



# Town of Amherst, NH

## BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES

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

### 1. Call to Order

Chairman Peter Lyon called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Attendees: Chairman Peter Lyon, Selectmen Dwight Brew, John D'Angelo, Reed Panasiti, and Tom Grella.

Ways & Means: Peter Moustakis (Chair), Scott Tuthill, Danielle Pray, Lisa Eastland, and Mike Parisi.

### 2. Pledge of Allegiance – Mary Guild, Town Executive Assistant, led the pledge.

*Ways & Means alternate, Lisa Eastland, exited the meeting.*

### 3. Citizen Forum – none.

### 4. Strategic Plan Presentations

#### 4.1 Conservation Commission

Amherst Conservation Commission Chair, Rob Clemens, presented the Board with the ACC's Strategic Plan. He explained that the ACC manages 2600 acres of land in Town (13% of Amherst). The ACC works to balance expenses from the Town Budget with support from its Conservation Fund. The ACC's mission is to protect and manage the town's biodiversity and natural resources, and promote the public use of natural open space for low-impact outdoor recreation that is consistent with conservation.

*Ways & Means member, Elaina Bedio entered.*

The ACC has 7 strategies to pursue its mission:

- To influence zoning and planning: this strategy is carried out by the ACC's volunteer Commissioners with no budget impacts.
- Acquisitions: the Conservation Fund is used for acquisitions. This is made up of revenue from 100% of the Land Use Change Tax (LUCT) and 100% of profits from town forests. This year the ACC completed the acquisition of the Grater property.
- Managing town forests: The ACC manages 10 areas of forest in the town, totaling 1,566 acres. The ACC works to prepare an updated Forest Management plan.

- Managing grasslands: The ACC will be moving towards a non-forest habitat approach for this strategy. It also sponsored a grasslands workshop earlier this year.
- Controlling invasive species: Invasives are a problem on public and private lands in town. The ACC uses contractors to direct the control of invasive species on ACC managed public lands, while also collaborating control with the DPW, and encouraging private landowners to control invasives on their land.
- Low-impact outdoor recreation: The ACC promotes low-impact recreation on the approximately 25 miles of trails it manages. The group also works collaboratively with the Bike/Ped Commission on a number of projects for off-road trails in town.
- Public education and outreach: This year the ACC developed a PE&O Plan and is working to engage the Amherst community through various events and activities.

In response to a question from Selectman Panasiti, Rob Clemens stated that there hasn't been enough attention paid to the protection and quality of drinking water in town. There are various grant opportunities available through the state in regarding to drinking water and aquifers, the ACC hasn't yet had the time or talent yet to pay close enough attention to these.

In response to a question from Selectman Grella, Rob Clemens explained that, prior to last year, the ACC was receiving 50% of the town's LUCT funds. Thanks to last year's warrant article, the ACC now also receives the other 50%. LUCT funds flow in fits and spurts and are channeled into the Conservation Fund. A bulk of these funds are used for acquisitions, but some percentage is also used for property management.

In response to a question from Selectman Grella, Rob Clemens stated that the ACC is trying to maintain a relationship with any of the prospective developers coming into town. The hope is to look at these developments and see options for conservation and preservation of land within them; to try to find a balance with the developments.

In response to a question from Selectman Brew, Rob Clemens stated that the ACC is looking to possibly expand some of their current meadow edges and look at additional areas that may constitute non-forest habitat.

Chairman Lyon thanked the ACC and complimented them for all of their hard work over the years.

*Matt Seiler, Ways & Means member, entered the meeting.*

#### **4.2 Library**

Library Director, Amy Lapointe, presented the Library's Strategic Plan to the Board. She presented the Library's mission statement as: Connecting People, Stories, and Ideas. The Library is governed by a 7-member elected Board of Trustees and has 7 full-time, 8 part-time, and 7 pages for employees. The employees' wages and benefits is 80% of the Library's operating budget. Ms. Lapointe checked with surrounding libraries and all of them fell within a few percentage points for this statistic. Amy Lapointe explained that the Library's total circulation peaked in 2013, with an increase in e-materials and

84 decrease in audio-visual materials. Program attendance has remained high within all age  
85 groups and they have seen a dramatic amount of growth in items borrowed from other  
86 libraries. The Library's strengths include their staff and programming, their weaknesses  
87 come from physical space limitations and parking.

