



Town of Amherst, NH

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES

Barbara Landry Meeting Room
2 Main Street
Monday, October 14, 2019

1 **1. Call to Order**

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3 Chairman Peter Lyon called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

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5 Attendees: Chairman Peter Lyon, Selectmen Dwight Brew, John D'Angelo, and Tom
6 Grella. Also present: Town Administrator Dean Shankle.

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8 **2. Non-Public Session per RSA 91-A:3, II (a)**

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10 Although posted on the agenda, the Board of Selectmen did not enter a non-public session.
11 Ways & Means: Peter Moustakis (Chair), Chris Goodrich, Elaina Bedio, Scott Tuthill,
12 Matt Seiler, Danielle Pray, Lisa Eastland, and Mike Parisi.

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14 **3. Pledge of Allegiance** – Chris Buchanan, Chairman of the Bicycle & Pedestrian
15 Advisory Committee, led the pledge.

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17 **4. NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

18 **Pursuant to New Hampshire RSA 231:40, RSA 231:41, RSA 231:42, the Amherst**
19 **Board of Selectmen hereby announces to the citizens of Amherst the convening of**
20 **a Public Hearing to take input regarding the laying out of a right-of-way for**
21 **removal of lumber from:**

22 *Map & Lot: 007/015*

23 *Buckridge Drive*

24 *Owner of the Record: Maurice Bowler*

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26 *A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Grella to*
27 *open the public hearing.*

28 *Voting: 4-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*

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30 Chairman Lyon explained that Maurice Bowler has requested to postpone this hearing
31 until next year.

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33 *A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Brew to*
34 *table this matter until May 11, 2020.*

35 *Voting: 4-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*

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37 **5. Citizen Forum** – none.
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6. Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee Report

Chris Buchanan, Chair of the Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee, explained that the Committee's Multimodal Master Plan was approved in July. Since then the group has been trying to find ways to implement project ideas that are both cost-effective and timely. The Committee has contacted paving companies and other groups in town regarding different project options.

Part of the group's focus is on trails and, throughout the development of the Plan, 27 trail ideas from both public and committee members have come to light. The Committee will be presenting these ideas to the Amherst Conservation Commission at their November 13th meeting.

Chris Buchanan explained that roadside projects are most cost-effective when they coincide with road construction already being done. George Bower, Committee member, stated that the proposed project ideas are based upon planned construction projects in town for the next three years. There are a few construction projects in 2020 that the Committee would like to pursue for possible roadside multimodal projects.

Chris Buchanan explained that there are two segments of road construction being proposed in 2020 for Amherst Street, from Milford to the Village. Based on research, the traffic volume and speed on this road would merit a side path approach. This is a larger project, but there is also the opportunity to do something on a vital road that connects two communities.

George Bower explained that this project has a more sophisticated approach to it, but affords the town many more benefits. It would also be a great example for future projects of what the town is trying to accomplish. It is a project that would be used every day.

Chris Buchanan stated that the Committee contacted Continental Paving for a rough estimate of what it would cost to complete this project. The estimate is about \$32.50/linear foot. This includes an 8' side path, with 5' of separation from the driving lanes. This estimate does not include mass excavation, tree trimming, or other items that might come up.

In response to a question from Chairman Lyon, George Bower stated that there is currently sufficient width on this road to support this project. The right-of-way and road way widths exist. The travel lanes would need to be repositioned to create the side path area.

Chris Buchanan stated that the proposed cost for the road construction project, without factoring in the side path, is about \$440,000. There may be reduced costs due to the paving company already being on site.

George Bower explained that the next project involves three streets in the Village: Davis Lane, Carriage Lane, and Main Street. This project would work within the existing right-of-way and help with traffic calming. As part of already proposed road construction on these streets, this project is looking at laying down interlocking pavers in order to make

these streets more amenable as pedestrian ways. This would create a safe environment for people and change the perception of these roadways by making them less vehicle-centric.

Chris Buchanan explained that research states that the most effective ways to communicate to drivers are either 1) gateway treatments (communicate the narrowing of the road), or 2) altering the pavement itself. Tactile and auditory feedback communicate an aesthetic difference and a reason to slow down. Research shows it reduces speeds across an entire area.

George Bower stated that this type of slowing method is seen in many historic districts, such as in Keene, Nashua, and Portsmouth. Pavers in these areas change the context in which people drive and how they behave. Installing pavers on these three streets is a way to change the Historic District in town and alter how people view it and how they move through it. There is an opportunity to start this change in 2020.

Chris Buchanan explained that these are not conventional pavers, but interlocking, permeable pavers. They look like brick, but are not. They will form a street-wide drainage system. Similar projects have shown pavers mitigate the cost of additional storm water installation.

