Citizen's Forum**

Chairman Brew announced that the Town Moderator, Steve Coughlan, has determined that the town elections will go forward tomorrow as planned [a severe winter storm is anticipated on Election Day]. Polls will be open from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Souhegan High School and Chairman Brew recommended getting there earlier given the weather reports.

### **4. Uncollectible EMS Bills**

As requested by the Board at its last meeting, Finance Consultant, Rita Donaldson, came forward to expand on her recommendation to review Comstar's Aging Report on a quarterly basis. As of February 27, 2017, the total ambulance receivables are \$492,549.67 and of these \$320,065.47 are in excess of 120 days, some dating back as far as 2004. Chairman Brew indicated that he understood the billing contractor invoices the insurance company when it has insurance information. He initially thought that the patient got billed and in many cases the patient has no insurance.

Fire Chief, Matt Conley, joined Ms. Donaldson and indicated that they gather as much information and the hospital does the same. Three letters are sent to try to collect and this is a huge issue. Ms. Donaldson said what is billed may not be what is allowed by Medicare and Medicaid. For example, a bill of \$2,000 has an allowable rate of \$500 and the insurance covers \$400. Chairman Brew noted that there is a lot of variation between what is allowable, collected and uncollectable. He said when the town started charging for the service in the late 1990s, the intent of the Board was to capture from the insurance company monies available and not necessarily collecting from those without insurance, and to bill Medicare/Medicaid at the lowest rate. Ms. Donaldson said the cost of providing EMS is increased when a party is hired to do collections. In

response to Selectman Jensen, Ms. Donaldson said the uncollectable amount for FY16 was \$118,000. Selectman Lyon asked how much is collected and what is paid Comstar in a year. He asked whether doing the work in-house would be comparable. Ms. Donaldson said that six percent of what is collected goes to Comstar; FFR affiliate keeps 33 percent. Selectman Lyon suggested the Board discuss the matter at a future date.

Selectman Lyon listed results of a statewide EMS survey done in 2012 and stressed the need for the Board to be comfortable with the process. Town Administrator, Jim O'Mara, said he will get a copy of the policy to the Board. Chairman Brew said going forward it would be helpful for the Board to be provided with information on how much money is owed by people who don't have insurance versus those who do. Chairman Brew agreed with Selectman Lyon and asked "where does the Board want to go with those who have no insurance?" He said there is a big inequity when uninsured must pay \$2,000 while those who are insured pay \$500. Rita Donaldson said the insurance payout varies by insurance company.

Selectman Jensen moved, second by Selectman Lyon, to authorize Comstar to write off the old uncollectible ambulance receivables balance in the amount of \$320,065.47 and to re-visit the matter on a quarterly basis with the next quarterly report being at the end of FY17 (June 30, 2017). Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

Rita Donaldson stated that \$70,000 will move into the 120 day column. Chairman Brew asked Ms. Donaldson to categorize uncollectible by insured and uninsured and by residents and non-residents.

## **5. Fire Station Update**

Town Administrator O'Mara stated that the insulation was in and all work is on schedule. Due to weather concerns, this week's meeting was moved to Thursday.

## **6. Department Quarterly Updates**

### **6.1 Library**

Amy Lapointe, Library Director, came forward and reported the following:

"At the library, most of our energy goes into maintaining our collection of materials and providing a range of services and programs. In this community, there is a huge interest in programming of all types for a variety of ages, and also range of organizations and departments that provide programming. Recently, we've been putting increased effort into ensuring that our programming complements the other programming in town and/or that we are collaborating with other organizations to maximize our effectiveness. Some of our successful collaborations in the past months have included:

- "Last fall, we put on a "Big Read". Through September and October, we worked with 16 other libraries, and the Fireseed Alliance to provide a range of programming around elements and issues from John Steinbeck's "The Grapes of Wrath." Funding for the projects came from the National Endowment for the Arts, The NH Humanities Council, a few various donors, and the individual libraries. All told almost 2300 people attended 98 programs and books discussions and some really rich discussion was fostered.

