



Town of Amherst, NH

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES

Barbara Landry Meeting Room
2 Main Street
Monday, January 7, 2019

1 **1. Call to Order**

2
3 Chairman Dwight Brew called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

4
5 Attendees: Chairman Dwight Brew, Selectmen John D'Angelo, Tom Grella, Peter Lyon,
6 and Reed Panasiti. Also present: Executive Assistant Mary Guild.

7
8 **2. Pledge of Allegiance** – Matt Mullen, of Milford Boy Scout Troop 4, led the pledge.

9
10 **3. Citizens' Forum** – none

11
12 **5. Administration**

13 **5.1 Planning Board Appointment – Alternate Member**

14 *This item was moved to later in the meeting.*

15
16 **5.2 Steeple Repairs**

17 Chairman Brew stated that the Town of Amherst owns the steeple portion of the Amherst
18 Congregational Church and there are some improvements that need to be made to it,
19 including electrical repairs, and alarm system and electrical system upgrades. Both
20 Charlie Vars, the project manager, and DPW Director Eric Hahn believe the project
21 scope is appropriate.

22
23 *A MOTION was made by Selectman Grella and SECONDED by Selectman Lyon to*
24 *approve the repairs to the Town-owned Church Steeple and to authorize the use of town*
25 *funds to cover the cost of the repairs in the amount of \$7,400.00.*

26
27 In response to a question from Selectman Panasiti, Chairman Brew stated that the original
28 estimate for the project was higher, but that the exact scope of work was reviewed and it
29 was thus lowered.

30
31 *Voting: 5-0-0; motion passed unanimously.*

32
33 **5.1 Planning Board Appointment – Alternate Member**

34 *The Board took up this item at this time.*

35
36 Chairman Brew introduced Brian Coogan as a possible new alternate member for the
37 Planning Board.

38
39 Mr. Brian Coogan introduced himself. He stated that he is interested in the historical New
40 England feel of Amherst. He would like to see the open space in town continue to be

41 preserved in the proper fashion. Due to his work background in legal asset management
42 compliance, he believes he will be a good fit for making for the requests to the Planning
43 Board comply with the laws.

44
45 *A MOTION was made by Selectman Lyon and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to*
46 *appoint Brian Coogan to the Planning Board as an Alternate Member of the Board,*
47 *effective immediately, with a term expiration date of 2021.*

48 *Voting: 5-0-0; motion passed unanimously.*
49

50 **5.3 Unanticipated Funds – DPW**

51 Chairman Brew explained that there was a guardrail damaged last year, but replaced this
52 year with funds from this year's budget. A check from the insurance company has been
53 received and deposited into unanticipated revenue. The request is to move that money
54 back into the Guardrail line to reimburse it.

55
56 *A MOTION was made by Selectman Grella and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to*
57 *accept payment from MMG Insurance Company for damage to Baboosic Lake Road*
58 *guardrail and authorize expenditure from 01-4312-60-2684, Guardrails, to partially pay*
59 *for the replacement of the guardrail.*

60 *Voting: 5-0-0; motion passed unanimously.*
61

62 **5.4 FY20 Budget & Warrant Articles Discussion**

63 Chairman Brew explained that he would like to first discuss the Letter to the Editor
64 written by Selectman D'Angelo. The first issue to discuss is that of an individual Board
65 member making a statement to the public without also stating all of the facts involved.
66 The second issue is to discuss the items brought up in the Letter to the Editor.

67
68 Chairman Brew stated that he believes this Board works well together. There are opinions
69 that differ but everyone listens respectfully to each other. He believes it is important that
70 any issues are discussed only at Board meetings, so that all sides are heard at once and the
71 rationale behind them is as well. He explained that any article that only chooses one side
72 and the certain facts to support it is a disservice to the residents. He would like, going
73 forward, for the Board to communicate as a Board and capture all issues. If an individual
74 feels that something more needs to be discussed with the public, this can be brought up at
75 a Board meeting where all sides can be equally represented.

