



Town of Amherst, NH
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES
Barbara Landry Meeting Room
2 Main Street
Monday, January 14, 2019

1 **1. Call to Order**

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

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

7
8 Also in attendance: Ways & Means Committee members: Peter Moustakis, Sarah Bonnoit,
9 Maggie Paul, Elaina Bedio, Michael Facques, and Scott Tuthill.

10
11 **2. Pledge of Allegiance** – Kathy Cleveland, Milford Cabinet and Nashua Telegraph
12 reporter, led the pledge.

13
14 **3. Citizens' Forum** – none

15
16 **4. PUBLIC HEARING: Speed Limit Regulation**

17 *This item was tabled until its scheduled start time of 6:40 p.m.*

18
19 **5. PUBLIC HEARING: Town Operating Budget**

20 *This item was tabled until its scheduled start time of 7:00 p.m.*

21
22 **6. Administration**

23
24 **6.1 Proposed Additional Warrant Article**

25 Selectman Panasiti explained that there was a change to the Veteran's Disability Tax
26 Credit, due to Senate Bill 341. The new bill, effective January 1, 2019, raised the
27 maximum credit from \$2,000 to \$4,000. He recommends changing the limit of the town's
28 Veteran's Tax Credit from the present \$1,400 to \$4,000, incrementally each year for
29 three years.

30
31 *A MOTION was made by Selectman Panasiti and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo*
32 *to include a warrant article on this year's ballot to increase the Veteran's Tax Credit*
33 *maximum from \$1,400 - \$2,400.*

34
35 In response to a question from Selectman Panasiti, Ms. Gail Stout, Tax Collector, stated
36 that there are approximately 19 applicants that this change would effect. It will have
37 approximately a \$0.01 impact on the tax rate.

38

39 The Ways & Means Committee stated that they would not be voting on this new warrant
40 article until they see the wording for it.

41
42 *Voting: 5-0-0; motion passed unanimously.*

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44 **4. PUBLIC HEARING: Speed Limit Regulation**

45 *Pursuant to RSA 41:14-b, the Amherst Board of Selectmen shall hereby give notice*
46 *and announce the convening of two public hearings for the following proposed*
47 *ordinance for the purpose of regulating traffic (NH RSA 31:39):*

48 *Speed Limit Regulation: Establish Ordinance to set the speed limit on Border Street to*
49 *30 MPH.*

50
51 *A MOTION was made by Selectman Grella and SECONDED by Selectman Lyon to open*
52 *the public hearing at 6:40 p.m.*

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

54
55 Chief Mark Reams stated that the Amherst Public Highway Safety Committee reviewed
56 that there is currently no posted speed ordinance for Border Street. After conducting a
57 traffic study over an eight (8) day period, it was recommended that an ordinance of 30
58 mph be placed on Border Street.

59
60 Chairman Brew explained that there will be two (2) public hearings on this proposed
61 ordinance. The second will be on January 28, 2019. After these hearings the Board will
62 take action on the proposal.

63
64 There was no public comment.

65
66 *A MOTION was made by Selectman Lyon and SECONDED by Selectman Grella to close*
67 *the public hearing at 6:43 p.m.*

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

69
70 **6. Administration [the Board continued with this item]**

71
72 **6.2 Town Report Bid**

73 Executive Assistant, Mary Guild, stated that three (3) bids were received for the Town
74 Report printing project. The lowest, qualified bidder was Select Print Solutions. This
75 company has printed the Town Report before and was very meticulous.

76
77 *A MOTION was made by Selectman Lyon and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo to*
78 *award the Annual Town Report printing to Select Print Solutions, as the lowest qualified*
79 *bidder, for the costs quoted at \$1,687 for 750 or \$1,966 for 1,000 books.*

80
81 In response to a question from Selectman Grella, Ms. Guild stated that the town usually
82 prints 1,200 books, but that this has proved to be too many. She expects to print around
83 750 this year instead. The report can also be found online on the Town's website.

