



# Town of Amherst, NH

## BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES

Barbara Landry Meeting Room  
2 Main Street  
Monday, September 28, 2020 6:30PM

1       **1. Call to Order**

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

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4       Attendees by Zoom conference call: Chairman Peter Lyon, Selectman Dwight Brew,  
5       Selectman Reed Panasiti, Selectman John D'Angelo, and Selectman Tom Grella.  
6       Also present: Town Administrator Dean Shankle and Kristan Patenaude, minute taker

7  
8       Ways & Means Committee Members present: Lisa Eastland (Chair), Danielle Pray (vice  
9       chair), Mike Parisi, Scott Tuthill, Matt Seiler, Jim Kuhnert, Lori Mix (alternate).

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

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

18       Utilizing Zoom teleconferencing for this meeting. All members of the Board have the  
19       ability to communicate during the meeting through this platform and the public has access  
20       to contemporaneously listen and if necessary participate in the meeting by dialing +1 301  
21       715 8592 and using a webinar ID of 859-0059-9870 or by using the link contained in the  
22       agenda posted at amherstnh.gov.

23  
24       Notice of the meeting and means to access it were previously posted in accordance with  
25       law. Members of the public that have phoned into the meeting can raise their hand by  
26       pressing the #9 on their phone, in order to make it known that they would like to speak to  
27       the Board. If anyone has a problem accessing the meeting, please call 603-440-8248 for  
28       assistance. In the event the public is unable to access the meeting, the meeting will be  
29       adjourned and rescheduled.

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31       All votes will be taken by roll call and for ease, in alphabetical order.  
32       Lastly, the meeting is being recorded and will be replayed on ACATV.

33  
34       The Board started by taking a roll call vote and stating if they were alone.

35  
36       *Roll call vote: Selectman Brew – present; Selectman D'Angelo – present; Selectman*  
37       *Grella – present; Selectman Panasiti – present; Chairman Lyon – present. All noted*  
38       *themselves as being alone.*

39 **2. Citizen's Forum – none.**

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41 **3. Scheduled Appointments**

42  
43 **a. "Goldens on the Green" – Bill Swift**

44 *A MOTION was made by Selectman Panasiti and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo*  
45 *to approve the Goldens on the Green event on October 18, 2020.*

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

49  
50 **4. Strategic Plans**

51 **4.1 FY22 Strategic Plan, Recreation**

52 Craig Fraley, Recreation Department Director, stated that one of the Department's FY21  
53 Goals, to continue to enhance the use of Baboosic Lake Town Beach to Amherst  
54 Citizens, has essentially been maxed out. He does believe that COVID-19 had an effect  
55 on beach use this spring and summer.

56  
57 Craig Fraley reviewed the Departments' FY22 goals:

58 1) Increase citizen awareness about Recreation Programs & Facilities: the Department  
59 puts out a bi-weekly newsletter, with a 35% open rate (over 22% is considered good).  
60 The Department still looks to broaden this goal. 2) Increase and manage park and  
61 recreation facilities available to citizens: the acres of land maintained by the Department  
62 has increased since 2017. More recently, the Department has added Birch Park,  
63 Buchanan Park, and Buck Meadow Conservation & Recreation Area. 3) Diversify  
64 program offerings to serve citizens of all ages: the Department looks to continue  
65 diversifying its program offerings to senior citizens, preschoolers, and through programs  
66 at Peabody Mill Environmental Center (PMEC).

67  
68 Craig Fraley stated that the Department's FY22 Initiatives include:

- 69 1) Development of Buck Meadow Conservation & Recreation Area for usable fields and  
70 indoor space: this property was purchased in March 2020 and has about 10 acres of  
71 flat field area. The Department would like to expand this area in three Phases. Phase I  
72 goes through the current year and consists of items such as painting the field,  
73 installing an accessible ramp to the clubhouse, and other little-to-no cost items. Phase  
74 II in FY22 involves reconfiguring the existing parking lot, making improvements to  
75 the clubhouse, and installing two full sized soccer fields. Phase III in FY23 looks to  
76 add additional parking, install a playground (through a fundraising event), and  
77 installing a gravel road around the property for better emergency access. Funding  
78 sources for these Phases could come from the 50/50 Land Water Conservation Grant,  
79 local grants, warrant articles, or a Capital Reserve Fund.
- 80 2) Add additional part-time Parks Crew staff: the Department has not taken on any  
81 additional staff since 2017, yet the amount of land to maintain has almost doubled. It  
82 is difficult for the current crew to keep up with the needs of the properties. Two of  
83 the full-time employees for the Department are paid out of the general budget; the  
84 rest are paid for out of the -02 Revolving Fund. With the pandemic, there haven't

