



Town of Amherst, NH

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING

MINUTES

Barbara Landry Meeting Room
2 Main Street

Monday, August 10, 2020 6:15PM

1. Call to Order

Chairman Peter Lyon called the meeting to order at 6:17 p.m.

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

Also present: Town Administrator Dean Shankle

2. Non-Public Session, RSA 91-A:3, II (b)

A MOTION was made by Selectman Panasiti and SECONDED by Selectman Grella to enter into non-public session via RSA 91-A:3, II (b).

By roll call vote: Lyon: yes, Grella: yes, Brew: yes, D'Angelo: yes, Panasiti: yes, the motion passed unanimously.

The Board entered Non-Public Session at 6:17 pm.

A MOTION was made by Selectman Panasiti and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo to come out of Non-Public Session.

By roll call vote: D'Angelo: yes, Panasiti: yes, Brew: yes, Grella: yes, Lyon: yes, the motion passed unanimously.

The Board came out of Non-Public Session at 6:22 pm.

Chairman Lyon announced that no motions were made in the non-public session.

The Board reconvened public session at 6:30pm.

Attendees by Zoom conference call: Chairman Peter Lyon, Selectman Dwight Brew, Selectman Reed Panasiti, Selectman John D'Angelo, and Selectman Tom Grella.

Also present: Town Administrator Dean Shankle, Minute taker Kristan Patenaude.

All attendees and the public accessed the meeting via Zoom.

Chairman Lyon explained that, pursuant to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID19 pandemic and in accordance with his Emergency Order #12, this meeting is authorized to take place electronically. There is no physical location to observe and listen to this meeting. However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, we are:

Utilizing Zoom teleconferencing for this meeting. All members of the Board have the ability to communicate during the meeting through this platform and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and if necessary participate in the meeting by dialing +1 301 626 6799 and using a webinar ID of 880-4719-5965 or by using the link contained in the agenda posted at amherstnh.gov.

Notice of the meeting and means to access it were previously posted in accordance with law. Members of the public that have phoned into the meeting can raise their hand by pressing the *9 on their phone, in order to make it known that they would like to speak to the Board. If anyone has a problem accessing the meeting, please call 603-440-8248 for assistance. In the event the public is unable to access the meeting, the meeting will be adjourned and rescheduled.

All votes will be taken by roll call and for ease, in alphabetical order.

Lastly, the meeting is being recorded and will be replayed on ACATV.

The Board started by taking a roll call vote and stating if they were alone.

Roll call vote: Selectman Brew – present; Selectman D’Angelo – present; Selectman Grella – present; Selectman Panasiti – present; Chairman Lyon – present. All noted themselves as being alone.

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

A MOTION was made by Selectman Panasiti and SECONDED by Selectman Brew to enter the Public Hearing.

By roll call vote: Selectman Brew – aye; Selectman D’Angelo – aye; Selectman Grella – aye; Selectman Panasiti – aye; Chairman Lyon – aye. 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

Police Chief, Mark Reams, joined the meeting.

Chief Reams explained that the Highway Safety Committee recently met to discuss an observation made and resident concerns about the safety of intersections at Cricket Hill Road and Town Crier Road, and Douglas Drive and Hickory Drive. These roads were all paved within the last year and, while there are white lines at the intersections, there are no current stop signs. The Committee surveyed similar neighborhoods in Town and found that these are controlled similarly as to what is being proposed. The Committee recommends placing three stop signs at the three intersections of Hickory Drive and Douglas Drive, one at the intersection of Hickory Drive at Maple Drive, and one descending at Cricket Hill Road and Town Crier Road, for a total of five signs.

A MOTION was made by Selectman Grella and SECONDED by Selectman D’Angelo to close the Public Hearing.

By roll call vote: Selectman Brew – aye; Selectman D’Angelo – aye; Selectman Grella – aye; Selectman Panasiti – aye; Chairman Lyon – aye. 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

In response to a question from Selectman Brew, Chairman Lyon explained that there will be a second public hearing on this item on August 24, 2020. The Board will then vote on this item at its following meeting.

4. Citizen’s Forum - none.

5. Administration

5.1 Administrator’s Report

Town Administrator Shankle explained that the State is starting to make decisions about which broadband programs to undertake. He does not believe that Amherst was selected for this round of programs but will contact to see if the Town can be considered for the next round of projects.