88  
89 The Library's first goal is to provide a collection that supports library patrons in their  
90 information, education and recreational needs. This goal will be addressed by updating  
91 the Collection Development policy and performing a use-based collection analysis. The  
92 second goal is to provide educational, informational, and recreational opportunities that  
93 meet the needs and interests of the community. The Library is looking to balance their  
94 offerings by refining their program planning workflow. The third goal is to ensure that  
95 the facility is configured and maintained to support the community in their individual and  
96 collective use and the staff in their provision of services. In order to meet this goal, the  
97 Library will be implementing renovation plans for its staff spaces and service points. The  
98 Library Board of Trustees has voted to award a bid for the project to a construction  
99 manager. This project should be started this fall. A fourth goal is to improve  
100 communication to build community awareness of and engagement with the library. The  
101 Library is continuing to develop and measure its social media presence and will be  
102 creating a new website in the next few years. A final goal for the Library is to maintain  
103 the long-term health of the organization through responsible management. The Library  
104 will be working to update its policy manual and maximize effective staffing. A sizeable  
105 percentage of non-personnel expenses come from "outside" sources.

106  
107 In response to a question from Selectman Panasiti, Amy Lapointe stated that she will  
108 work with the DPW Director to determine how much money has been saved by switching  
109 all of the lights over to LEDs in the building.

110  
111 In response to a question from Selectman Brew, Amy Lapointe explained that, in looking  
112 out five years, she believes there will be a bigger demand for space as people continue to  
113 operate in a more virtual space. The Library will be needed as a community area and for  
114 those who work from home.

115  
116 In response to a question from Selectman D'Angelo, Amy Lapointe stated that she does  
117 not believe the Library will outgrow its space. Instead, the Library will maximize the  
118 efficiency of its space.

119  
120 Chairman Lyon thanked Ms. Lapointe and stated that he believes the Library's  
121 community outreach outside of their building will continue to be important.

#### 122 123 **4.3 Fire Rescue**

124 Matt Conley, Fire Chief, presented the Fire Rescue Department's Strategic Plan. He  
125 explained that the goals for the Department are to continuously improve the high level of  
126 service, infrastructure stability, and to continue to meet the needs of the community with  
127 the protection of life and property. The Fire Services Department is comprised of 41  
128 members, 21 of whom have EMS Certification. The Rescue Department is comprised of  
129 45 members, 24 of those have fire certification.

131 Matt Conley explained that the Fire Service Department has seen its membership  
132 fluctuate over the past three years. Currently, there is an issue with bringing in new  
133 members as they are having difficulty finding affordable housing in town. There are 24  
134 cross-trained rescue members in the Department, and 21 cross-trained fire service  
135 members. The highest frequency calls for FY19 were alarm activations and  
136 rescue/medical. Amherst's average Fire Rescue call is three minutes quicker than the  
137 NFPA 1710 Standard.

138  
139 The Department's medical calls have been on a steady rise since 2015. The average age  
140 of those most frequently transported by the Department's EMS are 70-79 and 80-89.  
141 Chief Conley noted to the Board that as more developments focused on 55+ housing  
142 come into town and these populations increase, these numbers will continue to reflect  
143 that. The most frequent complaint call received by the Department is for falls. The NFPA  
144 1710 Standard established for Advanced Life Support response is to be within eight  
145 minutes 90% of the time. Amherst's average for this standard is 7.81%.

146  
147 Chief Conley stated that some of the initiatives for the Department include recruitment  
148 and retention of quality employees, replacing aging apparatuses, becoming a Heart Safe  
149 Community, and community paramedicine.

150  
151 Selectman Grella thanked Chief Conley and the Department for their kindness and  
152 treatment of him during a recent ambulance ride he had to take.

153  
154 In response to a question from Selectman Brew, Chief Conley stated that he will be  
155 working to get the staffing numbers back up, but the call side is hard to control right now.  
156 The decrease in staffing is leading to slight daytime impacts in the Department.

157  
158 In response to a question from Selectman Brew, Chief Conley stated that about 10% of  
159 the time, if the other two ambulances are out, a third ambulance is needed. The  
160 Department also gives out more mutual aid to surrounding towns than it takes in.

161  
162 Chief Conley and Selectman Brew discussed the possibility of renegotiating the town's  
163 agreement with Mont Vernon for mutual aid. Selectman Brew stated that, if a third  
164 ambulance was retained, it would also need to be fully equipped, which could be very  
165 expensive. Chief Conley explained that a third ambulance would take on a tertiary role in  
166 the event that it was needed.

167  
168 In response to a question from Selectman D'Angelo, Chief Conley stated that the cost of  
169 living adjustment was included for the Department's employees last year.

170  
171 In response to a question from Selectman Panasiti, Chief Conley stated that they will  
172 address the staffing drop by recruiting during town events and continuing to be in the  
173 public eye.

174  
175 Chairman Lyon suggested that Chief Conley review the vehicle replacement spreadsheet  
176 with Russ Thomas at some point.

178 In response to a question from Ways & Means member Elaina Bedio, Chief Conley  
179 explained that the cost for a third ambulance is not currently included on the spreadsheet,  
180 but will be included within the next year or two.

