



# Town of Amherst, NH

## BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES

Barbara Landry Meeting Room  
2 Main Street  
Monday, May 24, 2021, 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, recording  
7       secretary

8  
9       Other attendees and the public accessed the meeting via Zoom.

10  
11       Chairman Lyon explained that, pursuant to the State of Emergency declared by the  
12       Governor as a result of the COVID19 pandemic and in accordance with his Emergency  
13       Order #12, this meeting is authorized to take place electronically. There is no physical  
14       location to observe and listen to this meeting. However, in accordance with the  
15       Emergency Order, we are:

16  
17       Utilizing Zoom teleconferencing for this meeting. All members of the Board have the  
18       ability to communicate during the meeting through this platform and the public has access  
19       to contemporaneously listen and if necessary, participate in the meeting by dialing +1 312  
20       626 6799 and using a webinar ID of 895-1129-9650 or by using the link contained in the  
21       agenda posted at amherstnh.gov.

22  
23       Notice of the meeting and means to access it were previously posted in accordance with  
24       law. Members of the public that have phoned into the meeting can raise their hand by  
25       pressing the \*9 on their phone, in order to make it known that they would like to speak to  
26       the Board. If anyone has a problem accessing the meeting, please call 603-440-8248 for  
27       assistance. In the event the public is unable to access the meeting, the meeting will be  
28       adjourned and rescheduled.

29  
30       All votes will be taken by roll call and for ease, in alphabetical order.  
31       Lastly, the meeting is being recorded and will be replayed on ACATV.

32  
33       The Board started by taking a roll call vote and stating if they were alone.

34  
35       *Roll call vote: Selectman Brew – present; Selectman Grella – present; Selectman Panasiti*  
36       *– present; Selectman D'Angelo – present; and Chairman Lyon – present. All noted*  
37       *themselves as being alone.*  
38

39       **2. Citizen's Forum – none.**

40  
41       **3. Scheduled Appointments**

42           **3.1. Revaluation Update - Michael Tarello and Stephen Whalen, Vision**  
43           **Government Solutions**

44 Mike Tarello explained that he is currently working on putting the inspection and permitting  
45 information into the database. The residential rates will then be set. He has gone through the  
46 sales and sorted them into qualified/unqualified. Sales are considered qualified if they have  
47 been exposed to the market and are good indicators of the market value. Single-family sales  
48 are at 76% of market value to start. Condo sales are at 72-73% of market value, and vacant  
49 land is at 78% of market value. Commercial/industrial properties are at 86% of market value.

50  
51 Mike Tarello stated that once all properties have been qualified, they will be analyzed.  
52 Property values are analyzed using a variety of factors, such as style, age, land size of  
53 property, etc. The goal is to bring all properties up to 100%. New cost rates will then be set.  
54 Currently the cost rate looks to be approximately \$75/square foot for an average residential  
55 property. The market says this rate should be within the \$110-115 range. He noted that  
56 construction costs have gone up quite a bit in the last five years. Ranges will vary amid types  
57 of properties.

58  
59 Mike Tarello explained that the sales data analyzed is from April 1, 2020, to April 1, 2021 for  
60 residential homes. He needed to use two years of vacant land sale data going back to April 1,  
61 2019, as there was not enough land sales from one year to complete the analysis for vacant  
62 land. He noted that the State of NH Department of Revenue uses data from September 1,  
63 2020, to August 30, 2021 to establish the ratio of sale price to assessment, which could lead to  
64 some differences in the calculation of the ratio post Revaluation.

65  
66 In response to a question from Chairman Lyon, Mike Tarello stated that he would try to  
67 include sales data through the end of May 2021 in their analysis.

68  
69 Steve Whalen stated that the field review will soon be complete. During the field review,  
70 employees drive by properties and verify if it matches the record card. There appear to be only  
71 small changes based on the field review.

72  
73 Mike Tarello stated that the process is on schedule and that hearing notices should be sent out  
74 by late July.

75  
76 Selectman Brew explained that the specific value of one's property is not as important in this  
77 process as how it relates to other properties in Amherst. He asked if there could be a  
78 percentage shared with taxpayers, so that one could determine what the difference might be in  
79 property taxes based on this revaluation.

80  
81 Mike Tarello explained that the hearings will break out the percentage changes for properties  
82 in terms of style, neighborhood, etc.

83  
84 In response to a question from Selectman Grella, Mike Tarello explained that market value is  
85 determined by analyzing all the market sales that reflect the conditions of this time period for

86 sales of properties of different types. The average median sale price for this area is currently  
87 \$480,000.

