



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**

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: 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

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

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

4. PUBLIC HEARING: Speed Limit Regulation

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

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

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

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

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

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

There was no public comment.

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

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

6. Administration [the Board continued with this item]

6.2 Town Report Bid

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

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

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

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

86
87 **6.3 Town Report Cover**

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

91 In response to a question from Selectman D'Angelo, Ms. Guild stated that the town audit
92 will be included in this year's town report, and it will probably be available to be reviewed
93 at the Board's next meeting.
94

95 **6.4 Town Report Dedications**

96 The Board reviewed a list of people who contributed to the community, who passed away
97 this past year. Usually one or two people are highlighted in the Town Report, but a
98 suggestion was made this year to include a "We Remember" page, as there are a
99 significant number of people to incorporate. The Board agreed with this idea.
100

101 **7. Approvals**

102
103 **7.1 Accounts Payable**

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

107 *Voting: Motion passed unanimously, 5-0-0.*
108

109 The Ways & Means Committee stated that they have re-voted on a few of the warrant
110 articles. They have now approved the Operating Budget (Warrant Article 22)
111 unanimously, 6-0-0.
112

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

114 *The Board reconvened at 7:00 p.m.*
115

116 **5. PUBLIC HEARING: Town Operating Budget**

117 **Pursuant to New Hampshire RSA 32:5, I, the Amherst Board of Selectmen hereby**
118 **announces to the citizens of Amherst the convening of a Public Hearing to take**
119 **input on the proposed FY20 Town Operating Budget, bonds and notes, and**
120 **proposed warrant articles.**
121

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

124 *Voting: 5-0-0; motion passed unanimously.*
125

126 Selectman Lyon and Chairman Brew read through **Warrant Article 22**, Operating
127 Budget.
128

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Selectman Panasiti read through **Warrant Article 23**, Contingency Fund.
There were no comments/questions.

Selectman Panasiti read through **Warrant Article 24**, Police Station Renovation Capital Reserve Fund.
There were no comments/questions.

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

Selectman D'Angelo read through **Warrant Article 26**, Assessing Revaluation Capital Reserve Fund.
There were no comments/questions.

Selectman D'Angelo read through **Warrant Article 27**, Town Computer System Capital Reserve Fund.
There were no comments/questions.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Board reconvened at 8:33 p.m.

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

8. Action Items

The Board reviewed action items.

9. New/Old Business

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

10. Adjournment

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

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

NEXT MEETING: –January 28, 2019

SIGNATURE ON FILE

01.28.2019

Selectman Reed Panasiti

Date