



Town of Amherst, NH
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES
Barbara Landry Meeting Room
2 Main Street
Monday, January 11, 2021 6:30PM

1 **1. Call to Order**

2 Chairman Peter Lyon called the meeting to order at 6:29 p.m.

3
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, Matt
9 Seiler, Bill Loscocco, Scott Tuthill, Jim Kuhnert, and Mike Parisi.

10
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
19 Utilizing Zoom teleconferencing for this meeting. All members of the Board have the
20 ability to communicate during the meeting through this platform and the public has access
21 to contemporaneously listen and if necessary, participate in the meeting by dialing +1 312
22 626 6799 and using a webinar ID of 817-9992-3077 or by using the link contained in the
23 agenda posted at amherstnh.gov.

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

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

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

36

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

40
41 **2. Public Hearing on Bond Authority over \$100,000**

42 **2.1 Pursuant to New Hampshire RSA 33:8-a, the Amherst Board of**
43 **Selectmen hereby announces to the citizens of Amherst the**
44 **convening of a Public Hearing to take input on the proposed FY21**
45 **Town Operating Budget, bonds and notes, and proposed warrant**
46 **articles.**

47
48 *A MOTION was made by Selectman Panasiti and SECONDED by Selectman D’Angelo to*
49 *enter into a Public Hearing to hear and present the bond item, according to RSA 33:8-a.*
50 *By roll call vote: Selectman Brew – aye; Selectman D’Angelo – aye; Selectman Grella – aye;*
51 *Selectman Panasiti – aye; Chairman Lyon – aye. 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*

52
53 Chairman Lyon read Warrant Article 22:

54 *ARTICLE 22: Open Space Acquisition Bond*

55 *Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of six million dollars (\$6,000,000.00) to*
56 *purchase land and easements or other property interests within the Town of Amherst for*
57 *conservation purposes, and to authorize the Board of Selectmen to issue bonds or notes up to*
58 *six million dollars (\$6,000,000.00) in compliance with provisions of the Municipal Finance*
59 *Act (RSA 33:1 et seq., as amended); provided, however, that notwithstanding anything herein*
60 *to the contrary, the Town shall not issue more than three million dollars (\$3,000,000.00) of*
61 *bonds or notes in any one fiscal year; to authorize the Selectmen to negotiate and determine*
62 *the rate of interest thereon and the maturity and other terms thereof, and to take any other*
63 *action they deem appropriate to effectuate the sale and/or issuance of said bonds or notes,*
64 *however, no such bonds or notes shall be issued with a term of maturity of less than ten (10)*
65 *years or more than twenty (20) years, furthermore, to authorize the Selectmen to acquire said*
66 *property exercising their authority under RSA 41:14-a, and additionally to raise and*
67 *appropriate the sum of Two Hundred Forty Thousand Dollars (\$240,000.00) for the first year*
68 *interest and costs. Land or property interests to be purchased with bond proceeds shall total*
69 *not more than 800 acres and shall be acquired in the name of the Town as conservation land*
70 *to be managed by the Conservation Commission pursuant to RSA 36-A:4, to protect and limit*
71 *the future use of, or otherwise conserve and properly utilize open spaces and other land and*
72 *water areas. The authorization to borrow provided hereunder shall not lapse until June 30,*
73 *2026. (Tax impact = \$0.14) (3/5 Vote Required)*

74
75 Chairman Lyon explained that this warrant article seeks \$6M, with the provision to remove
76 \$3M/year to borrow funds for land acquisitions. The warrant article also seeks \$240,000 for
77 the first year to deal with any associated interest and costs. The warrant article limits the
78 amount of land to be purchased to not more than 800 acres. The land shall be purchased in the
79 name of the Town and managed by the Amherst Conservation Commission (ACC). This
80 warrant article will lapse in June 2026. The ACC brought forth this article as a way to
81 preserve open space and water quality for the Town.

