



# **Town of Amherst, NH**

## **BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES**

**Barbara Landry Meeting Room**  
**2 Main Street**  
**Monday, March 23, 2020 6:30PM**

1       **1. Call to Order**

2  
3       Chairman Peter Lyon called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

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5       Attendees: Chairman Peter Lyon, Selectman Dwight Brew, Selectman Reed Panasiti,  
6       Selectman John D'Angelo at Town Hall.

7  
8       Also present: Town Administrator Dean Shankle.

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10      Selectman Grella joined by phone.

11  
12      Other attendees and the public accessed the meeting via Zoom.

13  
14      **2. Pledge of Allegiance** – Amherst Conservation Commission Chair Rob Clemens led  
15      the Pledge.

16  
17      **3. BOARD OF SELECTMEN & CONSERVATION COMMISSION**  
18      **NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

19  
20               Pursuant to New Hampshire RSA 36-A:5 and 41:14-a, The Amherst Board of  
21       Selectmen and the Amherst Conservation Commission hereby announce to the  
22       citizens of Amherst the convening of a Public Hearing to take input on the acquisition  
23       of property by the Town. All interested citizens are invited to participate.

24  
25                       ***Map & Lot: 02/098/033***  
26                       ***Owner of Record: M.E. Young, Inc.***

27  
28       A *MOTION* was made by Selectman D'Angelo to begin the Public Hearing. Selectman  
29       Panasiti *SECONDED* the motion.

30  
31       Members of the Amherst Conservation Commission in attendance via Zoom included:  
32       Rob Clemens, Chair; Jared Hardner, Vice-Chair; John Harvey, Vick Bennison, Frank  
33       Montesanto, Bill Stoughton, Wes Robertson, Mike Cohen, and Lee Gilman. Craig Fraley,  
34       Director of the Recreation Department was also present.

35  
36       Jared Hardner explained that the acquisition of this land is a collaboration between the  
37       ACC and the Recreation Department. The property is located off Route 101A, between it  
38       and Stearns Road. The property is 40.7 acres and formerly operated as the Buckmeadow

39 Golf Course. There is an additional 18 acre easement that comes with the property, which  
40 includes a portion of land that is included in the easement as long as golf is being played  
41 on it. To that end, approximately 1 acre of this area will be returned to the nearby condo  
42 association two years after golf ceases being played on the land. This has no material  
43 impact on the town's goals with this acquisition.  
44

45 He stated that the ACC is very interested in prioritizing any possible properties in the  
46 Southern Hydrological Zone, which includes all wetlands and supporting areas of  
47 hydrological importance on the north and south sides of Route 101A. This area is  
48 important because it sits on top of a highly transmissive aquifer that has also been  
49 identified by the state as an area for a possible municipal wellhead. The acquisition of  
50 this property is the ideal opportunity to conserve water resources for the town. This will  
51 fulfill a goal of the ACC, while allowing for an opportunity for the Recreation  
52 Department as well. The two groups will work together to create a green space that  
53 allows for 2-3 playing fields. This will address a major deficit in playing fields in town.  
54 The clubhouse will also be utilized for recreation programming, including senior  
55 programming, as the property is easily accessible.  
56

57 He stated that the ACC intends to install a walking trail along the perimeter of the  
58 property, which will go through wetland and grassland environments. The property is  
59 already fairly flat, grassy and contains an irrigation system, resulting in a tremendous  
60 value to the Recreation Department for the field area. The proposed rectangular fields  
61 will be part of the larger network of town fields. These fields will be utilized for spring  
62 and fall sports and two tournaments. There is the opportunity to install a small  
63 playground structure and/or a picnic area on the site.  
64

