



# **Town of Amherst, NH**

## **BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES**

**Barbara Landry Meeting Room**  
**2 Main Street**  
**Monday, July 12, 2021, 6:30PM**

1       **1. Call to Order**

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

3  
4       Attendees: Chairman Peter Lyon, Selectman Dwight Brew, Selectman John D'Angelo,  
5       Selectman Danielle Pray, and Selectman Tom Grella.

6       Also present: Town Administrator Dean Shankle, and Recording Secretary Kristan Patenaude

7  
8       **2. Pledge of Allegiance** – led by Bill Stoughton.

9  
10      **3. Citizen's Forum**

11      Victoria Parisi introduced herself to the Board as the newly elected Amherst School Board  
12      member and liaison to the Board of Selectmen. She noted that Board members and the public  
13      are welcome to reach her at [vparisi@sau39.org](mailto:vparisi@sau39.org). She stated that Tom Gauthier is the newly  
14      elected Amherst School Board Chair and Josh Conklin is the Recreation liaison from the  
15      Amherst School Board. She explained that the Amherst School Board will continue to update  
16      the various Town boards and commissions regarding information about the Wilkins School  
17      site.

18  
19      **4. Scheduled Appointments**

20      **4.1. 2021 Revaluation Update - Michael Tarello and Stephen Whalen of Vision**  
21      **Government Solutions**

22      Mike Tarello and Stephen Whalen joined the Board via Zoom. Mike Tarello explained that  
23      they have completed the residential analysis of land and buildings for single-family,  
24      condominiums, etc. They have brought the values to 100%. These were adjusted based on  
25      land values, building costs, building sizes, and neighborhoods. This information has been  
26      reviewed with the assessors. Informal hearings will be set for August and the process should  
27      be finalized by the end of August.

28  
29      In response to a question from Selectman Brew, Mike Tarello explained that all of the  
30      properties in Amherst have been adjusted to values of 100% but this information is not yet  
31      available to the public. By the end of next week, notices should be sent out and the website  
32      will be updated with this information for the public to view. All of the work will be completed  
33      before the tax rate needs to be set, which is towards the end of October.

34  
35      **4.2 ACC, Proposed Open Space Advisory Committee**

36      Bill Stoughton, of the Amherst Conservation Commission (ACC), joined the Board to discuss  
37      the proposed formation of an Open Space Advisory Committee. He stated that the ACC  
38      believes there is a benefit to the Town to have a subcommittee advising the ACC and Board of

39 Selectmen on the procedure of acquiring open space and which parcels to consider. This is  
40 proposed to be a subcommittee of the Board of Selectmen and is also proposed to be made up  
41 of six members (one Board of Selectmen, one ACC, one Planning Board, and three citizens –  
42 one hopefully from a private land trust in Town). He reviewed the draft charter for the  
43 subcommittee with the Board. The intention of the ACC in this proposal is to take a sense of  
44 the Town in choosing and recommending parcels to the ACC and Board of Selectmen. This  
45 subcommittee would be advisory only and approving this subcommittee would make no  
46 change to the State mandated process that the Town will follow when acquiring land.

47  
48 Selectman Grella noted that boards/commissions usually have an odd number of people on  
49 them, but that the proposed number is probably okay, as this is an advisory subcommittee  
50 only.

51  
52 Selectman D'Angelo stated that he believes the Open Space Warrant Article laid out the  
53 process for acquiring open space quite well. He does not understand where this subcommittee  
54 fits into that process.

55  
56 Bill Stoughton explained that this subcommittee would advise both the ACC and Board of  
57 Selectmen. The ACC believes this subcommittee would be helpful as a second set of eyes in  
58 the process. The subcommittee would be purely advisory because the ACC believes there is a  
59 good process in place, but also wants to maintain public support of this process.

60  
61 Selectman D'Angelo stated that he is not sure this subcommittee would add value to the  
62 process. He could understand if members of the public advised the ACC regarding specific  
63 parcels of interest, and then the ACC brought that info before the Board of Selectmen.

64  
65 Selectman Pray suggested that two members of the ACC may be a better makeup for the  
66 subcommittee.