82

83 Rob Clemens, Chair of the ACC, and ACC Commissioners, Jared Hardner and Bill
84 Stoughton, joined the meeting. Rob Clemens noted that the preliminary results from the
85 Master Plan Survey are indicative of the Town's support for open space and conservation. So
86 far there have been 1,641 responses to the survey. The #1 ranked reason that people stated
87 they moved to Amherst was for the safe environment (thought to be items such as low crime
88 rate and high-quality drinking water). The #2 reason listed was open space and conservation
89 land in Town (78% strongly agreed/agreed). The #1 ranked priority of townspeople noted was
90 to secure and preserve water resources in Town (85% highest/high priority). The #2 ranked
91 priority was to maintain the rural character of Town (83% highest/high priority). Both of these
92 priorities rely on the conservation of open space in Town.

93

94 Rob Clemens explained that that residents also noted on the survey that 92% of them want to
95 protect open space and natural resources, 93% of them want to protect the Town's aquifers,
96 and 91% want to conserve the natural areas in Town. He explained that most of the current
97 open space in Town is actually privately owned and vulnerable to development. The only
98 feasible option is to acquire open space in Town, in order to achieve the residents' top
99 priorities.

100

101 Rob Clemens stated that the ACC wants to be sensitive to taxpayers, and thus is
102 recommending dropping the maximum amount spent through this Warrant Article in any
103 given year from \$3M to \$2M. This will reduce the impact to taxpayers by about 1/3. This will
104 not allow the Town to purchase some of the largest parcels available in Town but will still
105 allow for significant acquisitions.

106

107 Selectman Brew stated that he is in support of the Warrant Article. He noted that dropping the
108 maximum amount per year from \$3M to \$2M will make the proposed bond more affordable to
109 taxpayers, while also ruling out some of the largest parcels to purchase in a single chunk. He
110 is in support of reducing this amount.

111

112 Selectman D'Angelo stated that he is in support of the Warrant Article. He believes it is a
113 good plan for the Town to have this money in hand to purchase properties as they become
114 available. He believes some of the largest properties in Town are probably more than \$2M,
115 and so he believes, if the Town wants to preserve those, the amount should be capped at \$3M.
116 For example, the Hazen property that was for sale a few years ago, could maybe have been
117 purchased by the Town if this bond was available at that time. He supports leaving the
118 Warrant Article as written.

119

120 Selectman Grella stated that he believes the \$2M cap is a good idea.

121

122 Selectman Panasiti stated that he supports the Warrant Article and believes the cap could be
123 argued to be at either amount. He suggested letting the citizens have a say in the cap amount.

124

125 Chairman Lyon stated that he is in favor of the Warrant Article. He would support either cap
126 amount. He would like for there to be more money available for acquisitions, but also knows
127 it's important not to overtax the citizens. He opened the meeting for public comment.

128

129 Public Comment:

130 Sherie Dowsett, 20 Old Coach Lane, stated that she is in favor of this Warrant Article. She has
131 lived here for 12 years and moved here for the rural nature of the area. She uses the
132 conservation land every day and believes it's an amazing feature to have at the doorstep. She
133 is concern about the development she has seen happening around Town. She doesn't want the
134 Town to lose its rural identity. She believes this Warrant Article is forward thinking and will
135 allow the Town to preserve open space.

136
137 Arnie Rosenblatt, 8 Hubbard Road, Chairman of the Planning Board, but speaking for
138 himself, stated that he has lived in Town for 33 years. He believes this Warrant Article makes
139 all the sense in the world. He explained that, without the Town's ability to buy open space, the
140 Planning Board's ability is very limited to minimize development. As a citizen, he loves
141 seeing open space around Town. This is certainly a need versus a want for the Town.

142
143 Mike Akillian, 10 Old Mont Vernon Road, is heartily in support of this Warrant Article. He
144 questioned, of all the land in Town that could be acquired, what percentage is in excess of
145 \$2M. He believes the Town has lost important opportunities in the past to acquire land
146 because certain mechanisms were missing, and the Town had to wait until Town Meeting to
147 approve purchases. He believes lowering the cap to \$2M is an okay idea, but if there are
148 significant parcels over \$2M developers may be able to operate more quickly than the Town.