85 been as many funds coming to this account, but the employees are still needed to  
86 work on the properties that are being used just as much, if not more.

- 87 3) Resurface AMS courts to allow for basketball use and create a shaded picnic area to  
88 allow space for outdoor classrooms and team meeting spaces: these courts are in need  
89 of resurfacing and there is a major lack of outdoor basketball facilities in town.  
90 4) Build an indoor facility to act as a community center for Amherst residents of all  
91 ages: while this item is still important, it has been tabled for now.

92  
93 Craig Fraley stated that the budget impact for Initiative 1 could be two Warrant Articles,  
94 each for \$75,000, split over FY22 and FY23. The budget impact for Initiative 2 would be  
95 a budget increase of \$25,000 for one additional staff member at 29 hours/week. The  
96 budget impact for Initiative 3 would be \$85,000 for resurfacing, and \$2,000 for the picnic  
97 area, both to be funded from the -02 Revolving Account.

98  
99 Selectman Brew stated that he has concerns about the fact that Amherst hasn't grown  
100 much over the last several years, yet these new Department initiatives cost a fair amount  
101 of money. He explained that, if all of the proposed developments in Town were to be  
102 built, it would create an overall increase in housing units of less than 10%. He would like  
103 to see the rural and affordable community aspects of the Town balanced with the  
104 Recreation efforts. He would also like for the Department to go slowly regarding the  
105 potential community center, to see if the community actually wants to invest in it – both  
106 the initial building costs and the recurring cost.

107  
108 In response to a question from Selectman D'Angelo, Craig Fraley stated that the two  
109 amounts of \$75,000 for Buck Meadow should effectively finish that project. This is the  
110 amount needed if a 50% match grant can be obtained.

111  
112 Selectman D'Angelo suggested that a Capital Reserve Fund be started for the potential  
113 community center if the Department thinks it's truly a future proposed project. This fund  
114 could be seeded with money from the undesignated fund balance.

115  
116 In response to a question from Selectman Grella, Craig Fraley stated that one of the two  
117 tractors from the Buck Meadow property purchase will likely be kept and utilized by the  
118 Department and the second tractor sold using municibid.com.

119  
120 In response to a question from Selectman Panasiti, Craig Fraley stated that there should  
121 be money in the -02 Revolving Fund available to use for the tennis court resurfacing once  
122 the pandemic has subsided.

123  
124 In response to a question from Selectman Panasiti, Craig Fraley explained that the  
125 Department follows state guidelines regarding youth sports. Participants do not need to  
126 wear masks while actively participating, similarly with coaches. Players and coaches do  
127 need to wear masks when the game is over or when moving fields. The Department  
128 recommends that all spectators wear masks and have received very little pushback on  
129 this. While the Department employees can ask spectators to wear masks, they cannot be  
130 on every field for every game to ensure this is happening.

Chairman Lyon stated that the Recreation Department has done great things with not a lot of money. He suggested that the Department look at some of their budget requests to determine which are most important at this time. The Department will need to bring detailed information regarding their budget requests during the budget process.

In response to a question from Scott Tuthill, Ways & Means member, Craig Fraley stated that the \$85,000 cost is to resurface two tennis courts. It cost about \$65,000 to resurface the Davis Lane courts, so he increased the amount to play it safe.

In response to a question from Matt Seiler, Ways & Means member, Craig Fraley explained that, if a grant is not received, the Department will continue to apply for various grants. If no grant at all is received, it will simply take longer to complete the project, or possibly require an additional Warrant Article.