Chris Buchanan stated that there are other roads that may merit projects next year, but these seem like the best options for now. There may be the possibility to consider other options on roads, such as painting center lines only where appropriate or the physical narrowing of roads. He stated that, throughout the process, the Committee received feedback regarding one particular area in town that is not currently slated for any upcoming road construction – the area from Souhegan High School to the Middle School and Homestead Road. He suggests that some type of multimodal treatment be undertaken there. The challenge comes from the fact that Boston Post Road was recently repaved and that there would be three entities involved in the project: the Town, the Souhegan Cooperative School District, and the Amherst School District. George Bower suggested that each of those three entities create a CRF over three years in order to get the project off the ground.

In response to a question from Chairman Lyon, Chris Buchanan stated that he has seen budgets for similar projects in this area ranging from \$90,000- \$175,000.

Chris Buchanan also noted that the NH DOT is in the final step of its 10 year planning process. In 2002 NRPC and NH DOT determined that some work should be done on the NH 101 corridor due to a known high mortality rate for accidents; however, very little has been done since that time. Road construction is now scheduled for 2022/23 for the NH 101 corridor, but the budget for this project has been reduced by 84%. This leaves only about \$8.9 million dollars for the Amherst/Milford/Wilton corridor. He implored the Board to write a letter to the DOT, and to coordinate with the Milford and Wilton Boards of Selectmen, to explain that there is a known high mortality risk if high speed traffic is not separated by a physical medium.

132 In response to a question from Selectman D'Angelo, George Bower explained that the
133 Amherst Street project would aim to shift the roadway to the side and add an additional
134 8' asphalt for the side path. This project has not yet been engineered, so the exact cost is
135 hard to know.

136
137 In response to a question from Selectman D'Angelo, Chris Buchanan stated that the
138 estimate for the pavers is \$3.75/ft². The current proposed road construction budget for the
139 three Village roads is about \$165,000.

140
141 Selectman D'Angelo suggested that the Committee get an estimated number of square
142 feet for those three roads and other data. He believes a warrant article would be the best
143 way to fund these projects. He also suggested one town CRF for the work near the High
144 School, as additional CRFs give voters more chances to say no.

145
146 In response to a question from Selectman Grella, Chris Buchanan explained that towns
147 are usually more successful in being awarded grants for this type of work if they have
148 already allocated some of their own funds. Amherst has also been passed over for these
149 types of grants in the past due to its demographics.

150
151 In response to a question from Selectman Grella, George Bower explained that the
152 proposed 8' side path would allow for bicyclists to use it.

153
154 Selectman Grella suggested the Committee pick one of the three roads in the Village to
155 try the pavers on first. Chris Buchanan added that a UNH plowability study found that
156 this type of paver is indeed plowable.

157
158 In response to a question from Selectman Brew, Chris Buchanan stated that side paths are
159 generally plowed by a pickup truck. Also, that roadway stretch of Amherst Street would
160 be made less wide during the project.

161
162 In response to a question from Selectman Brew, George Bower stated that, if the state
163 decides to continue with their plan for the NH 101 corridor in Amherst, the project will
164 look similar to that completed from Keene to Brattleboro in 1980. In that project, access
165 points were eliminated and roadways were merged in order to limit the number of turns
166 on the road.

167
168 Chairman Lyon stated that the Committee has chosen three good projects. The group
169 needs to firm up their numbers for the Amherst Street project, and he recommends
170 creating a side path that actually goes somewhere on both ends. He also suggested that
171 the Committee stay in contact with the DPW and Highway Safety Committee throughout
172 the process. He requested that the group work with Town Administrator Shankle on
173 drafting a letter for the BOS to sign to send to the DOT and to ask work on reaching out
174 to the other towns regarding a joint efforts.

175
176 In response to a question from Chairman Lyon, Chris Buchanan explained that pavers
177 give the opportunity to double as drainage support and they actually look like bricks,

versus stamped pavement. However, both options produce the auditory and tactile feedback.

7. Budget

7.1 Draft #1 Presentation

Town Administrator Shankle and Finance Director, Cheryl Eastman, presented the first draft of the budget to the Board and Ways & Means Committee. The overall projected increase from FY20 to FY21 is \$325,586, or 2.32%. Cheryl Eastman read some of the notes regarding the budget, such as that the dental rates are showing a 3.9% increase, no new positions are being requested, there is a large increase in the new IT contract, the Souhegan Regional Landfill District assessment increased by 13.83%, and Pennichuck Water Main Assessment rates increased by 24%. The operating budget is proposed at \$14,338,436; with tax impacts for proposed warrant articles added in, this number increases to \$15,332,536. The estimated FY21 town tax rate is 5.56, leading to a town tax bill of \$1,947 in taxes on a \$350,000 property.

The Board discussed which spreadsheet columns they would like to see on future budget presentations.

In response to a question from Chairman Lyon, Cheryl Eastman stated that revenues were estimated very timidly in the past. She will look at past actuals in order to get more accurate estimates.

Ways & Means member, Lisa Eastland, commented that she would also like to see the FY18 and FY19 figures included in the spreadsheet review, in order to gain a historical context.