Town Administrator Shankle stated that the storm last week impacted the Fire Department, Police Department, and DPW through their services. The storm also directly impacted the Recreation Department, as a large tree fell on Spaulding Field; this has since been cleaned up. He noted that the Baboosic Lake Beach has also been closed recently, due to poor DES tests. The Beach should be up and running by tomorrow, after tests came back with better results.

Town Administrator Shankle explained that information has been received from the Town Attorney regarding the Police Station renovation contract. The contract has been signed. The work on the renovation should begin the first week in September.

Town Administrator Shankle explained that the inter-governmental agreement between Homeland Security and the Town has been renewed. He also explained that there is a request by the Amherst Junior Women’s Club to hold a few more Yoga on the Green sessions into the later summer/fall.

Selectman Panasiti asked for clarification on the broadband project item.

5.2 Approval of Budget Meetings Schedule - Finance

Finance Director, Cheryl Eastman, joined the meeting.

In response to a question from Chairman Lyon, Cheryl Eastman explained that the proposed Budget Meeting schedule reflects last year’s schedule. Selectmen D’Angelo noted that it appears to actually be two weeks ahead of last year’s schedule.

Selectman Brew noted that he would like to see a first draft of the proposed Warrant Articles prior to the individual department meetings.

Cheryl Eastman explained that the Board would be able to discuss the topics of the proposed Warrant Articles at the meeting on October 26, 2020, but that verbiage for these won’t be available until the meeting on November 9, 2020.

Town Administrator Shankle suggested that the Board be able to discuss the topics, titles, and amount of the proposed Warrant Articles at the October 26th meeting, and to then discuss the wording on November 9th.

The Board went over their department assignments for the budget meetings:
Police and Communications: Selectman Panasiti, back-up Selectman Grella
Fire and Rescue: Selectman Grella, back-up Selectman D'Angelo
DPW: Selectman D'Angelo, back-up Selectman Brew
Library: Chairman Lyon, back-up Selectman D'Angelo
Recreation: Selectman Panasiti, back-up Chairman Lyon
General Government: Selectman D'Angelo, back-up Selectman Brew
Community Development: Selectman Brew, back-up Selectman D'Angelo

5.3 Year End Review of FY19 - 20 Budget - Finance

Chairman Lyon complimented Cheryl Eastman on the amount of information and the layout she presented for this review.

Cheryl Eastman reviewed the FY20 revenues and expenses. She stated that the surplus/deficit for revenue was \$217,954; the surplus/deficit for expenses was \$240,370.

In response to a question from Chairman Lyon, Cheryl Eastman explained that budget adjustment line under expenses is made up of encumbrances from the prior year and budget adjustments, mostly a large sum of about \$85,000 moved from the DPW Administration line to the DPW Operating line.

Cheryl Eastman reviewed the FY20 total revenue numbers with the Board. She explained that the budget versus actual, not including bridge capital projects, shows a surplus of \$217,954. This is a very good result, especially with the unknowns of COVID-19. The FY20 revenue increase over FY19 is \$32,904. This is also a very good result.

Cheryl Eastman reviewed the FY20 budget versus actual numbers, broken down by department. These budget numbers show a well-constructed budget that was strictly adhered to by Department heads. This resulted in a surplus of \$249,379. She reviewed the major drivers in the budget versus actual numbers by Department: Executive - change in Town Administrator, IT contract, and copier rentals; Finance - change in Finance Director, an over expenditure in the Training line which was partially offset by savings in the Audit line; Tax Collector - postponement of the lien process; Assessing - funds encumbered into FY20 for software upgrades; Personnel Administration - Worker's Compensation Insurance savings from a "Premium Holiday, Disability and Life Insurance savings; Planning Board - funds budgeted for Storm Water Management not spent, current director not sure what they were spent on; Zoning Board - Planner position vacant for five months.

In response to a question from Selectman Panasiti, Cheryl Eastman explained that there were funds in the FY20 budget for stormwater management, but the current Planning Board Chair couldn't find an explanation or reason for these funds. These funds, thus,

went largely unexpended. All necessary items were still taken care of by the right deadlines. The surplus for this was \$23,243.

Town Administrator Shankle noted that these funds might have been for GIS maps and interns for stormwater management that were previously budgeted.