In response to a question from Matt Seiler, Craig Fraley stated that he has not yet pushed for a community survey regarding the community center. Craig Fraley stated that he is hoping some member of the community step up to drive the project forward.

In response to a question from Jim Kuhnert, Ways & Means member, Craig Fraley stated that he can work to look at community centers proposed or built for other similar-sized towns in the area.

In response to a question from Danielle Pray, Ways & Means member, Craig Fraley stated that the golf carts that came with the Buck Meadow were sold for about \$19,000. This money was originally deposited into the General Fund, but Town Counsel and the auditors explained that these funds could be placed back into the Recreation Department and Conservation Commission budgets; these funds were to be split evenly between the two entities by the same percentage that each paid for the property.

In response to a question from Lisa Eastland, Ways & Means Chair, Craig Fraley stated that there will still be ice skating allowed on the resurfaced courts at AMS.

In response to a question from Lisa Eastland, Craig Fraley stated that the maintenance items done by the Recreation Department are typically routine maintenance items, and maintenance at the school facilities. The Parks crew can be used for many projects in Town, but then those employees must be backfilled for items like mowing.

In response to a question from Lisa Eastland, Craig Fraley stated that there is a financial agreement between the Recreation Department and the SAU. He also explained that there will not be any real cost for the winter usage of Buck Meadow. He hopes that the Department will be able to make a cross-country skiing and snow shoeing area there in the future.

#### **4.2 FY22 Strategic Plan, Library**

Amy Lapointe, Library Director, explained that the Library is made up of 7 full-time, 8 part-time employees, and 7 pages. Wages and benefits are 80% of the operating budget. The Library is generally open 7 days a week, 63 hours. During COVID-19, the Library is

currently open 33 hours. She explained that the Library total circulation peaked in 2013. Circulation has seen an increase in e-materials, and a decrease in audio visual materials. There has been a dramatic increase in items borrowed from other libraries, mostly due to changes in procedure and the Collection Development Policy. The Library has maintained steady staffing for over a decade, despite a rapid growth in service from 2003-2013.

Amy Lapointe noted that the Department has the following goals:

- 1) To provide a collection that supports library patrons in their information education and recreational needs: the Library will continue to analyze print and digital collection usage. She believes there is no real substitute for a professional recommending books to interested parties.
- 2) To provide educational, informational, and recreational opportunities that meet the needs and interests of the community: the Library will continue to explore various types of virtual programs and explore options for enhanced accessibility during programs.
- 3) Ensure that the facility and technology infrastructure are configured and maintained to support the community in their individual and collective use and the staff in their provision of services: the facility has been configured to support social distancing and there will be a phased plan as social distancing evolves. The Library would also like to explore how to support patrons working from home.
- 4) Improve communication to build community awareness of and engagement with the library: the Library is looking to create a new website and continue developing a social media presence.
- 5) Maintain the long-term health of the organization through responsible management: the Library will work to update the policy manual. The Library looks to maximize effective staffing and maintain a fiscally responsible organization.

In response to a question from Selectman Brew, Amy Lapointe explained that the Library staff used to be 7 full-time, 7 part-time employees, and 7 pages. The additional part-time person is an added person, but no additional hours.

In response to a question from Selectman Grella, Amy Lapointe stated that the contract building renovation work was completed on budget. The new space feels like it's working well so far.

#### **4.3 FY22 Strategic Plan, Community Development**

Nic Strong, Community Development Director, stated that the Department's vision into 2026 is to have an efficient and streamlined service for all those who seek to use and develop land in Town; work with stakeholders to translate the vision of the updated Master Plan into a physical reality for the community; and to be a trusted source of information and guidance for the community.

Nic Strong stated that the building permit applications have mostly stayed on track, even through the pandemic. There was an increase in pool permits. She explained that Planning Board, Zoning Board of Adjustment, and Historic District applications were all paused for about three months, due to COVID-19, leading to a shift in the number

received to date. She explained that the 2020 census will be important in terms of planning and budgeting for the future. She stated that the projected population data does seem to show an aging of the populace in Town.