#### 181 182 **4.4 Community Development**

183 Community Development Director, Nic Strong, presented the Department's Strategic  
184 Plan to the Board. The Department's vision for 2025 is a streamlined and efficient point  
185 of service for all who seek to use and develop in town, a Department that has worked  
186 with stakeholders to translate the vision of the 2020/2021 Master Plan into a physical  
187 realty for the community, and is a trusted source if information and guidance in the  
188 community.

189  
190 Nic Strong brought the Board through historical trends of the Department. She explained  
191 that almost all of the applications for the Zoning Board of Adjustment as variances. This  
192 might speak to the ordinance needing to be updated. This should be taken care of after the  
193 Master Plan update is complete and the regulations are worked through. According to the  
194 US Census, in 2010 Amherst's population was 11,201. The Town Clerk keeps an  
195 informal list and believes the town's population, as of October 2, 2019, to be around 12,  
196 789. The most populous age range in Amherst is 45-54 years old, for the years of 2013-  
197 2017; the second most populous age range is 65-74 years old.

198  
199 Nic Strong stated that the strengths of the Department lie in research skills, inhouse plan  
200 review, and customer service. Weaknesses of the Department include turnover in the  
201 Community Development Director position, leading to upheaval and unease in the office,  
202 previous lack of staff engagement, space issues, and previous poor choices in digitizing  
203 content.

204  
205 Internal goals for the Department include: overhauling the filing system, evaluating the  
206 layout and space of the office, fostering a sense of teamwork and engagement with all  
207 Office of Community Development staff, and creating SOPs and FAQs for the Office of  
208 Community Development.

209 External goals for the Department include: completing the online permit application  
210 system, reviewing the Office of Community Development's fee schedule, creating an  
211 online map that shows pending applications before the Town's land use board with links  
212 to supporting documentation, and improving the Office of Community Development  
213 outreach and engagement to the community.

214  
215 In response to a question from Selectman Brew, Nic Strong explained that most  
216 documents are submitted to the Office by email and are available to the public digitally.

217  
218 Selectman Brew suggested the presentation of a Community Development Technology  
219 roadmap. Items such as online permitting, scanning in document, etc. could be  
220 considered over a number of years as a way to reduce space and make the Department  
221 more efficient.  
222

Selectman D'Angelo suggested that the Community Development Office focus on internal items first and then speak with Town Administrator Dean Shankle on the prioritization of other projects.

In response to a question from Selectman Grella, Nic Strong stated that the digitization company has many different options when transferring documents. Former Community Development Director, Gordon Leedy, used to come in early to scan in documents. The issue is that between the Office and the company, most of the documents were not named properly and thus cannot be searched for now. Most of the documents have already been digitized, now they need to be reopened to see what they are and renamed correctly.

Chairman Lyon complimented Nic Strong on all that she's gotten done in her 90 days so far as Community Development Director.

#### **4.5 Public Works**

Eric Hahn, DPW Director, presented the Department's Strategic Plan to the Board. The Department's mission statement is to effectively and efficiently manage the infrastructure placed in our care (travel ways, facilities, and common grounds) so that residents have convenient access to safe and durable assets throughout the town.

One of the outcomes the Department is working towards is having 68% or greater of Amherst roads rated as good according to industry standard pavement condition index (PCI) by 2025. In order to meet this goal a 7 year road budget plan has been implemented. The plan prioritizes arterials, feeders, through roads, and then cul-de-sacs.

A second goal of the Department is that, by 2025, six additional Amherst bridges and water crossings will be built or upgraded to last for 75+ years with the last three enrolled in DOT's program. There are 20 bridges in Amherst and 3 water crossings. There are three state aid bridges already on the state list, one of each will be upgraded in FY22, FY23, and FY25. The DPW will also survey and look at all of the large culverts in town next year.

A third goal of the Department is that, by 2025, all Amherst town buildings and outbuildings are functionally sound and compliant with all appropriate regulations and codes. DPW has a list of the required work at each building and will work to complete these projects.

A fourth goal of the Department is to achieve a work force productivity of 90% by 2020. The DPW is utilizing the Mobile 311 system as an essential tool. They have also implemented a management cycle of continuous improvement.

A final goal of the Department is that Amherst will continue to comply with evolving requirements of the Clean Water Act under the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System permit issued by the EPA. The DPW will collaborate with Community Development to develop new ways of ensuring compliance and addressing the new permit requirements outside the narrow view of DPW.



In response to a question from Selectman D'Angelo, Eric Hahn stated that the 90% productivity is measured against sending the right person out at the right time with the right materials for the right job.

Selectman D'Angelo explained that, while driving through Massachusetts, he noticed crosswalks that were painted yellow with an 8" white stripe on either side. This gave the illusion that the crosswalk was raised and probably works as a calming traffic measure. He suggested the DPW look into similar methods.

The Board thanked Eric Hahn for his drive for innovation and ambition. The work of the Department is noticed and appreciated.