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

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6.3 Town Report Cover

Ms. Guild stated that the Town Report cover picture will be from the Moving Vietnam Veterans' Wall event in Amherst over the summer. The Board agreed to leave the decision on which picture to use up to Ms. Guild.

In response to a question from Selectman D'Angelo, Ms. Guild stated that the town audit will be included in this year's town report, and it will probably be available to be reviewed at the Board's next meeting.

6.4 Town Report Dedications

The Board reviewed a list of people who contributed to the community, who passed away this past year. Usually one or two people are highlighted in the Town Report, but a suggestion was made this year to include a "We Remember" page, as there are a significant number of people to incorporate. The Board agreed with this idea.

7. Approvals

7.1 Accounts Payable

A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti, to approve one (1) FY19 Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$175,296.51 dated January 8, 2019, subject to review and audit.

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

The Ways & Means Committee stated that they have re-voted on a few of the warrant articles. They have now approved the Operating Budget (Warrant Article 22) unanimously, 6-0-0.

The Board took a brief recess at 6:54 p.m.

The Board reconvened at 7:00 p.m.

5. PUBLIC HEARING: Town Operating Budget

Pursuant to New Hampshire RSA 32:5, I, the Amherst Board of Selectmen hereby announces to the citizens of Amherst the convening of a Public Hearing to take input on the proposed FY20 Town Operating Budget, bonds and notes, and proposed warrant articles.

A MOTION was made by Selectman Grella and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to open the public hearing at 7:00 p.m.

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

Selectman Lyon and Chairman Brew read through **Warrant Article 22**, Operating Budget.

Andy Caisse (61 Spring Road) raised questions regarding the Library's budget. He explained that last year's Library budget was around \$975,000, with about 80% of that being allocated for personnel costs. This leaves approximately \$195,000 for actual programming, etc. He thought this appears to be a lot of overhead for this department and

133 there is a request for an increase to this for the FY20 proposed budget. Mr. Caisse added
134 if this 80% split holds, the proposed additional \$123,000 requested will only result in an
135 increase of about \$5,000 towards programming. He doesn't believe this is a fair trade-off.
136

137 Chairman Brew stated that much of the personnel-driven costs at the Library are similar
138 to other departments and are wage-driven. The primary staff increases are driven by the
139 2% cost of living, which the Board already determined to be appropriate for all
140 departments.
141

142 Library Director, Amy Lapointe, stated that she believes the ratio of their personnel cost
143 is on par with similar organizations. She explained that the programs at the Library
144 cannot be enjoyed without the staffing to back them up. She doesn't view this as a
145 problem.
146

147 Mr. Caisse stated that he would like to see what can be done to push towards progress on
148 this versus the disparity of the percentage of the budget going towards personnel.
149

150 In response to a question from Paul Mancini (6 Potter Way), Chief Matt Conley stated
151 that the Fire Department has fielded about 547 calls this year, while the EMS has fielded
152 about 1,016. He added that this is a large number for the size of these departments.
153

154 In response to a question from Paul Mancini (6 Potter Way), Chairman Brew stated that
155 the interest and principal will remain over \$1 million in FY23, and will drop by about
156 \$100,000 in FY24/25, until it drops to \$0 in FY26.
157

158 Debbie Bender (20 Grater Road) stated that she believes the Amherst Library to be one of
159 the most active with some of the most inclusive offerings anywhere that she's seen.
160

161 Selectman Panasiti read through **Warrant Article 23**, Contingency Fund.

162 There were no comments/questions.
163

164 Selectman Panasiti read through **Warrant Article 24**, Police Station Renovation Capital
165 Reserve Fund.

166 There were no comments/questions.
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168 Selectman Panasiti read through **Warrant Article 25**, Communications Center Capital
169 Reserve Fund.