65 Jared Hardner explained that a parking study of the property has been completed. It may  
66 be necessary to expand the amount of parking currently offered on site, and this could be  
67 found on the other side of the current clubhouse, away from the condos. There will be no  
68 night games, no lighting, no public address systems, and no bleachers. Off-hours parking  
69 will be monitored by the police. This project is intended to be a seamless one between  
70 ACC and the Recreation Department. The total area is 58.6 acres. An offer of \$575,000  
71 was accepted in January 2020. The ACC will contribute \$375,000 and the Recreation  
72 Department will contribute \$200,000. A purchase & sale agreement has been signed.  
73 There will be no tax implication from this acquisition.  
74

75 Future items include surveying the bounds of the easement and turning the approximate  
76 one acre back over to the condos, pursue approvals for any necessary field improvements,  
77 develop and implement public use rules, begin the habitat restoration program, develop  
78 trails, kiosks, and benches for the property. The Recreation Department/ACC boundaries  
79 will be surveyed and finalized in five years, after a trial period allowing the groups to  
80 determine the best possible placements, parking, etc.  
81

82 In response to a question from Mike Cohen, Jared Hardner explained that the  
83 development of the public rules will come out of ACC meetings, during which input from  
84 abutters and other members of the public will be sought. There will possibly also be an  
85 advisory committee formed that will include abutters/condo owners.  
86

Wes Robertson commented that this seems to be a win/win for the town, ACC, and Recreation Department. He mentioned that this area might be suitable for ADA compliant trails in the future.

Selectman Grella expressed concerns regarding the safety of turning to/from this area from Route 101A. He suggested the possibility of making an access point from Stearns Road instead.

*A MOTION was made by Selectman Panasiti and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo to close the public hearing.*

*Voting: 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*

*A MOTION was made by Frank Montesanto and SECONDED by Lee Gilman to recommend that the Board of Selectmen release \$375,000 from the ACC Conservation Fund for the purpose of the acquisition of Buck Meadow.*

*Roll call vote:*

*Frank Montesanto: aye; John Harvey: aye; Lee Gilman: aye; Jared Hardner: aye; Vick Bennison: aye; Rob Clemens: aye.*

*Motion carried unanimously.*

#### **4. Citizen Forum – none.**

### **5. Board of Selectmen Reorganization**

#### **5.1 Officer Elections**

*A MOTION was made by Selectman Panasiti and SECONDED by Selectman Brew to nominate Peter Lyon as Chairman of the Board of Selectmen.*

*Voting: 3-0-2 (J. D'Angelo, P. Lyon abstained); motion carried.*

*A MOTION was made by Selectman Panasiti and SECONDED by Selectman Lyon to nominate Dwight Brew as Vice-Chair of the Board of Selectmen.*

*Voting: 4-0-1 (J. D'Angelo abstained); motion carried.*

*A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman Lyon to nominate Reed Panasiti as Clerk of the Board of Selectmen.*

*Voting: 3-0-2 (J. D'Angelo, R. Panasiti abstained); motion carried,*

#### **5.2 Committee Assignments**

The Board reviewed their assignments to other town committees.

Conservation Commission – Selectman Lyon

Heritage Commission – Selectman Grella

Highway Safety Committee – Selectman D'Angelo

Recreation Commission – Selectman Panasiti

Roads & Bridges – Selectman Grella

Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee – Selectman Lyon

Capital Improvement Committee – Selectman D'Angelo

Liaison to the schools – Selectman D’Angelo  
Cemetery Trustees – Selectman Brew  
Library Trustees – Selectman Brew  
Planning Board – Selectman Brew  
Trustees of the Trust Funds – Selectman D’Angelo

## **6. Administration**

### **6.1 Administrator’s Report**

Town Administrator Shankle stated that this is the first real Board meeting via a technology application. He read a comment submitted online from Tom Quinn, thanking the efforts being made to keep these meetings open to the public.

Town Administrator Shankle stated that the settlement offer from the town to Southern New Hampshire Medical Center has been signed and returned. No further action is needed.