76
77 Selectman D'Angelo stated that there wasn't anything in his opinion piece that he hasn't
78 also stated at an open Board meeting.
79

80 Chairman Brew agreed, but at open Board meetings issues are surrounded by overall
81 Board content, whereas in an opinion piece individual things can be picked out that, while
82 true, may be taken out of context and not capture the entire dialogue.
83

84 Chairman Brew and Selectman D'Angelo discussed the possibility of presenting two
85 opinion articles instead, or one larger article with all sides represented.

86 Selectman D'Angelo stated that context matters, but this article was specifically an effort
87 of persuasion on his part. When he ran for the Board there were two items in particular

that he disagreed with the Board on. As he was elected, he believes these two items are important to the public and thus he was trying to engage the voters and get their input.

Selectman Lyon explained that any of the Board members has a right to write a Letter to the Editor, but it would be nice to let the Board know ahead of time so that a counter article could be written, or one larger article could be collaborated on.

Selectman D'Angelo said that he would be happy to let the Board know ahead of time next time, as he is not trying to be the only voice in the conversation.

Selectman Lyon stated that the article made it seem that Selectman D'Angelo was taking credit for the town's new road plan. It also seemed to shed the responsibility for the undesignated fund balance issue onto the other four members of the Board.

Selectman D'Angelo explained that he wasn't trying to shed responsibility, but simply asking people to come to the hearings to hear the Board and give their input. He believes residents have been generally supportive of the ideas he's presented.

Chairman Brew believes people are supportive because not all of the facts were presented in the article. Selectman D'Angelo stated that he presented all of the facts when he ran for the Board, but there wasn't enough room in the article to reiterate them again. He doesn't believe the Boards planned to overtax the residents, but they have.

Selectman Lyon stated that that is simply not true.

Chairman Brew explained that, in terms of the unassigned fund balance, the GFOA recommends maintaining a minimum balance of 17%, and the DRA recommends maintaining a minimum of 5-17%. The Board looked at all the information and established a policy of its own at 10%. This article left out all of these recommended numbers and the Board's rationale.

Selectman D'Angelo stated that there is more of a balance than there's been since 2012. This was not done intentionally; it was taken accidentally over a six-year period, due to a combination of underestimating revenues and not spending the whole budget. The question now is what to do with the excess. His position is that there are projects to be funded over the next few years, such as bridges, where the balance could be used in order to remove the tax burden of these projects from the public.

Chairman Brew explained that the Board developed a policy with the intent to return every dollar over a certain percentage to the taxpayer, not to spend it on projects. An effort is made to return the money without making the tax rate jump wildly. It's reasonable to disagree with what percentage to return, but only if the opinion is put out with all the facts.

Selectman Grella pointed out that this policy was signed off on in 2016 by all five Board members. Now one member, Selectman D'Angelo appears to disagree with the policy, but it was put to a vote and carried through by a vote of 4-1-0.

Selectman D'Angelo acknowledged this but refuses to not speak up simply because he lost that vote.

Selectman Panasiti stated that he doesn't want this discussion to be one side versus the other; however, that is what the intent of the article seemed to be. The Board is trying to be good stewards of the laws.

Chairman Brew stated that his goal is to make sure that all sides of information are put out there for the public, not just one. He hopes that, if anyone feels strongly on a subject, input will be sought from the rest of the Board and all of the facts will be presented so that the public can come to a better understanding.

5.5 Public Hearing Presentation

The Board agreed to go through their slide presentation at the next meeting, as a dry run for the deliberative session.

5.6 Local River Mgmt. Advisory Committee Re-Appointment

A MOTION was made Selectman Lyon and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo to re-appoint Richard Hart to the Local River Management Advisory Committee on behalf of the Town of Amherst, and to authorize the Board of Selectmen to sign the NH DES Nomination form for the appointment.

Voting: 5-0-0; motion passed unanimously.

6. Approvals

6.1 Assessing

A MOTION was made by Selectman Lyon and SECONDED by Selectman Grella to approve and sign the abatement for:

Property Map/Lot 003-036-003 in the amount of \$1,556.00.

Voting: 5-0-0; motion passed unanimously.

A MOTION was made by Selectman Lyon and SECONDED by Selectman Grella to approve and sign the abatement for:

Property Map/Lot 009-011-009 in the amount of \$3,820.00.

Voting: 5-0-0; motion passed unanimously.