149
150 Bill Stoughton noted that he looked at all land in current use and that has sold in the past few
151 years and found that there has been in upward trend in the price of land since 2010. Land in
152 Town is currently about \$10-12,000/acre. If the Warrant Article has a cap of \$2M, this should
153 allow the Town to purchase around 180-200 acres of land.

154
155 Sally Wilkins, 28 Green Road, stated that she is in support of the proposed Warrant Article.
156 She questioned if the ACC/Town has, as part of this Warrant Article, looking into the funding
157 of the due diligence needed prior to purchasing open space, such as survey and legal work.

158
159 Rob Clemens explained that the ACC has a Conservation Fund that can be used to fund the
160 necessary due diligence. Bill Stoughton noted that the Warrant Article is also worded to create
161 funds (\$240,000) to cover some of the prep costs to acquire land, if needed.

162
163 Will Ludt, 3 School Street, stated that he is fully in support of this Warrant Article. He
164 believes the Town lost an opportunity with the Hazen property and likes the idea of the Town
165 being proactive. He also noted that bonds are probably at their lowest cost now. He questioned
166 why there is an 800-acre limit proposed.

167
168 Bill Stoughton explained that Town Counsel advised the ACC to put parameters on the
169 Warrant Article in terms of the authority, the purpose, and the amounts for the proposal. If the
170 average current cost of land is about \$10,000/acre, 600 acres of land would cost the Town
171 about \$6M. The proposed Warrant Article looks for a max of slightly more acreage. If this
172 Warrant Article is approved and the Town finds a piece of land that bumps against this 800-
173 acre max, the ACC can always ask the Town for additional authority to purchase more.

174
175 Rolf Vanbibber, 83 Christian Hill Road, stated that he supports the proposed Warrant Article
176 and that the Master Plan Survey results speak for themselves.

177 In response to a question from Jim Kuhnert, of the Ways & Means Committee, Chairman
178 Lyon stated that this Warrant Article looks to purchase land in the name of the Town, to be
179 managed by the ACC. The ACC will seek parcels that will allow public access. Areas with
180 public access will allow some work on behalf of the ACC/Town, but most of this is at a
181 minimum cost and done through volunteer hours. The costs associated are often offset through
182 donated materials and money previously set aside in the ACC budget. Chairman Clemens
183 explained that the maintenance cost for the currently ACC managed 2,500 acres in Town is
184 minimum. Jared Hardner noted that the ACC currently manages over 30 miles of trails in
185 Town; the ACC's budget for this management is less than \$2,000/year.

186
187 In response to a question from Lisa Eastland, Bill Stoughton stated that, if the Warrant Article
188 cap is lowered to \$2M, the cost to the average \$360,000 house in Town would be about
189 \$33/year.

190
191 In response to a question from Chairman Brew, Lisa Eastland stated that the Ways & Means
192 Committee has discussed the Warrant Article with the changed \$2M cap, and the group's vote
193 is still 4-3-0.

194
195 Sally Wilkins noted that there are fewer than a dozen parcels in Town that are greater than
196 100 acres. Thus, the likelihood of the Town finding a parcel that is more than 800 acres is
197 mostly a non-issue.

198
199 In response to a question from Jim Kuhnert, Rob Clemens stated that, in conjunction with this
200 Warrant Article, the ACC has a list of criteria it will look at when deciding if land should be
201 acquired. There are a number of parcels in Town that align with the ACC's highest priorities
202 in terms of water and habitat protection.