67  
68 In response to a question from Selectman Brew, Bill Stoughton explained that the ACC Chair  
69 and Vice Chair will be the ones to reach out to landowners regarding potential acquisition.  
70 Bill Stoughton stated that he believes the subcommittee and entire ACC would be brought on  
71 board for a discussion if an acquisition was growing closer. Some of these meetings would  
72 potentially happen in non-public session, so as to keep pricing confidential at first. Bill  
73 Stoughton stated that he believes pricing information would be made available to the public if  
74 the ACC makes a recommendation to move an acquisition forward from preliminary  
75 discussions with a tentative agreement in place.

76  
77 Selectman Brew explained that he has concerns about where this subcommittee would fit into  
78 the process as well. He is concerned that it might make the process less efficient.

79  
80 Chairman Lyon noted that this subcommittee might make the process less nimble, but that it  
81 would add value to the process by being a sounding board of people outside of the Board of  
82 Selectmen and ACC.

83  
84 Bill Stoughton explained that some examples of questions that might be asked to the  
85 subcommittee are: is it better off for the Town to look at acquiring a single large parcel of

land, or several parcels located throughout Town? Should the Town focus on acquiring land in one certain area of Town, and, if so, which area? He stated that there is a benefit in involving people who know the history of prior bond procedures in Town. While the ACC believes a good process is in place, it does not want to recommend properties to the Board of Selectmen with blinders on.

Selectman Brew stated that if the community is going to be involved upfront and help come up with filters to evaluate potential properties, there could be value to this subcommittee.

*A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman Pray to approve the recommendation of the Open Space Advisory Committee.*

*Voting: 4-1-0; motion carried.*

#### **4.3 Walnut Hollow Farm, Ashley and Jarroh Dunnick, Speed Bump request for Walnut Hill Road**

Ashley and Jarroh Dunnick joined the Board. Jarroh Dunnick stated that Walnut Hill Road has a 30mph speed limit, but that the road is dangerous with blind corners and some areas that are only wide enough for one vehicle to pass at a time. Even at that speed, the road is not safe. Many locals walk and bike along the road, but some use it as a seasonal cut through to Baboosic Lake. While the Police Department has been informed of this issue and has doubled their patrols, it does not deter those unfamiliar with the area from speeding. He is requesting that two seasonable speed bumps be installed along the road. These would be able to be removed for plowing in the winter. He noted that there are letters from nearby neighbors also supporting this suggestion. He is concerned with the safety of those using the road, including his family.

In response to a question from Chairman Lyon, Jarroh Dunnick stated that this is a year-round issue that is sometimes worse in the winter due to slick road conditions.

Chairman Lyon explained that the issue is that the speed limit on the road seems to be unsafe. He stated that the lowest the speed limit could be posted on this road is 25mph, and that would only be after a traffic study is completed. He suggested sending this item to the Highway Safety Committee for review.

The Board agreed to refer this item to the Highway Safety Committee and contact the Dunnick's when the item is brought back before the Board with a recommendation.

### **5. Board Discussion- Board, Commission and Committee Appointments**

#### **5.1 Applications for Board, Committees and Commissions**

*A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo to appoint Tom Christensen as a full member, and John Harvey and Wendy Rannenberg as alternate members, of the Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee, with terms expiring 2024.*

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

131 *A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo to*  
132 *appoint Victor Bennison and Lee Gilman as full members, and Bill Widmer and Mike Cohen*  
133 *as alternate members, of the Amherst Conservation Commission, with terms expiring 2024.*  
134 *Voting: 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*

135  
136 *A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo to*  
137 *appoint John Bement and Gordon Zuerndorfer as full members, and Lauren Zuerndorfer as*  
138 *an alternate member, of the Heritage Commission, with terms expiring 2024.*  
139 *Voting: 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*

140  
141 *A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo to*  
142 *appoint Chris Buchanan as a full member of the Historic District Commission, with a term*  
143 *expiring 2024.*  
144 *Voting: 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*