A MOTION was made by Selectman Lyon and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to approve and sign the All Service Veteran's Tax Credit for:

Property Map/Lot 003-014-000 in the amount of \$500.00.

Voting: 5-0-0; motion passed unanimously.

6.2 Payroll

A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to approve one (1) FY19 Payroll Manifest in the amount of \$203,206.32 dated December 20, 2018, subject to review and audit.

Voting: motion passed unanimously, 5-0-0.

A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Grella to approve one (1) FY19 Payroll Manifest in the amount of \$212,953.38 dated January 3, 2019, subject to review and audit.

Voting: motion passed unanimously, 5-0-0.

183
184 **8.4 Accounts Payable**

185 *A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti,*
186 *to approve one (1) FY19 Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$31,828.93 dated*
187 *December 17, 2018, subject to review and audit (Town Clerk Transfers to the State of*
188 *NH).*

189 *Voting: Motion passed unanimously, 5-0-0.*
190

191 *A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti,*
192 *to approve one (1) FY19 Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$26,730.75 dated*
193 *December 31, 2018, subject to review and audit. (Town Clerk Transfers to the State of*
194 *NH).*

195 *Voting: Motion passed unanimously, 5-0-0.*
196

197 *A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti,*
198 *to approve one (1) FY19 Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$385,253.20 dated*
199 *December 11, 2018, subject to review and audit.*

200 *Voting: 5-0-0; motion passed unanimously.*
201

202 *A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti,*
203 *to approve one (1) FY19 Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$26,443.86 dated*
204 *December 12, 2018, subject to review and audit.*

205 *Voting: Motion passed unanimously, 5-0-0.*
206

207 *A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti,*
208 *to approve one (1) FY19 Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$243,652.00 dated*
209 *December 27, 2018, subject to review and audit.*

210 *Voting: Motion passed unanimously, 5-0-0.*
211

212 *A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti,*
213 *to approve one (1) FY19 Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$2,922,266.00*
214 *dated January 2, 2019, subject to review and audit. (Schools Disbursement).*

215 *Voting: 5-0-0; motion passed unanimously.*
216

217 **8.5 Concentration Account**

218 *A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti,*
219 *to approve one (1) FY19 Concentration Account Manifest in the amount of \$2,446.73*
220 *dated December 12, 2018, subject to review and audit.*

221 *Voting: 5-0-0; motion passed unanimously.*
222

223 *A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti,*
224 *to approve one (1) FY19 Concentration Account Manifest in the amount of \$4,635.33*
225 *dated December 27, 2018, subject to review and audit.*

226 *Voting: 5-0-0; motion passed unanimously.*
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232 **8.6 Previous Meeting Minutes**

233 *A MOTION was made by Selectman Panasiti and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo to*
234 *approve the Board of Selectmen meeting minutes of December 10, 2018, as amended.*
235 *Voting: 5-0-0; motion passed unanimously.*
236

237 **7. Action Items**
238

239 The Board reviewed action items.
240

241 **8. New/Old Business**
242

243 Selectman D'Angelo explained to the Board that the schools may be under heavy fire
244 from the voters this year. They will be asking for an approximate 8.8% increase in their
245 budgets. The new contract, signed last year, will also be going up by an amount previously
246 thought to be much lower.
247

248 Selectman Lyon stated that the flashing light at the Route 122/Merrimack Road
249 intersection should be replaced by DOT later this week.
250

251 Selectman Panasiti thanked the DOT/Highways Dept for their work on the 101/101A off
252 ramp project.
253

254 **9. Non-Public Session, RSA 91-A:3, II (a)**
255

256 *A MOTION was made by Selectman Panasiti and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo to*
257 *adjourn the public meeting and enter into non-public session, RSA 91-A:3, II (a) at 7:22*
258 *p.m.*

259 *Voting: 5-0-0; motion passed unanimously.*
260

261 *By roll call vote: D'Angelo: yes, Panasiti: yes, Brew: yes, Grella: yes, Lyon: yes, the*
262 *Board went into non-public session.*
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266

267 **NEXT MEETING: January 14, 2019 - Monday**
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271
272 **SIGNATURE ON FILE**

01.28.2019

273 _____
274 *Selectman Reed Panasiti*

Date