### **6.2 COVID-19 Update**

Town Administrator Shankle stated that the staff at Town Hall are appreciative of the public’s cooperation at this time. The staff is ready and willing to do anything they can to help the townspeople. A recent emergency order enacted by the Governor allows for these meetings to be held without a majority present, but still requires a physical location for the public to come to. Earlier today, another order from the Governor stated that these meetings can be held entirely remotely, as long as the public has remote access and there is a way to let the public know how they can participate. This can be done without a physical location being necessary.

Town Administrator Shankle explained Bill H.R. 6201, Families First Coronavirus Response Act. This expands emergency paid leave to town employees in a number of ways. He also stated that the Department of Public Works is no longer recycling at the Transfer Station.

In response to a question from Selectman Panasiti, Town Administrator Shankle explained that recycling at the Transfer Station increases the amount of contact between the staff and the public, and members of the public with each other.

Eric Hahn, DPW Director, explained that the town and SRLD (Souhegan Regional Landfill District) is committed to recycling and will reimplement the service as soon as possible. The Transfer Station is a place where people tend to socialize. This measure tries to keep a minimum number of people on the deck at all times.

In response to a question from Selectman Lyon, Director Hahn stated that he has observed a change in behavior since instituting this measure.

Town Administrator Shankle stated that the Town Clerk has expressed an interest in taking one of her windows that leads to the outside and turning it into a walk-up window. The DPW is willing to assist with this. The bandstand will be used as a ramp up to the window, and a platform on which to do business. The window will normally remain closed, but items can be handed through it.

Town Administrator Shankle stated that the Police Department has instituted limited lobby access and a call-in procedure for burn permits.

He explained that the staff at Town Hall has been trying to work from home when possible or trading off shifts in the building. He is asking the Board to approve a policy that, until the emergency declaration is lifted by the Governor, all business in Town Hall will be done remotely, and the front doors will be locked, unless someone calls ahead and makes an appointment. He is also recommending all meetings be done remotely and to suspend public hearings for the time being.

Selectman Panasiti expressed concerns over how to make sure the public can have input during remote meetings.

Selectman Brew suggested creating a ramp and window access to the other side of Town Hall as well, in order to not disadvantage public members who may not want to enter the building but have business to take care of. This could be done in conjunction with locking the front doors.

Chairman Lyon stated that the first priority is the safety of the town employees.

Selectman D'Angelo stated that he is hesitant to lock the front doors of Town Hall, but also wants there to be a focus on safety. He suggested posting a list of important phone numbers on the front door.

*A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to authorize the Town Administrator to make the temporary accommodations necessary to ensure the safety of the town employees and the public, including locking the front doors of Town Hall and to allow residents who need to, to conduct business with Town Hall staff.*

*Voting: 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*

### **6.3 CRF Request, DPW – Bridge Repair & Replacement**

*A MOTION was made by Selectman Panasiti and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo to approve the request to withdraw \$26,929.40 from the Amherst Bridge Repair & Replacement Capital Reserve Fund to reimburse expenses to the DPW for the repairs of the twin culvert system at The Flume. Repairs were completed earlier in the FY20 budget year. Voting: 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*

## **7. Staff Reports**

### **7.1 AFR COVID-19 Update**

Fire Chief, Matt Conley, gave an update regarding the Fire Department's response to COVID-19. He explained that the Department executed a timely response to the virus and will continue to develop and maintain long-term staffing. The staff's anxiety is extremely high and there have been a large number of calls regarding COVID-19. The Department will procure additional resources to handle the number of calls.

Two of our First responders are currently in self-quarantine due to activities unrelated to AFR calls. Response to COVID-19 type calls will get a normal response, we do

however approach a patient with a single provider to get symptoms and history to minimize crew exposure.

Selectman Brew suggested putting all non-essential expenses on to hold, in order to be prepared to fund some of these larger staffing issues that may come up.

Chairman Lyon requested that Town Administrator Shankle come back to the Board after holding staff meetings to discuss possible spending holds.