## **5. Approvals**

### **5.1 Employee Resignation**

*A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Brew to accept, with regret, Simon Corson's resignation as Planner I, effective October 4, 2019. Voting: 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*

### **5.2 Hawkers & Vendors Registration/Application**

*A MOTION was made by Selectman Panasiti and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo to approve the Hawkers & Vendors application from Jeremy Philbrick for the sale of food items at Amherst Garden Center for the period of October 7, 2019 through October 7, 2020 and to authorize the Chairman to sign the registration form on behalf of the Board of Selectmen. Voting: 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*

### **5.3 EVERSOURCE Petitions & Pole Licenses**

*A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to approve the placement of one utility pole on Davis Lane and authorize the Board of Selectmen to sign the petition on behalf of the Town of Amherst. Voting: 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*

*A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to approve the placement of one utility pole on Northend Lane and authorize the Board of Selectmen to sign the petition on behalf of the Town of Amherst. Voting: 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*

*A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to approve the placement of one utility pole on Buckridge Drive and authorize the Board of Selectmen to sign the petition on behalf of the Town of Amherst. Voting: 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*

### **5.4 Assessing**

*A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to approve and sign the Veteran Tax Credit (2020 Tax Year) for: Property Map/Lot 003-059-008 in the amount of \$500.00 Voting: 5-0-0; motion passed unanimously.*

*A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to approve and sign the Land Use Change Tax for:  
Property Map/Lot 005-162-001 in the amount of \$14,400.00  
A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to approve and sign the Land Use Change Tax for:  
Property Map/Lot 005-162-002 in the amount of \$1,346.00  
A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to approve and sign the Land Use Change Tax for:  
Property Map/Lot 005-162-003 in the amount of \$14,400.00  
A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to approve and sign the Land Use Change Tax for:  
Property Map/Lot 006-079-008 in the amount of \$13,340.00  
Voting: 5-0-0; motion passed unanimously.*

### **5.5 Payroll**

*A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti, to approve one (1) FY20 Payroll Manifest in the amount of \$217,102.48 dated September 26, 2019, subject to review and audit.  
Voting: 5-0-0; motion passed unanimously.*

### **5.6 Accounts Payable**

*A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti, to approve one (1) FY20 Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$23,558.67 dated September 27, 2019, subject to review and audit (Town Clerk Transfers to the State of NH).  
Voting: 5-0-0; motion passed unanimously.*

*A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti, to approve one (1) FY20 Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$33,868.90, dated October 1, 2019, subject to review and audit. (Town Clerk Transfers to the State of NH).  
Voting: 5-0-0; motion passed unanimously.*

*A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti, to approve one (1) FY20 Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$228,102.16, dated October 1, 2019, subject to review and audit.  
Voting: 5-0-0; motion passed unanimously.*

*A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti, to approve one (1) FY20 Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$2,964,773.00, dated October 1, 2019, subject to review and audit (School Disbursements).  
Voting: 5-0-0; motion passed unanimously.*

### **5.7 Concentration Account**

*A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti, to approve one (1) FY20 Concentration Account Manifest in the amount of \$22,888.72, dated October 1, 2019, subject to review and audit.  
Voting: 5-0-0; motion passed unanimously.*



364  
365 **5.8 Previous Meeting Minutes – September 23, 2019**

366 *A MOTION was made by Selectman Panasiti and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo,*  
367 *to approve the Board of Selectmen meeting minutes of September 23, 2019, as amended*  
368 *[Line 401: change “dangerous” to “damaging”; Line 440: change “in the budget” to*  
369 *“on the town’s ballot sheet”].*

370 *Voting: 5-0-0; motion passed unanimously.*  
371

372 **6. Action Items**

373 The Board reviewed their action items.  
374

375 **7. New/Old Business**

376 Selectman D'Angelo stated that the Amherst School Board budget initial presentation has  
377 been moved to next Tuesday. He suspects this is due to the budget not being ready yet.  
378

379 Selectman Grella explained that he recently sat through a meeting where Superintendent  
380 Adam Steele presented an analysis of the Amherst and Souhegan School Board budgets  
381

382 Chairman Lyon stated that there will be a meeting with DPW at the Town Hall tomorrow  
383 night, October 8<sup>th</sup>, to discuss the Baboosic Lake Septic. The Board will also discuss the  
384 topic of impact fees at one of their upcoming meetings.  
385

386 *A MOTION was made by Selectman Grella and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo to*  
387 *adjourn the meeting at 9:15 pm.*

388 *Voting: 5-0-0; motion passed unanimously.*  
389  
390  
391  
392

393 **NEXT MEETING: October 14, 2019 - Monday**  
394  
395  
396  
397  
398

399 **SIGNATURE ON FILE**  
400 *Selectman Reed Panasiti*

10.21.2019  
*Date*