- “In December, we were pleased to participate in the Town tree lighting celebration with a series of “sold out” gingerbread house making workshops.
- “In January, we looked towards the schools. For the second year, we reached out to Souhegan to support our 2-part Lyceum, which was facilitated by SHS faculty and included a student panel. The Lyceum was again centered around a question from The Franklin Society Book. This year’s question was whether war had been beneficial to mankind. The Amherst Franklin Society had explored that question on Nov. 25, 1807. Our Lyceum wrapped up a week later with a panel discussion with an academic, a student, a chaplain and a combat veteran. The program generated quite a bit of interest from the NHHC, and was featured in their newsletter.
- “Also in January, we worked with the middle school to show the film “Screenagers: Growing Up in the Digital Age.” There was an evening screening, open to the public, and then the film was showed in-school to the entire 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Attendance was strong, despite a snowstorm complication and generated enough buzz about this important and relevant topic that the PTG decided to sponsor yet another screening, which was held last week, I believe.
- “In May, we’re looking forward to working with Freedom’s Way National Heritage Area, part of the NPS, and the Amherst Historical Society to put together a walking tour to participate in the “2017 Hidden Treasures” celebration.

“Consistent with our Strategic Plan, we’re focused on outreach and ensuring that the community is aware of the range of services provided by the library. The library is a community-wide investment and we want to see everyone maximize their return. In addition to partaking in collaborations to increase our reach, we are getting out in the community. On Election Day in November, we staffed a table with staff, trustees and Friends of the Library to spread the word. More recently, we participated in the recent Biometric Screening event sponsored by the SAU for past/ present SAU employees.

“I often talk to you about the ways that we are expanding and improving access to our collection with diverse formats. Unfortunately, we’re losing one of those. The e-magazine product that we’ve enjoyed through the NH Downloadable Books Consortium is going away because a contract couldn’t be established between the vendors. Most of the titles are already unavailable- there are a smattering left which will be expiring over the coming months. There are other e-magazine products available so we are currently investigating our options and I expect we’ll have a replacement platform in place by the summertime.

“Our beautiful 1892 building continues to be lovingly maintained by the Dept of Public Works. The lower level windows were replaced in the fall and we are thrilled with the increase in light they now let in. we’ve also had a lot of treework done in the past 6 months. Between trimming the side trees that were rubbing the roof, and cutting down rotting trees in the back that posed a safety concern, I think the library grounds are going to be a sunnier place this summer. The Garden Club continues their conscientious care of our gardens and are already thinking about tweaking plantings to accommodate the changes, as well as ways to maximize use of our back garden. The Friends of the Library and the Garden Club are together providing funding for some new outdoor

furniture for the back, and I hope that I see you all out there this spring, reading the paper, checking your email, taking a coffee break.

“The Library Board of Trustees continues to be proactive and forward thinking in our provision of innovative, robust, relevant, and convenient library service. We had a great work session a few weeks ago where all of the library staff and library trustees got together and engaged in an activity designed to update our library mission statement, which has been in place for over a decade. We shared success stories and examples of exemplary work. I heard a lot about intellectual and social stimulation, engagement, connecting, convenience, and caring. I expect that I will be announcing an updated mission statement in the coming months.

“Finally, I just want to put in a plug for the Friends of the Library 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Trivia Night coming up on Saturday night at Hampshire Hills, with dinner and drinks starting at 5:30. This is one of the major FOL fundraisers, but it’s also an incredibly fun night out. If the BOS wants to get together and form a table, I think we could probably squeeze one more in, or, if a few of you want to come and spectate, you are welcome to do that as well.”

Selectman Lyon said he liked hearing about the interdepartmental activities saying “the more of that we can do, everyone benefits”. In response to Chairman Brew regarding grants, Director Lapointe said that every year they get several mini-grants; and when they have a particular program they’d like to initiate, they’ll look to find a grant that will work with that particular program.

## **6.2 Fire Rescue**

Fire Chief, Matt Conley, came forward to present his department’s July through December 2016 report [attached]. His report provided the following information.