203
204 *A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman Grella, as part of*
205 *the proposed Warrant Article 22, to reduce the maximum amount that can be spent in any*
206 *fiscal year from \$3M to \$2M, and to reduce the \$240,000 requested in the first year to*
207 *\$160,000.*

208
209 *Discussion:*
210 *Selectman Brew stated that, while he is unsure the amount of land the Town can purchase for*
211 *a max cap of \$2M instead of \$3M, he does understand how much land the Town can acquire*
212 *for \$0. He would rather lower the cap, in the hope that the Town will approve this Warrant*
213 *Article.*

214
215 *Selectman D'Angelo stated that, while he is not married to either cap amount, he would*
216 *rather the Board keep the cap at the higher amount and give the voters trust to purchase land*
217 *that becomes available, as the residents seem to deem this to be important.*

218
219 *Selectman Panasiti stated that there doesn't seem to be much property available in Town that*
220 *would warrant the \$3M; he agrees with lowering the cap.*

221

222 *Chairman Lyon agreed with Selectman Brew's view that he would rather the Town be able to*
223 *purchase something rather than nothing, and that the Warrant Article must be approved in*
224 *order to do so. A lowered cap amount might help this to pass.*

225

226 *By roll call vote: Selectman Brew – aye; Selectman D'Angelo – abstain; Selectman Grella –*
227 *aye; Selectman Panasiti – aye; Chairman Lyon – aye. 4-0-1; motion carried.*

228

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

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

233

234

235 **3. Public Budget Hearing**

236 **3.1 Pursuant to New Hampshire RSA 32:5, I, the Amherst Board of**
237 **Selectmen hereby announces to the citizens of Amherst the**
238 **convening of a Public Hearing to take input on the proposed FY21**
239 **Town Operating Budget, bonds and notes, and proposed warrant articles.**

240

241 *A MOTION was made by Selectman Panasiti and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo to*
242 *open the Public Hearing, according to RSA 32:5, I.*

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

245

246 Chairman Lyon read Warrant Article 23:

247 *ARTICLE 23: Operating Budget*

248 *Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including*
249 *appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the*
250 *amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the first*
251 *session, for the purposes set forth herein, totaling \$14,877,676. Should this article be defeated*
252 *the default budget shall be \$14,630,503, which is the same as last year with certain*
253 *adjustments required by previous action of the Town or by law; or the governing body may*
254 *hold one special meeting in accordance with RSA 40:13 X and XVI to take up the issue of a*
255 *revised operating budget only. This operating budget warrant article does not include*
256 *appropriations contained in any other warrant article. (Tax Impact = \$5.44) (Majority vote*
257 *required)*

258

259 Chairman Lyon stated that, per NH State Law, RSA 40:13, IX (b) "Default budget" as used in
260 this subdivision means the amount of the same appropriations as contained in the operating
261 budget authorized for the previous year, reduced and increased, as the case may be, by debt
262 service, contracts, and other obligations previously incurred or mandated by law, and reduced
263 by one-time expenditures contained in the operating budget. The default budget, as proposed
264 is \$14,630,503. Items that would not come out to form the default budget would be last year's
265 lease/purchase budget for DPW trucks.

266

267 Chairman Lyon stated that the total increase from last year's budget to this proposed budget is
268 \$261,300, or 1.79%. He reviewed the noteworthy changes to the budget, including: a

269 reduction of \$23,000 from the Souhegan Regional Landfill District budget, a reduction of
270 \$120,000 from the DPW New Equipment line, a reduction of \$68,980 from the Principal &
271 Interest Payments line, a 1.5% COLA increase of \$77,695, an increase of \$21,530 to the
272 Recreation Field Maintenance line, a \$12,000 increase to the Master Plan line, an increase of
273 \$52,000 to the Police Union Wages line, an increase of \$86,516 to the Police & Fire Group II
274 Retirement line, a \$100,000 increase to the Road Reconstruction line, and a \$15,000 increase
275 to the Pennichuck Hydrants line.

276

277 Chairman Lyon explained that, if the Default Budget is voted in, it will not include items like
278 the COLA increase, the Pennichuck Hydrants increase, the Master Plan funds, the additional
279 increase to the Road Reconstruction line, and the additional funds to the Recreation Field
280 Maintenance line.