170 There were no comments/questions.
171

172 Selectman D'Angelo read through **Warrant Article 26**, Assessing Revaluation Capital
173 Reserve Fund.

174 There were no comments/questions.
175

176 Selectman D'Angelo read through **Warrant Article 27**, Town Computer System Capital
177 Reserve Fund.

178 There were no comments/questions.
179

180 Selectman D'Angelo read through **Warrant Article 28**, Bicycle and Pedestrian Network
181 Capital Reserve Fund.

182
183 Mr. Gordon Leedy, Director of Community Development, said that, as of last Thursday,
184 the status of the town's grant application regarding this warrant article is still undecided.

185
186 In response to a question from Carolyn Mitchell, Peter Moustakis of the Ways & Means
187 Committee explained that the Ways & Means Committee voted down this article because
188 it is a nice idea, but not a necessity. This plan does not include sidewalks throughout
189 town, but a rail trail to connect Baboosic Lake into the center of town. This is a long-term
190 project which will cost millions and probably not be complete until 2026. There will be
191 more money needed for each section and the grant will need to be reapplied for each
192 year.

193
194 In response to a question from Bruce Barter (60 Buckridge Drive), Mr. Leedy stated that
195 this Warrant Article's portion of the plan is phase II of VI. Phase I focused on a section
196 from Thornton Ferry I Road to Birch Park. Phase II will be a corridor about 8,100 linear
197 feet long, which will connect other roads into the spine of the multi-modal network.

198
199 Selectman Lyon read through **Warrant Article 29**, Bridge Repair and Replacement
200 Capital Reserve Fund and its associated articles: **30**, Mont Vernon Road Bridge Over
201 Caesars Brook; **31**, Thornton Ferry Road 1 Bridge over Beaver Brook; and **32**, Brook
202 Road Bridge over Joe English Brook.

203
204 Chairman Brew explained that even if all the money was available for these projects, the
205 town would still have to wait until it comes up on the state's list for aid.

206
207 Selectman Grella read through **Warrant Article 33**, Fire Rescue Vehicle and Equipment
208 Purchase and Repair Capital Reserve Fund.

209
210 Chairman Brew clarified that this CRF was funded \$257,000 last year as well.

211
212 Selectman Grella read through **Warrant Article 34** Department of Public Works
213 Mechanic Garage.

214
215 In response to a question from Paul Mancini (6 Potter Way), DPW Director, Eric Hahn,
216 stated that this project is projected to cost less than previous similar proposed projects
217 because it will be maintaining the footprint of the existing building as it currently is.

218
219 In response to a question from Bruce Barter (60 Buckridge Drive), Mr. Hahn stated that
220 this will be a 40x60 steel-fabric building, built in the spot that the 1950's carriage shed
221 currently stands, once it's torn down.

222
223 Selectman Grella read through **Warrant Article 35**, Motor Vehicle Registration Fee
224 Waiver.

227 Chairman Brew read through **Warrant Article 36**, Solar Exemption Cap.

228

229 *A MOTION was made by Selectman Lyon and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo to*
230 *close the public hearing at 8:29 p.m.*

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

232

233 ***The Board took a brief recess at 8:29 p.m.***

234 ***The Board reconvened at 8:33 p.m.***

235

236 The Board discussed any items that need to be cleaned up for the Deliberative Session
237 presentation.

238

239 **8. Action Items**

240

241 The Board reviewed action items.

242

243 **9. New/Old Business**

244

245 Selectman D'Angelo explained to the Board that the Souhegan School Board is proposing
246 eliminating three (3) positions. The Amherst School Board has a 9.8% increase to their
247 budget. He has had discussions with the School Board and Superintendent Steele over a
248 warrant article that they're trying to include on their ballot, but that must be approved and
249 in their default budget.

250

251 **10. Adjournment**

252

253 *A MOTION was made by Selectman Grella and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo to*
254 *adjourn the meeting at 8:46 p.m.*

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

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261 **NEXT MEETING: –January 28, 2019**

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266 **SIGNATURE ON FILE**

01.28.2019

267

268 *Selectman Reed Panasiti*

Date