88  
89 Chairman Lyon suggested putting basic information for the revaluation on the Town's  
90 website.

91  
92 In response to a question from Selectman Panasiti, Mike Tarello stated that all communities  
93 get the same starting point and that the direction from the state is standard for all.

94  
95 **3.2. Joint Facilities Advisory Committee update, Adam Steel and Victoria**  
96 **Parisi**

97 Victoria Parisi explained that the Joint Facilities Advisory Committee (JFAC) recently  
98 discussed a number of items. An RFP was sent to 10 firms, recommended by the DOE, in  
99 search of an architect. The JFAC unanimously selected Banwell Architects, of Lebanon, NH.  
100 Banwell has been hired by the Amherst School Board and will update the groups at the end of  
101 next month regarding proposed efficiencies.

102  
103 Victoria Parisi stated that a survey regarding potential future uses for the Clark School was  
104 returned with 170 responses. There seems to be an appetite for the building to remain in use to  
105 the Town, in some form. The JFAC will continue to communicate with the Town on this item.

106  
107 Victoria Parisi explained that there was site and civil work done at Wilkins School to  
108 determine where on site building can be done. Wetlands on site have been flagged. The  
109 existing soils on site will be determined through borings and test pits. The results of this work  
110 will be ready soon and will be shared with the Board.

111  
112 Selectman Brew stated that the last report was that the Clark School was in "good condition."  
113 The building is approximately 30,000 square feet, and the school is currently using most of it.  
114 He understood that it would cost approximately \$300/square foot to replace the Clark School  
115 square footage on the Wilkins site, for a total of approximately \$9M. He stated that people  
116 will probably want to better understand why this amount should be spent to replace the Clark  
117 School square footage if the building is in "good condition."

118  
119 Selectman D'Angelo stated that there will need to be analysis done as to the price needed to  
120 make the Clark School building serviceable for other uses. He noted that the school district  
121 might have to pay the Town to take the building off its hands. He will want to see how much  
122 the building is assessed for and how much will be needed for its upkeep.

123  
124 Selectman Grella stated that 170 responses to the survey is small, unfortunately. Victoria  
125 Parisi stated that this is only a starting point and that future surveys will hopefully be used.

126  
127 Adam Steele explained that no one was comfortable with the \$96M being proposed for the  
128 ballot this year, which is why it was removed, and other further studies are being sought.

129  
130 **3.3 Goldens on the Green, Sept 12, 2021, 1-3pm**

131 Town Administrator Shankle suggested that this event first go before the COVID-19  
132 Committee before being discussed by the Board, as it will be a large event. He also noted that

this was not previously discussed at the staff meeting. The Board will hear it at a future meeting.

#### **4. Administration**

##### **4.1 Updates and general information**

Jennifer Stover, of the COVID-19 Committee, stated that the group met on the 21<sup>st</sup>. Matt Conley, Fire Chief, Scott Tenney, Building Inspector/Health Officer, Perry Day, DPW, and Eric Hahn, DPW Director, discussed reopening the Swap Shop at the Transfer Station. The group decided to continue to hold off on reopening the Swap Shop until at least June 30<sup>th</sup>. The air quality is currently being tested in all Town buildings. The Library already has its results and they are very positive. The Committee is requesting that a form for vaccination status of employees be used. This form will not be required, but employees will be able to share this information if they choose. The group will meet again prior to June 18, 2021.

In response to a question from Selectman Panasiti, Jennifer Stover stated that the decision to continue requiring masks at the Transfer Station was made in order to be consistent across Town buildings and to err on the side of caution.

Selectman Panasiti stated that mandates have been relaxed across the State and he would like to see similar updates in Town for outdoor venues.

Chairman Lyon agreed with erring on the side of caution, but also echoed the idea that the Town should continue to push itself to get back to a sense of normalcy. He explained that outdoor venues, such as the Transfer Station, are the perfect place to start moving towards this.

Town Administrator Shankle stated that a Voter's Guide will be sent to every mailing address in Town by Thursday. Copies will also be available at the Library and Town Hall.

Town Administrator Shankle stated that DES has updated the Town that the State is teetering on the edge of widespread drought. DES is requesting that customers try to conserve water.

Town Administrator Shankle stated that the July 4<sup>th</sup> Committee met last Sunday and agreed to stay the course already decided on and move forward with the reverse parade.

Selectman Panasiti stated that he received questions from a citizen regarding using the Town Green during the holiday. Chairman Lyon explained that flags will still be put up around the Green and that the Green is open to the public. Anyone is allowed to use the area, but these activities will not be town-sponsored.