Nic Strong stated that the Department has shown flexibility in regard to the pandemic, such as through the permitting process used for outdoor dining, and the ability to submit online permit requests. The Department is currently fully staffed. Some of the weaknesses of the Department include the office layout and previous digitizing choices. The Department has upcoming opportunities, such as the Master Plan process, and proactive communications between Boards, Commissions, and Departments.

Nic Strong reviewed the Department's internal goals:

- 1) Filing system overhaul
- 2) Evaluation of office space and layout
- 3) Fostering a sense of teamwork and engagement with all Community Development Office staff
- 4) Create Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for the Department

Nic Strong reviewed the Department's external goals:

- 1) Providing transparent information to the public
- 2) Reviewing the Department's fee schedule
- 3) Creating a map that shows pending applications, with links to supporting documentation
- 4) Stormwater Management and MS4
- 5) Land Use Board procedures

Selectman Brew stated that he appreciates Nic Strong's willingness to make sure that Boards and Commissions stick to the letter of the law and are in compliance. He believes that access to meeting data online prior to each meeting has been a great help to the Boards and the public. He agreed that digitization should be done properly in order to be useful – even if this means it will take longer. He stated that a visual map with links to each application currently in process could also be beneficial to the Boards and public.

Selectman D'Angelo suggested a link somewhere on the website that bring people to new and current applications.

Nic Strong updated the Board on the Master Plan process. She explained that the Planning Board Master Plan Steering Committee has created a Communications Subcommittee responsible for discussing how to engage the public, outreach opportunities, and a survey. The survey will be sent to residents and business owners in Town to discuss different future topics of interest. This will be a baseline for choosing the themes for the Master Plan.

Nic Strong stated that the Department is currently working on the MS4 permit. This permit has many requirements over multiple years. The permit is currently in a reporting and inspection phase. The Department works to keep track of site approvals, monitoring



the sites as they're approved, and monitoring outfalls. The report is updated each year to make sure the Town is meeting all the requirements of the EPA process.

*The Ways & Means Committee exited into its own meeting.*

## **5. Administration**

### **5.1 General Updates**

Town Administrator Shankle stated that the renovations to the Police Station are carrying forward.

### **5.2 Halloween**

Craig Fraley stated that the safest way for Amherst to celebrate Halloween is for there to be no Doors on the Green, or other Halloween activities in the center of Town. There is no real way to stop people from trick-or-treating or handing out candy. The Village usually sees about 2,000 people on Halloween night. He recommends that people only trick-or-treat in their own neighborhoods this year.

Marti Warren explained that she spent the weekend speaking to many homeowners around the Village. She believes there may be fewer people opening their doors to hand out candy than in the past.

Chairman Lyon stated that this is a difficult position for the Board to be in, because Halloween is not a town-sponsored or organized event. He would support and encourage people to trick-or-treat in their own neighborhoods and be respectful of the wishes of others.

Selectman Brew stated that he would encourage people to be safe, adhere to guidelines, stay only in small groups, and be masked. He believes if residents are not comfortable participating, they should turn off their lights.

Selectman Brew stated that it was appropriate for the Selectmen to discuss Halloween in the Village because it is a large event, but he believes trick-or-treating in individual neighborhoods safely is a reasonable thing to do.

Selectman Grella suggested that those not from Amherst stay home in their own neighborhoods this year.

Selectman Panasiti stated that he does not want to restrict the holiday but suggested posting something on the Town website that the Board does not support a town-wide event this year.

Marti Warren suggested that no information about trick-or-treating in the Town be given out to WMUR this year.

In response to a question from Town Administrator Shankle, Chairman Lyon stated that it would be up to the Police Chief's discretion as to whether a police detail is necessary at all for that evening.

### 5.3 Drought

Town Administrator Shankle noted that DES is urging municipalities to implement municipal-wide restrictions during this drought.

Selectman Brew stated that he contacted a large well driller in Amherst. The driller explained that he has not heard of wells going dry due to other residents' water use in Amherst but has heard of it in other surrounding towns. Selectman Brew stated that he is hesitant to restrict usage because it is almost at the end of the watering season. He would encourage people to be frugal and conserve water.

