



Town of Amherst, NH
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES
Barbara Landry Meeting Room
2 Main Street
Monday, November 17, 2014 at 6:00 PM

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I. Public Session

Chairman Dwight Brew called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. Attendees: Chairman Dwight Brew, Vice Chairman Mike Akillian, Selectmen John D’Angelo, Brad Galinson, and Tom Grella. Also present: Town Administrator, Jim O’Mara, and Suzanne Beauchesne taking minutes.

II. **Pledge of Allegiance** – Selectman John D’Angelo, celebrating his birthday this date, led the pledge.

III. **Citizen Forum – No citizens came forward.**

IV. FY 16 Budget & Strategic Plan Discussion

Tax and Assessor’s Office

Tax Collector, Gail Stout, presented the Tax Collector & Assessor’s FY16 proposed budget of \$293,165 showing a 2.77 percent increase for postage and education. Ms. Stout stated that no costs are associated with initiatives since the new software budget was shifted to another budget. The tablets to be used by the assessors -- funds for which come from existing capital reserves -- will be available in March 2015.

Police Department

Police Chief, Mark Reams, presented the Police Department budget showing an increase of 8.3% over the FY15 budget. Priority initiatives include a full time officer (\$82,500) and a new undercover vehicle (\$20,000) (the current undercover vehicle is a 1998 machine). The full time officer position would increase the number of officers to 19. Officer staffing is below state and federal standards which is 1.8 per thousand residents. Amherst has 1.5 per thousand residents. Chief Reams indicated that given current staffing, coverage is at 70 percent. An additional officer would bring that up to 90 percent coverage, keeping in mind vacation times and other considerations. The additional officer may generate some savings in overtime. The substation, however, will not replace the need for an additional officer. The Communications Center’s proposed budget remains equal to the FY15 operating budget at \$374,500.

Chairman Brew suggested that a discussion on financing approaches might be productive and asked that the issue be placed on the agenda following the MRI presentation at the BOS meeting of November 24th. Chairman Brew also asked that the Ways and Means Committee put together some recommendations.

Town Administrator, Jim O’Mara, provided a list of the proposed FY16 strategic initiatives and read through a prepared list of warrant articles that include:

Warrant Article CRF	Balance 10/31/14	FY16 Contribution	Total
ADMIN-Computer System – CR	\$59,681.85	\$15,000	\$74,681.85
ASSESSING-Revaluation – CR	\$58,027.64	\$25,000	\$83,027.64
DPW-Bridges – CR	\$20,080.20	\$150,000	\$170,080.20
EMS-Ambulance – CR	\$249,002.12	\$50,000	\$299,002.12
APD-Communications Ctr – CR	\$61,101.30	\$15,000	\$76,101.30
FIRE-Apparatus Replacement - CR	\$342,481.06	\$150,000	\$492,481.06
DPW-Town Buildings – CR	NEW	\$10,000	\$10,000
FIRE-Station Renovation – CR	NEW	\$60,000	\$60,000

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53 Selectman D’Angelo indicated that it may not be the best year to start bridge funding and again mentioned
54 the need to replace the South Station sometime over the next several years. The Board asked that a
55 “withdrawals” column be added to the capital reserves chart. Selectman Galinson mentioned the possibility
56 of including any agreement that may be reached with the Cemetery Trustees, but it was unclear what form
57 that may take.

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59 Other warrant articles include:

- 60
61 1) DPW – Sidewalks \$328,100 (gross)
62 -- 80 percent reimbursed by State if approved
63 2) EMS-Mosquitoes \$ 40,000 (annual request)
64 3) ADMIN – Contingency Fund \$100,000 (undesignated)
65 4) REC-Tennis Courts \$100,000
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68 The language for the “sidewalks” warrant article was discussed since the article must include the gross
69 figure. Explanatory language will be developed to clarify that the town will not proceed with the project if
70 it is not approved by the State for 80 percent reimbursement.

71
72 Following a brief discussion on mosquito funding, it was suggested that Public Health Officer, Dr. Mary
73 Katherine Lockwood, be invited to the next BOS meeting to report on recent data and the risk of EEE and
74 other diseases to the Amherst community.

75
76 Administrator O’Mara provided a list of prioritized departmental initiatives. Department heads will
77 schedule meetings with selectmen and ways and means committee member liaisons prior to December 8th.

78
79 Vice Chairman Akillian suggested approaching the work to be done by category (public safety, recreation,
80 education, etc.) rather than strictly by department. Vice Chairman Akillian will forward a list of suggested
81 categories to the Selectmen and members of the Ways and Means Committee. As requested, Town
82 Administrator O’Mara will provide to members of the Board and Ways and Means Committee a prioritized,
83 detailed spreadsheet tied to initiatives prior to the next Board meeting of November 24, 2014.

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85 **V. Old and New Business**

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87 **VII. Non-Public Session (if necessary)**

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89 **VIII. Adjourn**

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91 Vice Chairman Akillian moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Selectman D’Angelo. Vote 5-0

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93 The meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.