##### **4.2 Amherst Garden Club Proclamation**

Town Administrator Shankle explained that the Garden Club will be celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary on June 10<sup>th</sup>.

Chairman Lyon read the Garden Club's proclamation into the record:

178 *WHEREAS, In February of 1971, thirty-five women met to form a gardening club called The*  
179 *Gardeners, later to be known as The Amherst Garden Club, which has now grown to*  
180 *approximately 130 members; and*  
181 *WHEREAS the Club maintains town gardens at the Town Hall, the Library, the Police*  
182 *Department, and many other sites around Town; and*  
183 *WHEREAS, the Club gives support to local projects providing education, resources*  
184 *and networking opportunities to promote the love of gardening, civic landscaping,*  
185 *and environmental responsibility; and*  
186 *WHEREAS, the Club has given out over \$50,000 in scholarships to local students to*  
187 *encourage environmental studies.*  
188 *NOW, THEREFORE, in recognition of the 50th Anniversary of the Amherst Garden*  
189 *Club, the Board of Selectmen, on behalf of ourselves and the Town of Amherst,*  
190 *hereby extends congratulations and gratitude to all past and present members of*  
191 *the Club and our best wishes for the Club's future success.*

192  
193 *A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo to*  
194 *approve and sign the proclamation.*  
195 *By roll call vote: Selectman Brew – aye; Selectman D'Angelo – aye; Selectman Grella – aye;*  
196 *Selectman Panasiti – aye; Chairman Lyon – aye. 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*

## 197 198 **5. Staff Reports**

### 199 **5.1. Communication Center – New employee step/grad classification**

200 This item was tabled until the Board's next meeting.  
201

### 202 **5.2 Repainting Cross Walks/Stop Bars adding yield lines to Cross Walks**

203 DPW Director, Eric Hahn, explained that the DPW published and received bids for repainting  
204 cross walks and stop bars and adding yield lines to unguarded cross walks (shark's teeth.) Last  
205 summer all obsolete style crosswalks were ground off and repainted according to Manual of  
206 Uniform Traffic Control Device (MUTCD) Standards. This summer DPW desires to add  
207 further MUTCD enhancements for unguarded crosswalks. These crosswalks are those that are  
208 typically, mid-block, similar to the one crossing Boston Post Road at Wilkin's School.  
209

210 The Board discussed the number of bids received for this project and the fact that one of the  
211 bidders did not bid according to the specifications.  
212

213 *A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to award*  
214 *Highway Safety the contract for repainting Crosswalks and Stop Bars and adding yield lines*  
215 *to unguarded crosswalks in the amount of \$10,580, and to encumber any unspent funds as of*  
216 *June 30th from the award into FY22.*

217 *By roll call vote: Selectman Brew – aye; Selectman D'Angelo – aye; Selectman Grella – aye;*  
218 *Selectman Panasiti – aye; Chairman Lyon – aye. 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*  
219

### 220 **5.3 Amherst St reconstruction & bike/ped path**

221 Eric Hahn explained that, after meeting with the contractor, there is a fairly long lead time for  
222 the reconstruction of Amherst Street to begin. Instead of starting the project and needing to  
223 delay it, he is requesting to encumber the funds for this project into the next fiscal year.  
224

In response to a question from Selectman D'Angelo, Eric Hahn stated that the long lead time was discovered because the reconstruction and side path projects together lead to an increased number of drainage structures. These projects will still be completed by the end of this construction season.

*A MOTION was made by Selectman Panasiti and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo that the balance of encumbered funds on June 30th, contained in 01-4312-90-9800 be re-encumbered into FY22 for Amherst St. reconstruction.*

Discussion:

*Town Administrator Shankle stated that if the Board does not indicate that it is willing to encumber these funds, then it needs to do something else with this project. The exact amount of money to be encumbered can be decided on later, but this needs to be re-encumbered in order to move forward.*

*Selectman Panasiti amended his motion to read that the Board is willing to encumber the balance of encumbered funds on June 30th, contained in 01-4312-90-9800 be re-encumbered into FY22 for Amherst St. reconstruction. Selectman D'Angelo SECONDED the amended motion.*

*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.*

#### **5.4 Heating Oil & Propane bid, jointly with SAU39**

Town Administrator Shankle stated that the Town tried to tie into the school bid for heating oil and propane but there are questions regarding the bidders and where the bid was posted. He explained that the SAU added the Town onto the bid, and thus the Town-portion of the bid only could be rejected.