- Calls for Service. EMS Division: A-1 = 409; A-2 = 56; A-3 = 21. Mutual aid provided totaled 21 (Milford 16, Bedford 3, Merrimack 2). Fire Division: 187 toned calls, 107 non-toned calls, broken out about evenly between day and night calls.
- Several EMS members have completed their transition to the Advance EMT level; one has graduated from a paramedic program. One EMS and one Fire have graduated from an Advanced EMT program. Five members have graduated from the FF1 program, hosted by AFR, and Lt. Buchanan has completed his instructor 1 certification.
- Fire Prevention activity includes: 193 inspections and plan reviews; 27 occupancy/place of assembly permits issued (renewed annually); 16 fire drills; 47 information/consults and ten car seat installations.
- The new F4-50 ambulance is equipped with hydraulic rear suspension providing for a smoother ride and the box can be raised and lowered which is a great help to personnel.
- The emergency response SUV was placed in service.
- The AEDs and automated CPR devices, funded through the Bertha Rodgers Trust Fund were placed in service.
- The power stretchers were placed in service on the two ambulances.
- Ice rescue equipment donated by the Lions Club was delivered with training taking place over the next two weeks.
- Several tours were provided to families and groups from the community. AFR hosted a Red Cross sponsored Blood Drive (a second will be done in 2017). File of Life program

183 presentation was delivered to occupants of Parkhurst Place. The same presentation is being  
184 scheduled for residents of Summerfield and Fells developments.

- 185 • Remain active with the Souhegan Mutual Fire Air Association.
- 186 • Continue with the development of Standard Operating Guidelines.

187  
188 Selectman Grella suggested that the Chief provide the Board with a demonstration of the AEDs  
189 and Lucas. Selectman Jensen suggested publicizing the fact that already two lives have been saved  
190 with the equipment, which purchase was made possible by a Bertha Rodgers Trust Fund grant.  
191 Selectman Lyon stated that a year-to-year comparison would be of interest. Vice Chairman  
192 Panasiti asked how many more staff needed to get through the FF1 program. Chief Conley said “a  
193 handful” and that they like to host the program, since they have more say with students. The Chief  
194 said that cross-training continues. The Board thanked Chief Conley for his report.

## 195 196 **7. Town Administrator**

### 197 198 **7.1 Legislative Issues**

199  
200 Town Administrator, Jim O’Mara, provided the Board with a list of 2017 pending legislation  
201 before the NH Legislature that was prepared with input from staff. The Board reviewed the list  
202 and agreed on a number of issues to be discussed with Amherst’s State Senator and  
203 Representatives when they appear before the Board at their next meeting. Selectman Jensen  
204 brought up the matter of setting up an Internet utility in town and offering research on why it ought  
205 to be an option for towns to consider. Liz Overholt, came forward stating that the decision on  
206 whether to hold elections tomorrow was a difficult process and might be brought to the attention of  
207 the legislators. Town Administrator O’Mara said the statute is clear that it is the Moderator’s  
208 decision. Chairman Brew suggested that the list of proposed issues be sent to all five legislative  
209 representatives. Administrator O’Mara will follow up.

### 210 211 **7.2 Capital Reserve Fund Amended Request**

212  
213 Town Administrator O’Mara stated that since the Board’s last meeting where the Board authorized  
214 withdrawal of \$150,000 from the Fire Station Renovation CRF, he has learned from Finance  
215 Consultant, Rita Donaldson, and Finance Director, Eileen Demers, that it is common practice to  
216 withdraw funds from the CRF upon receipt of an invoice.

217  
218 Selectman Lyon moved, second by Selectman Jensen, to re-consider the motion made and  
219 approved at the Board’s February 27, 2017 meeting that authorized the withdrawal of \$150,000  
220 from the Fire Station CRF. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

221  
222 Selectman Jensen moved, second by Selectman Lyon, to amend the February 27, 2017 motion to  
223 authorize the withdrawal of \$39,331.90 from the Fire Station Renovation CRF. Motion passed  
224 unanimously, 5-0.

### 225 226 **7.3 Town Common Use Request**

227  
228 Selectman Jensen moved, second by Selectman Grella, to authorize the use of the Village Green by  
229 the Amherst Junior Women’s Club for the Easter Egg Hunt on April 8<sup>th</sup> between the hours of 8:00  
230 a.m. and 12:00 noon. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0. Selectman Grella urged residents to  
231 please pick up after their pets.