Cheryl Eastman continued with the Departmental drivers: General Government Buildings - electricity rates went up 11%, several fire/security panel upgrades, and an addition of the Buck Meadow building; Cemetery - wage line was underspent, outside hire line was overspent; Police - wage lines underspent, less training, no new cruisers; Rescue - overtime was never budgeted; Fire - computer supplies and vehicle repairs were overspent; Communications - one full-time vacancy; DPW - Assistant DPW Director job vacant from July to February, telephone line and building repairs overspent.

In response to a question from Selectman Brew, Cheryl Eastman acknowledged that even though two of the Fire budget lines were overspent, the total Fire budget was 12% underspent. She explained that all of the Departmental budget lines addressed so far were underspent, other than the Finance Department.

Cheryl Eastman continued with the Departmental drivers: DPW Operations - a realignment of expenses, and Pennichuck Water Main Assessment overspent due to rates increasing; Souhegan Regional Landfill - increased volume of trash and recycling; Transfer Station - Health Insurance and Demotion Disposal overspent; Parks - PT wages and Outside Hire underspent.

Cheryl Eastman explained that approximately \$130,000 will be reimbursed to the Town due to COVID from various grants. Amherst was also allocated \$272,395 under the GOFERR grant.

In response to a question from Chairman Lyon, Cheryl Eastman explained that not all of the Town's COVID expenses might be reimbursed. The Town will probably spend more than being allocated from the GOFERR grant, but not so much as to impact the budgets.

Cheryl Eastman reviewed the FY20 budget versus actual for the Warrant Articles. She explained that the Contingency Fund was not needed and that the three Bridge Warrant Articles were not accessed. The DPW garage was not completed, but about \$72,000 was encumbered into next year for this project.

Cheryl Eastman reviewed the cash flow comparisons from FY19 to FY20 and found them to be almost identical.

The Board reviewed the unassigned fund balance. Cheryl Eastman explained that the unassigned fund balance is calculated by taking the revenue deficits/surplus under expenditures, minus funds encumbered, plus adjusted net changes in property tax receivables, plus net changes in inventory and pre-paid accounts. The estimated unassigned fund balance as of 6/30/2020 is \$6,532,550. This is a reduction of approximately \$586,000 from FY19.

In response a question from Chairman Lyon, Cheryl Eastman stated that there isn't exactly a way to estimate what this amount will be.

In response to a question from Selectman Brew, Cheryl Eastman acknowledged that the bridge work through Warrant Articles that will probably be done in FY21 or FY22 will be covered through the multi-year window for these projects as worded in the Warrant Articles.

In response to a question from Selectman Brew, Cheryl Eastman explained that the money reimbursed from the State to the Town for these bridge projects will come in as unanticipated revenue.

Selectman D'Angelo stated that, if this reimbursement is handled as unanticipated revenue, the Town will not be able to expend the funds. He also explained that this reimbursement is considered very anticipated. Cheryl Eastman explained that these funds were anticipated in FY20, but, as the Town cannot now say for sure when these will be received, they are considered unanticipated revenue. Selectman D'Angelo noted that the Town cannot pay the bond down with the funds, if they are considered unanticipated. Cheryl Eastman explained that a bond will not be necessary if the bridge work is completed in the proposed time period. The Bridge Capital Reserve Funds and State reimbursements will be enough to cover the projects.

Selectman Brew noted that the funds can be spent if the Board votes to accept and expend them. Chairman Lyon explained that all of this can be avoided if the Town can determine when the money will be spent, and then include it as revenue in that year.

In response to a question from Selectman D'Angelo, Cheryl Eastman explained that the drivers in reducing the amount of money in the unassigned fund balance are encumbrances into FY21 and the net change in property tax received.

The Board agreed that it will address further questions about the unassigned fund balance as it moves into the fall.

In response to a question from Selectman Grella, Cheryl Eastman agreed that reimbursement of the bridge Warrant Articles from the state depends on what's available in the State Bridge Aid Fund at the time. She believes this would be about an 80% reimbursement to the Town.

6. Staff Reports

6.1 New Hire - Rec

Recreation Director, Craig Fraley, joined the meeting.

Craig Fraley explained that he is requesting to hire a part-time position to fill Jennifer Stover's Administrative Assistant position. This position will average about 29 hours/week. The Department received eight applications for the position and interviewed

three of those applicants. Craig Fraley recommended Laura Kimball for the position as she is well-qualified.