Selectman Brew stated that he would like for any bids for Town projects to be placed in a certain area on the Town website that could be easily found by any interested potential bidders.

Selectman D'Angelo stated that part of the problem was that the DPW did not run the bidding process for this item and thus the vendors were chosen by the SAU. He suggested that the Town have a discussion with the SAU about future joint bid items.

Chairman Lyon agreed that the Town could get more visibility for its projects if there is a single place on the Town website to post bids. He suggested that the Town look at its purchasing policy to see if its adequate or if a new process is needed.

*A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Brew to reject the Town portion of the bid for heating oil and propane.*

*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.*



**5.5 Accountant Job Description Review** – *This item was moved to later in the meeting.*

**5.6 Expenditure Status Update** – *This item was moved to later in the meeting.*

## **6. Approvals**

### **6.1 Petition and Pole License PSNH#: 21-1564**

*A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to approve the Petition and Pole License PSNH#: 21-1564 for placement of a utility pole on MERRIMACK RD, BOSTON POST RD, THORNTON FERRY RD and to authorize the Board of Selectmen to sign the document on behalf of the Town of Amherst.*

*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.*

### **6.2 Assessing - July 2021 Tax Warrant**

*A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to approve and sign the July 2021 Tax Warrant in the amount of \$24,970,108.*

*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 Baboosic Lake Community Septic Warrants**

*A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to approve and sign the July 2021 Baboosic Lake Community Septic Warrants as follows:*

*Phase I \$ 2,014.08*

*Phase II \$ 5,444.75*

*Phase III \$ 6,633.58*

*Phase IV \$ 4,725.23*

*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.*

### **6.4 AP, Payroll and Minutes Approval**

*A MOTION was made by Selectman D’Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to approve one (1) FY21 Payroll Manifest in the amount of \$218,704.93 dated May 6, 2021, 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 \$219,273.16 dated May 20, 2021, 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 \$575,572.49 dated January 19, 2021, subject to review and audit (NH DMV).*

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 \$3,024,202.00 dated March 16, 2021, 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 Panasiti and SECONDED by Selectman D’Angelo to approve the Board of Selectmen meeting minutes of May 10, 2021, as amended.

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.

### **5.5 Accountant Job Description Review – The Board retook this item at this time**

Laurie May, Finance Director, explained that Pat Walz, Finance Assistant, has given her notice. In hiring for the position, Laurie May stated that she would like to change it to an Accountant position and add skills in Fixed Assets.

Town Administrator Shankle noted that this will upgrade the position and there is a new job description proposed. Chairman Lyon explained that there is money currently in the budget for this upgraded position.

Selectman D’Angelo stated that, as there are only two people in the Finance Department, it would be a good idea for the Town to seek someone fully qualified for this position.

In response to a question from Selectman Grella regarding offering the new position to Pat Walz, Town Administrator Shankle noted that Pat Walz is semi-retiring.

A MOTION was made by Selectman D’Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to approve the revised Accountant Job Description, and to also move to allow advertising to hire for the Accountant position.

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 Panasiti to accept, with regret, Pat Walz’s resignation as Finance Assistant.

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.

### **5.6 Expenditure Status Update – The Board retook this item at this time**

The Board reviewed revenues and expenditures of FY21 to date. Legal and Animal Control are over budget. On the revenue side, motor vehicle fees are down and building permits are up. Other State Revenue includes the State Covid-19 Grants in the amount of \$260,000. On the expenditure side, many budgets have more than the 17% remaining, such as planning and welfare.



365       **7. Action Items**

366       The Board reviewed its action items.

367  
368       **8. Old/New Business**

369       Selectman Brew stated that the Master Plan Steering Committee had its first meeting with  
370       Resilience Planning, in regard to updating the Master Plan. The committee will be meeting at  
371       6:30 PM on the third Monday of each month through the end of the year, and the public is  
372       welcome to attend any meeting

373  
374       Selectman D'Angelo reminded everyone that the Meet the Candidates Night will take place  
375       tomorrow night at 7pm via Zoom.

376  
377       Chairman Lyon reminded everyone the Town Voting will take place on June 8, 2021. The  
378       Board will meet next on June 14, 2021.

379  
380       The group thanked Selectman Panasiti for his years of service on the Board.

381  
382       *A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Grella to*  
383       *adjourn the meeting at 8:41pm.*

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

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389       **NEXT MEETING: Monday, June 14, 2021**

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393       \_\_\_\_\_  
394       *Selectman Reed Panasiti*

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