232  
233 **7.4 Hawkers & Vendors Application**  
234

235 Selectman Jensen moved, second by Selectman Lyon, to renew a permit to Brandon Lawler to sell  
236 financial advisory services for the period from March 13, 2017 through March 13, 2018 on  
237 Mondays through Saturdays between the hours of 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., excepting holidays.  
238 Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.  
239

240 **7.5 AFR Resignation**  
241

242 Selectman Jensen moved, second by Selectman Grella, to accept the resignation of Stephen Brady  
243 effective March 4, 2017. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0. Administrator O'Mara said the  
244 position opening will be posted internally first and then externally.  
245

246 **8. Approvals**  
247

248 **8.1 Assessing**

249 **8.1.1 Veterans Tax Credit**  
250

251 Selectman Lyon moved, second by Selectman Jensen, to approve a Veteran Tax Credit in the  
252 amount of \$500 for property located at 61 Seaverns Bridge Road, Map/Lot 2-179. Motion passed  
253 unanimously, 5-0.  
254

255 **8.1.2 Disabled Veteran Tax Credit**  
256

257 Selectman Lyon moved, second by Selectman Jensen, to approve the Disabled Veteran Tax Credit  
258 in the amount of \$1,400 for Map/Lot 12-28. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.  
259

260 **8.1.3 Elderly Exemption**  
261

262 Selectman Lyon moved, second by Selectman Jensen, to approve the Elderly Exemption for  
263 Map/Lot 8-12-3. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.  
264

265 **8.1.4 Abatements**  
266

267 Selectman Lyon moved, second by Selectman Jensen, to deny the abatement for Map/Lot 2-12-9  
268 located at 12 Patricia Lane. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.  
269

270 Selectman Lyon moved, second by Selectman Jensen, to approve the abatement for Map/Lot 2-  
271 164-7 located at 3 Waterview Drive in the amount of \$436.74. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.  
272

273 Selectman Lyon moved, second by Selectman Jensen, to approve the abatement for Map/Lot 3-47-  
274 2 located at 6 Nathan Lord Road in the amount of \$4,477.84. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.  
275

276 Selectman Lyon moved, second by Selectman Jensen, to approve the abatement for Map/Lot 4-45-  
277 3 located at 6 Deerwood Drive in the amount of \$750.49. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.  
278

279 Selectman Lyon moved, second by Selectman Jensen, to approve the abatement for Map/Lot 4-  
280 101-10 located at 1 Melendy Hollow in the amount of \$921.17. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

281 Selectman Lyon moved, second by Selectman Jensen, to deny the abatement for Map/Lot 4-150  
282 located at 63 Spring Road. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

283  
284 Selectman Lyon moved, second by Selectman Jensen, to approve the abatement for Map/Lot 6-10  
285 located at 128 Baboosic Lake Road in the amount of \$1,247.47. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

286  
287 Selectman Lyon moved, second by Selectman Jensen, to approve the abatement for Map/Lot 6-11  
288 located at 124 Baboosic Lake Road in the amount of \$97.87. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

289  
290 Selectman Lyon moved, second by Selectman Jensen, to approve the abatement for Map/Lot 6-28-  
291 64 located at 2 Trailside Drive in the amount of \$32.63. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

292  
293 Selectman Lyon moved, second by Selectman Jensen, to approve the abatement for Map/Lot 8-16-  
294 1 located at 10 Horace Greeley Road in the amount of \$592.36. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

295  
296 Selectman Lyon moved, second by Selectman Jensen, to approve the abatement for Map/Lot 8-66  
297 located at 6 North End of Lake in the amount of \$1,232.41. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

298  
299 Selectman Lyon moved, second by Selectman Jensen, to approve the abatement for Map/Lot 9-11-  
300 13 located at 1 Hubbard Road in the amount of \$1,189.74. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

301  
302 Selectman Lyon moved, second by Selectman Jensen, to approve the abatement for Map/Lot 17-60  
303 located at 92 Boston Post Road in the amount of \$366.46. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