7.2 Warrant Articles Discussion

The groups reviewed the proposed warrant articles. Town Administrator Shankle explained that he doesn't believe the Department Heads will be proposing any further warrant articles. A placeholder warrant article was proposed for a possible addition from the Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee.

The Board discussed three veteran's warrant articles. For one of these proposed articles which hasn't yet been added, Optional Tax Credit for Combat Service, there could be 538 applicants at an increase of \$250 each.

7.3 Individual Department Meeting Schedule

The groups discussed the meeting schedule and which Board member would attend each individual department meeting.

8. Administration

8.1 Administrator's Report

Town Administrator Shankle stated that he would like to take the opportunity to send Cheryl Eastman to a GovMax conference in Florida. The conference trip should not exceed \$500.00.

8.2 Unassigned Fund Balance

Cheryl Eastman stated that the total amount in the unreserved fund balance as of 6/30/19 was \$6,257,106.00. The total appropriations for 2019 were \$55,546,071.00. Amherst's recommended fund balance, per policy, is \$5,554,607.00. The difference between the 6/30 calculation and the recommended balance is \$702,499.00. 50% of this difference is \$351,249.50. This is the recommended amount that will be returned to the taxpayers.

A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman Grella to return \$351,249.50 to the taxpayers.

Voting: 3-1-0 (Selectman D'Angelo voted against); motion carries.

8.3 Unanticipated Funds

Town Administrator Shankle stated that the town is going to be receiving \$78,297.89 as payment for aid to cities and towns as a result of the state's recently passed biennial budget. While this money was specified last year to be used for highways, this year there is no specified project that the money needs to be used on.

The group discussed gathering a number of potential projects before the next meeting, in order to make a decision.

8.4 Planner I Position Discussion – Community Development

Town Administrator Shankle stated that there has been discussion regarding changing the job description for this position and also changing the job's classification to pay it at a higher rate. He will ask Nic Strong, Community Development Director, to craft a new job description for the Board's review.

8.5 Use of Green Request – Amherst Junior Women's Club

A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo to approve the request by the Amherst Junior Women's Club to hold their annual Trot Off Your Turkey road race on Friday November 29, 2019 starting at 9:00am and to set their signs for the event out on Wednesday evening.

Voting: 4-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

8.6 AAUW Candidates Night, Room Use Request

A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Grella to allow the AAUW to use the Barbara Landry Meeting Room at Town Hall on the evening of Tuesday March 3, 2020 for the purpose of conducting the annual Candidates Night. In the event the weather is inclement on March 3, move to allow a "snow date" of March 5, 2020.

Voting: 4-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

9. Staff Reports

9.1 Warrant Articles, for review – Tax & Assessing

The Board and Gail Stout, Tax Collector, agreed that she would come back to the Board at a future meeting to discuss the new warrant article previously discussed earlier in the meeting.

272 **9.2 Baboosic Lake Community Septic System Committee Formation**

273 DPW Director, Eric Hahn, discussed with the Board the possibility of creating a
274 Baboosic Lake Community Septic System Committee for the purpose of having two-way
275 communication on some of the issues there are. He suggested that the Committee be
276 made up of himself, three Lake residents, and an at-large member.

277
278 Town Administrator Shankle suggested that the DPW Director not be a member of the
279 Committee, but staff support as needed.

280
281 The group discussed their thoughts on the possible creation of this Committee. Selectman
282 D'Angelo voiced concerns that this creates a permanent model for dealing with a one-
283 time situation. Eric Hahn stated that maybe it's not correct to call the group a Committee,
284 but this group would allow for better back and forth communication between the Lake
285 residents and the DPW Director. Selectman Brew suggested that a charter should be
286 created for a new Committee.

287
288 Eric Hahn explained that the Lake residents were hoping that the town would absorb the
289 administrative overhead due to the Lake being cleaned up and a benefit to the town.
290 Selectman Brew suggested discussing with the proposed committee ways to reduce the
291 amount of necessary overhead.

292
293 Chairman Lyon suggested that Eric Hahn first work to create a charter for this Committee
294 and for the Board to then further discuss it.

295 296 **10. Approvals**

297 **10.1 Petition & Pole License**

298 *A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo to*
299 *approve the placement of one utility pole on Columbia Drive and to authorize the Board*
300 *to sign the petition on behalf of the Town of Amherst.*

301 *Voting: 4-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*

302 303 **10.2 Payroll**

304 *A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Brew, to*
305 *approve one (1) FY20 Payroll Manifest in the amount of \$217,726.81 dated October 10,*
306 *2019, subject to review and audit.*

307 *Voting: 4-0-0; motion passed unanimously.*

308 309 **11. Action Items**

310 The Board reviewed their action items.

311 312 **12. New/Old Business – none.**

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314 *A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Brew to*
315 *adjourn the meeting at 9:12 pm.*

316 *Voting: 4-0-0; motion passed unanimously.*

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NEXT MEETING: October 21, 2019 - Monday

SIGNATURE ON FILE

10.28.2019

Selectman Reed Panasiti

Date