A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman Grella to hire Laura Kimball to a part-time position of Amherst Parks and Recreation Administrative Assistant, as recommended by the Recreation Director, at Grade 6, Step 1, \$20.57/hour. By roll call vote: Selectman Brew – aye; Selectman D’Angelo – aye; Selectman Grella – aye; Selectman Panasiti – aye; Chairman Lyon – aye. 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

7. Approvals

7.1 Payroll

A MOTION was made by Selectman D’Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti, to approve one (1) FY20 Annual Fire Rescue Payroll Manifest in the amount of \$52,518.79 dated July 31, 2020, subject to review and audit.

By roll call vote: Selectman Brew – aye; Selectman D’Angelo – aye; Selectman Grella – aye; Selectman Panasiti – aye; Chairman Lyon – aye. 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

A MOTION was made by Selectman D’Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti, to approve one (1) FY21 Payroll Manifest in the amount of \$239,358.70 dated July 30, 2020, subject to review and audit.

By roll call vote: Selectman Brew – aye; Selectman D’Angelo – aye; Selectman Grella – aye; Selectman Panasiti – aye; Chairman Lyon – aye. 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

7.2 Accounts Payable

A MOTION was made by Selectman D’Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to approve one (1) FY21 Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$479,947.69 dated July 23, 2020, subject to review and audit.

By roll call vote: Selectman Brew – aye; Selectman D’Angelo – aye; Selectman Grella – aye; Selectman Panasiti – aye; Chairman Lyon – aye. 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

A MOTION was made by Selectman D’Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Brew to approve one (1) FY21 Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$3,024,202.00 dated August 3, 2020, subject to review and audit.

By roll call vote: Selectman Brew – aye; Selectman D’Angelo – aye; Selectman Grella – aye; Selectman Panasiti – aye; Chairman Lyon – aye. 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

A MOTION was made by Selectman D’Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to approve one (1) FY21 Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$261,356.83 dated August 4, 2020, subject to review and audit.

By roll call vote: Selectman Brew – aye; Selectman D’Angelo – aye; Selectman Grella – aye; Selectman Panasiti – aye; Chairman Lyon – aye. 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to approve one (1) FY21 Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$922,020.33 dated August 4, 2020, subject to review and audit.

By roll call vote: Selectman Brew – aye; Selectman D'Angelo – aye; Selectman Grella – aye; Selectman Panasiti – aye; Chairman Lyon – aye. 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to approve one (1) FY21 Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$96,991.73 dated August 6, 2020, subject to review and audit.

By roll call vote: Selectman Brew – aye; Selectman D'Angelo – aye; Selectman Grella – aye; Selectman Panasiti – aye; Chairman Lyon – aye. 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

7.5 Previous Meeting Minutes – June 27, 2020

A MOTION was made by Selectman Panasiti and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo to approve the Board of Selectmen meeting minutes of July 27, 2020, as presented.

By roll call vote: Selectman Brew – aye; Selectman D'Angelo – aye; Selectman Grella – aye; Selectman Panasiti – aye; Chairman Lyon – aye. 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

8. Action Items

The Board reviewed its action items.

9. Old/New Business

Selectman Brew stated that the Master Plan Steering Committee will meet for the first time, via Zoom, on August 17, 2020, at 6:30pm. There is an agenda and link to this meeting on the Town website.

Selectman D'Angelo stated that the CIP Committee met last Tuesday and is looking to keep the load on the taxpayers the same over the next approximately six years. As the road bond wraps up there will be new bonds proposed for school items.

Selectman Grella stated that there will be a joint Heritage Commission and Historic District Commission meeting on Thursday to discuss grants and advancement projects with someone from the State.

Chairman Lyon thanked Kristan Patenaude, and Bill Widmer for their job hosting the Amherst Conservation Commission's Town-Wide Clean Up Day last weekend.

In response to a question from Selectman Panasiti, DPW Director Eric Hahn stated that there was not much overtime needed due to last week's storm.

Chairman Lyon thanked Eric Hahn and the DPW for their efforts taking care of storm-related issues quickly.

A MOTION was made by Selectman Panasiti and SECONDED by Selectman Grella to adjourn the meeting at 7:34pm.

By roll call vote: Selectman Brew – aye; Selectman D'Angelo – aye; Selectman Grella – aye; Selectman Panasiti – aye; Chairman Lyon – aye. 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

NEXT MEETING: Monday, August 24, 2020

Selectman Reed Panasiti

Date