304  
305 Selectman Lyon moved, second by Selectman Jensen, to approve the abatement for Map/Lot 21-2  
306 located at 2 Brookwood Drive in the amount of \$67.77. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

307  
308 Selectman Lyon moved, second by Selectman Jensen, to approve the abatement for Map/Lot 21-11  
309 located at 1 Flanders Road in the amount of \$401.60. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

310  
311 Selectman Lyon moved, second by Selectman Jensen, to approve the abatement for Map/Lot 21-17  
312 located at 17 New Boston Road in the amount of \$988.94. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

313  
314 Selectman Lyon moved, second by Selectman Jensen, to approve the abatement for Map/Lot 24-32  
315 located at 15 Lake Front Street in the amount of \$632.52. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

316  
317 Selectman Lyon moved, second by Selectman Jensen, to approve the abatement for Map/Lot 25-37  
318 located at 20 Clark Avenue in the amount of \$1,370.46. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

## 319 320 **8.2 Payroll**

321  
322 Selectman Jensen moved, second by Vice Chairman Panasiti, to approve one (1) FY17 Payroll  
323 Manifest in the amount of \$212,436.64 dated March 2, 2017 subject to review and audit. Motion  
324 passed unanimously, 5-0.

### 8.3 Accounts Payable

Selectman Jensen moved, second by Vice Chairman Panasiti, to approve one (1) FY17 Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$18,057.20 dated February 28, 2017, subject to review and audit. (Town Clerk Transfers to the State of NH). Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

Selectman Jensen moved, second by Vice Chairman Panasiti, to approve one (1) FY17 Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$381,892.00 dated March 7, 2017, subject to review and audit. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

Selectman Jensen moved, second by Vice Chairman Panasiti, to approve one (1) FY17 Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$411,152.38 dated March 8, 2017, subject to review and audit. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

Selectman Jensen moved, second by Vice Chairman Panasiti, to approve one (1) FY17 Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$2,641,533.00 dated March 1, 2017, subject to review and audit. (School Disbursements). Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

### 8.4 Concentration Account

Selectman Jensen moved, second by Vice Chairman Panasiti, to approve one (1) FY17 Concentration Accounts Manifest in the amount of \$874.27 dated March 8, 2017, subject to review and audit. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

### 8.5 Previous Meeting Minutes: February 27, 2017

Vice Chairman Panasiti moved, second by Selectman Jensen, to approve the Board of Selectmen's public meeting minutes of February 27, 2017, as amended. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

## 9. New/Old Business

Selectman Jensen said the Internet survey will go live on March 22<sup>nd</sup>. Selectman Lyon said the Conservation Commission has been dealing with infrastructure repairs. Planning Board activity continues with Director of Community Development, Gordon Leedy, re-writing the land development regulations.

Town Administrator O'Mara said that Fire Rescue's grant application for funds for A-1 and A-2 monitors was not approved. A request to purchase the monitors with budget funds will be forthcoming for the Board's approval.

Chairman Brew suggested that the town and schools get together next year before the Voter Guide is off to the press.

Selectman Jensen went over pending items as follows:

- Policy on EMS Collections
- AED/Lucas Demonstration and publicizing Bertha Rodgers Trust Fund
- Response to audit notes
- Elderly Exemption Discussion



- 1971 Road Standards

#### **10. Non-Public Session, RSA 91-A:3 II (c)**

Pursuant to RSA 91-A:3 II (c), Selectman Jensen moved, second by Selectman Grella to enter into non-public session at 8:58 p.m. Roll Call: Brew-yes, Grella-yes, Jensen-yes, Lyon-yes, Panasiti-yes. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.


Board members and Town Administrator O'Mara discussed a matter which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of a person(s). At 9:35 p.m., Selectman Grella moved to exit non-public session. Second by Selectman Panasiti Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

Chairman Brew said that while in non-public session, no motions were made and no votes were taken.

#### **11. Adjournment**

Selectman Lyon moved, second by Selectman Grella, to adjourn the meeting at 9:36 p.m. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

**NEXT MEETING: March 27, 2017**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Selectman Nate Jensen  
Clerk, Board of Selectmen

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date