145  
146 *A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo to*  
147 *appoint William Cassidy as an alternate member of the Library Board of Trustees, with a*  
148 *term expiring 2022.*  
149 *Voting: 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*

150  
151 *A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo to*  
152 *appoint Patrick Daniel as a full member of the Recreation Commission, with a term expiring*  
153 *2024.*  
154 *Voting: 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*

155  
156 *A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo to*  
157 *appoint Seth Potter as a full member of the Road & Bridge Commission, with a term expiring*  
158 *2024.*  
159 *Voting: 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*

160  
161 *A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo to*  
162 *appoint Dick Lefebvre and William Dunn as alternate members of the Trustees of the Trust*  
163 *Fund, with terms expiring 2022.*  
164 *Voting: 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*

165  
166 Selectman Brew explained that Amherst is entitled to have three members on the Nashua  
167 Regional Planning Board. The Amherst Planning Board will nominate a citizen and bring it  
168 before the Board of Selectmen at a future meeting.

## 169 **6. Administration**

### 170 **6.1 Administrative Updates**

171 Town Administrator Shankle explained that he is still working on the kinks for hybrid  
172 meetings. He also explained that the Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee was able to  
173 apply for the RAISE grant in time.

### 174 **6.2 Planning Board request regarding intersections**

Selectman Brew, ex-officio to the Planning Board, explained that the Planning Board often asks developers to do traffic studies in Town. Some of those studies have shown that there are a number of intersections that are set to fail in the future. The Planning Board will often ask developers to contribute a proportionate amount for their part in finding a solution for these failures. However, developers often ask what the solution will be, and the Town is yet unclear on that. The Planning Board believes it is reasonable to ask Town Administrator Shankle and Community Development Director, Nic Strong, to consult with the Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) to see what next possible steps are.

Nic Strong explained that intersections located at Boston Post Road, Foundry, Main Street, and Amherst Street, are all slated to fail by 2030, even with a no-build situation. Failure, in this case, means the number of seconds someone in the intersection would have to wait would reduce the level of service at that intersection. An engineering study could show the existing conditions and outline possible improvements. Impact fees collected from new developments and offsite improvement funds could be used to pay for these improvements. An engineering study is not currently funded in the budget, but there is money in the Community Development budget for an “outside hire” that could be used.

Selectman Grella noted that an NRPC traffic study from 2014 identified a number of alternate possibilities, but it was determined that nothing could be substantively done to alleviate traffic problems in the Village.

Selectman D’Angelo agreed with asking NRPC what it would recommend for next steps. He also noted that he has been speaking with DPW Director, Eric Hahn, regarding the number of stop signs located around the Village. It may be possible to improve traffic in some way by removing or moving some of these stop signs. He suggested that this item also be brought forth to NRPC.

The Board agreed to allow Eric Hahn, Nic Strong, and Town Administrator Shankle to speak with NRPC about possible next steps on the intersections and stop signs.

### **6.3 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) discussion**

Town Administrator Shankle explained that the ARPA gives municipalities funds based on population numbers. Amherst is set to get \$1.2M from ARPA. These funds can only be used for specific items. One of these potential items is “Negative Economic Impacts.” Using funds for this item would require showing that some businesses in Town suffered economic hard due to COVID-19, and a program to target this economic harm. He is proposing a short four-month study be done to assess these potential impacts. This would require hiring two part-time researchers, mapping items, and general administrative overhead, totaling approximately \$25,000. A second item that these funds could be used for is mitigation of air quality issues in Town buildings. This is currently being worked on by Eric Hahn and can also be moved forward.

Selectman Brew agreed with the suggestions and noted that grant money should be used for the highest priority items that the Town can use it for.



In response to a question from Selectman Brew, Town Administrator Shankle explained that the process will involve data gathering, such as identifying businesses that may have been impacted, hosting focus groups, and speaking to the Chamber of Commerce. The ARPA funds must be committed by 2023 and spent by 2024.

Selectman Brew stated that he hopes the funds can also be used to be forward-thinking and look at what can be done to make businesses and the Town stronger in case of similar future events.