## **8. Approvals**

### **8.1 Police Collective Bargaining Agreement Signing**

The Board acknowledged that this agreement was previously approved by the Board and passed by the voters at the March election and signed the agreement at this meeting.

### **8.2 Intent to Excavate**

*A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONED by Selectman Panasiti to approve and sign the 2020 Intent to Excavate for Map 2 Lot 34-1 located off Howe Drive. Voting: 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*

### **8.3 Hawkers & Vendors Application**

The Board agreed to hold off on these applications at this time.

### **8.4 Pole License & Petition**

*A MOTION was made by Selectmen Brew and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to allow the placement of a utility pole on Brook Road as described in Petition and Pole License #12-0826 and authorize the Board of Selectmen to sign the Petition and Pole License on behalf of the Town of Amherst. Voting: 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*

### **8.5 Assessing**

*A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to approve and sign the Veteran Tax Credit (Tax Year 2020) for: Property Map/Lot 001-013-000-012 in the amount of \$500.00 Voting: 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*

*A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo to approve and sign the Land Use Change Tax for: Property Map/Lot 006-079-007 in the amount of \$13,300.00 Voting: 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*

*A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo to approve and sign the Land Use Change Tax for: Property Map/Lot 006-079-015 in the amount of \$13,300.00 Voting: 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*

*A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo to approve and sign the Land Use Change Tax for:*



Property Map/Lot 006-079-016 in the amount of \$13,300.00  
Voting: 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo to approve and sign the Land Use Change Tax for:  
Property Map/Lot 006-079-020 in the amount of \$13,300.00  
Voting: 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to deny Abatements for:  
Property Map/Lot 001-005-001  
Voting: 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to deny Abatements for:  
Property Map/Lot 002-066-001  
Voting: 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to approve and sign the Abatements for:  
Property Map/Lot 005-162-004 in the amount of \$833.00  
Voting: 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to approve and sign the Abatements for:  
Property Map/Lot 010-074-001 in the amount of \$3,467.00  
Voting: 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

#### **8.6 Report of Appropriations Actually Voted (DRA Form MS-232)**

A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED BY Selectman Panasiti to accept the DRA Form MS232, Report of Appropriations, as prepared by Finance Director Cheryl Eastman, and authorize the Board of Selectmen to sign the document on behalf of the Town of Amherst.  
Voting: 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

#### **8.7 Payroll**

A MOTION to approve one (1) **FY20** Payroll Manifest in the amount of \$206,355.67 dated March 12, 2020, subject to review and audit was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti.  
Voting: 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

#### **8.8 Accounts Payable**

A MOTION to approve one (1) **FY20** Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$31,754.37 dated March 13, 2020 subject to review and audit (Town Clerk Transfers to the State of NH) was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti.  
Voting: 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

A MOTION to approve one (1) FY20 Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$141,550.71 dated March 17, 2020 subject to review and audit was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti.

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

A MOTION to approve one (1) FY20 Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$2,853.17 dated March 18, 2020 subject to review and audit was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti.

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

### **8.9 Previous Meeting Minutes – February 10, 2020; March 9, 2020; March 16, 2020**

A MOTION to approve the Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes of February 10, 2020 was made by Selectman Panasiti and SECONDED by Selectman Brew.

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

A MOTION to approve the Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes of March 9, 2020 was made by Selectman Panasiti and SECONDED by Selectman Brew.

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

A MOTION to approve the Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes of March 16, 2020 was made by Selectman Panasiti and SECONDED by Selectman Brew.

Voting 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

## **9. Action Items**

### **10. Old/New Business**

Chairman Lyon read into the record the letter of gratitude that was sent to Sally Wilkins for her years of service.

## **ADJOURN**

A MOTION to adjourn the meeting was made by Selectman Panasiti and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo.

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

## **NEXT MEETING: March 30, 2020**

**SIGNATURE ON FILE**

**APRIL 6, 2020**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Selectman Reed Panasiti

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date