Selectman D'Angelo agreed with Selectman Brew. He believes it is a little late in the game for restrictions. He would encourage people to be prudent, but not mandate it.

Selectman Grella stated that he believes the odd/even watering days is adequate.

### 5.4 Town Hall Reopening Task Force Update

Jennifer Stover, Executive Assistant, stated that the Task Force spoke to all of the staff members in the building regarding reopening. The Task Force recommends that Town Hall be reopened by appointment only. The number of people in the lobby at any time should be limited to four (three for the Town Clerk, and one to be split between Tax/Assessing and Community Development). The outdoor ramp will be kept through the completion of absentee ballots in November. She stated that Town Hall employees will ask people, as part of their script, if they are willing and/or able to wear a mask. This should eliminate the need for an ordinance.

Selectman Brew clarified that if someone wants to do business unmasked, employees are still willing to help them outside of the building. Thus, no one will be denied service.

In response to a question from Selectman Brew, Jennifer Stover stated that this reopening is recommended as soon as doorbells and buzzers are in place.

Selectman D'Angelo stated that the reopening should be announced on the website and on Facebook.

In response to a question from Selectman Grella, Jennifer Stover stated that it would not be practical for employees to take visitor's temperature. In order to take people's temperature, staff members would need to come out from behind their plexiglass shields, which makes this undesired. Staff members will have the ability to open the door from behind the plexiglass shield.

*A MOTION was made by Selectman Panasiti and SECONDED by Selectman Grella to accept the recommendations of the Town Hall Re-opening Task Force and reopen Town Hall for appointments, as soon as all precautions are in place.*

*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.*



367 **6. Approvals**

368 **6.1 Assessing Approval, Land Use Change Tax Release, 4 Trask Way**

369 *A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo to*  
370 *approve the Land Use Change Tax in the amount of \$20,000 for Tax Map 005, Lot 059-*  
371 *014, 4 Trask Way*

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

375  
376 **6.2 Payroll, Accounts Payable, and NH DMV Manifests**

377 *A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to*  
378 *approve one (1) FY21 Payroll Manifest in the amount of \$227,713.13 dated September*  
379 *10, 2020, subject to review and audit.*

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

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384 *A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to*  
385 *approve one (1) FY21 Payroll Manifest in the amount of \$228,829.35 dated September*  
386 *24, 2020, subject to review and audit.*

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

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391 *A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to*  
392 *approve one (1) FY21 Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$126,671.10 dated*  
393 *September 15, 2020, subject to review and audit.*

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

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398 *A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to*  
399 *approve one (1) FY21 Payroll Manifest in the amount of \$73,955.44 dated September 16,*  
400 *2020, subject to review and audit.*

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

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405 *A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to*  
406 *approve one (1) FY21 NH DMV Manifest in the amount of \$36,893.16 dated September*  
407 *17, 2020, subject to review and audit.*

408 *By roll call vote: Selectman Brew – aye; Selectman D'Angelo – aye; Selectman Grella –*  
409 *aye; Selectman Panasiti – aye; Chairman Lyon – aye. 5-0-0; motion carried*  
410 *unanimously.*  
411

*A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to approve one (1) FY21 NH DMV Manifest in the amount of \$32,897.01 dated September 17, 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 NH DMV Manifest in the amount of \$32,184.56 dated September 17, 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.*

### **6.3 Previous Meeting Minutes 9/14/2020**

*A MOTION was made by Selectman Panasiti and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo to approve the meeting minutes of August 24, 2020, as amended [Line 384, strike the word 'unanimous.'*

*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. Action Items**

The Board reviewed its action items.

## **8. Old/New Business**

### **9. Non-Public Session RSA 91-A:3, II (b)**

*A MOTION was made by Selectman Panasiti and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo to enter into Non-Public Session, per RSA 91-A:3, II (b) at 9:04pm.*

*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 Grella and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo to exit Non-Public Session at 9:34pm.*

*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.*

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

*A MOTION was made by Selectman Panasiti and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo to adjourn the meeting at 9:38pm.*

*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.*

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**NEXT MEETING: Monday, October 12, 2020**

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*