Town Administrator Shankle explained that the Town will receive \$563,000 once the funds are applied for and a similar amount one year later. The Town must then show proof that the money was spent on the proper items.

In response to a question from Selectman Pray, Town Administrator Shankle stated that the ARPA funds can also be used for water and sewer infrastructure items, but the Town has neither of these. The funds could also be used to expand broadband capabilities in Town.

Chairman Lyon agreed with the suggestions and noted that the Town can begin the process of identifying businesses that have been impacted but could then change directions if a different item has more value to it. He noted that the Town should not overlook the importance of expanding its broadband capabilities, if possible.

*A MOTION was made by Selectman Pray and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo to approve an initial budget of \$25,000 using ARPA funds. This would be primarily to hire two part time researchers for \$16,000 (\$20/ hr. for 25 hours each week, for 16 weeks); \$6,000 for GIS mapping services and \$3,000 for general administrative overhead (paper, copying, etc.) to research to what extent economic harm has been done to Amherst businesses involved in the tourism, travel and hospitality sectors and develop draft program ideas on how to address these issues with ARPA funds.*

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

## **7. Staff Reports**

### **7.1 Auction of used equipment**

Town Administrator Shankle explained that Recreation Director, Craig Fraley, would like to auction off unused equipment. Any money made is requested to be returned into the Recreation Revolving Fund that was used to purchase the items originally.

Chairman Lyon noted that the equipment includes four paddleboards and one tractor that was purchased for Buck Meadow using the Revolving Fund and funds from the ACC. Any funds for the tractor are requested to be split respectfully between these two accounts. A similar auction of items was completed by the Recreation Commission last year, and Town Counsel determined it was appropriate for funds to be put back into the accounts used to originally purchase the items.

*A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo to allow the Recreation Department to auction off four stand-up paddleboards and a John Deere*

Tractor through Municibid.com. Any money collected from the sale will be put back into the funds where they were purchased from.

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

## **7.2 Swap Shop and Book Swap Volunteer Appointments**

DPW Director Hahn explained that the Swap Shop reopened last Saturday, and the Book Shop will reopen this Saturday. He would like the volunteers that run these shops to be recognized and appointed by the Board.

*A MOTION was made by Selectman Grella and SECONDED by Selectman Pray to recognize and appoint Judith Seavey, Jan Gleason and Jacqueline Daley as volunteers for the Swap Shop for a term of three years commencing today, and to recognize and appoint Faye and Joe O'Neill as volunteers for the Book Swap for a term of three years also commencing today, July 12th, 2021.*

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

## **8. Approvals**

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

*A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Pray to approve the 2021 MS-232 Form for the FY22 fiscal year.*

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

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

*A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Pray to approve one (1) FY21 Payroll Manifest in the amount of \$235,350.53 dated July 1, 2021, subject to review and audit.*

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

*A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Pray to approve one (1) FY21 Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$127, 095.79 dated July 6, 2021, subject to review and audit.*

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

*A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Pray to approve one (1) FY21 Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$324,341.80 dated July 6, 2021, subject to review and audit.*

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

*A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Pray to approve one (1) FY21Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$3,176,200.00 dated July 1, 2021, subject to review and audit (School disbursements).*

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

*A MOTION was made by Selectman Pray and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo to approve the Board of Selectmen meeting minutes of June 28, 2021, as amended.*

*Voting: 4-0-1 motion carried.*

316  
317 **9. Action Items**

318 The Board reviewed its action items.  
319

320 **10. Old/New Business**

321 Selectman Pray noted that State Senator Daniels will come before the Board at a future  
322 meeting to speak on municipal items.  
323

324 Town Administrator Shankle noted that the Planning Board's August 4<sup>th</sup> meeting will be held  
325 at Souhegan High School. The Town is hoping to make it a hybrid meeting.  
326

327 *A MOTION was made by Selectman Grella and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo to*  
328 *adjourn the meeting at 8:15pm.*

329 *Voting: 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*  
330  
331

332  
333 **NEXT MEETING: Monday, July 26, 2021**  
334  
335

336  
337 \_\_\_\_\_  
338 *Selectman Danielle Pray*

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