281

282 Selectman D'Angelo stated that he voted against the proposed budget, due to the DPW items.
283 He will discuss this further when that Warrant Article comes up for discussion.

284

285 Selectman Grella urged the voters to look at the budget and, hopefully, pass it as presented.

286

287 Selectman Brew read Warrant Article 24:

288 *Shall the Town vote to establish a contingency fund for the current year, in accordance with*
289 *NH RSA Section 31:98-a, for unanticipated expenses that may arise and further to raise and*
290 *appropriate the sum of one hundred-twenty thousand dollars (\$120,000) to go into the fund.*
291 *Said sum shall come from the undesignated fund balance and no amount to be raised from*
292 *taxation. Any appropriation left in the fund at the end of the year will lapse to the general*
293 *fund. (Tax Impact = \$0.00) (Majority vote required)*

294

295 Selectman Brew explained that the Board cannot exceed the budget amount approved by the
296 voters. If a Town emergency arises during the fiscal year, such as a necessary vehicle
297 replacement or building repair, the Board can use the Contingency Fund, if approved by the
298 voters to manage such an emergency. If the voters choose not to pass this Warrant Article, the
299 Town will need to find another way to deal with such an emergency. He explained that the
300 Board has requested this Contingency Fund of the voters for the past 6-8 years. It has been
301 approved each time, and the Board has never needed to access it. If the Contingency Fund is
302 not used, the amount lapses back into the general fund.

303

304 There were no questions/comments from the Board, Ways & Means Committee, or public at
305 this time.

306

307 Selectman Grella read Warrant Article 25:

308 *ARTICLE 25: Communications Center Capital Reserve Fund*
309 *Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of twenty-five thousand dollars*
310 *(\$25,000) to be added to the Communications Center Capital Reserve Fund, previously*
311 *established. (Tax Impact = \$0.01) (Majority vote required)*

312

313 Selectman Grella noted that these funds are to support repairs and maintenance for existing
314 communications infrastructure. Approximately \$120,000 has been expended over the last
315 seven years. Anticipated replacements and upgrades include a radio console replacement in

316 2022 requiring a \$55,000 match, and a radio tower replacement in 2024 requiring an
317 estimated \$50,000 match.

318

319 There were no questions/comments from the Board, Ways & Means Committee, or public at
320 this time.

321

322 Selectman Grella read Warrant Article 26:

323 *ARTICLE 26: Assessing Revaluation Capital Reserve Fund*

324 *Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of twenty-five thousand dollars*
325 *(\$25,000) to be added to the Assessing Revaluation Capital Reserve Fund, previously*
326 *established. (Tax Impact = \$0.01) (Majority vote required)*

327

328 Selectman Grella explained that State law requires towns to perform a revaluation every 5
329 years. The Town has used this CRF to raise money each year in order to fund upcoming
330 revaluations. The purpose of a revaluation is to update property assessments to reflect market
331 value. The purpose is not to increase property taxes. The current revaluation is scheduled to
332 start in January 2021 and the December 2021 tax bill will reflect these new values.

333

334 There were no questions/comments from the Board, Ways & Means Committee, or public at
335 this time.

336

337 Selectman Panasiti read Warrant Article 27:

338 *ARTICLE 27: Service-Connected Total Disability Tax Credit*

339 *Shall the Town vote to increase the optional tax credit for Service-Connected Total Disability*
340 *on residential property occupied by a service-connected totally disabled person or their*
341 *surviving spouse from \$3,200 to \$4,000 as permitted by RSA 72:35 I-a. (Tax Impact = \$0.01)*
342 *(Majority vote required)*

343

344 Selectman Panasiti stated that this Warrant Article will be a third increase to the Service-
345 Connected Total Disability Tax Credit, from \$3,200 to the cap of \$4,000. There are currently
346 25 qualified applicants receiving this credit in Town.

347

348 There were no questions/comments from the Board, Ways & Means Committee, or public at
349 this time.

350

351 Selectman Panasiti read Warrant Article 28:

352 *ARTICLE 28: Bridge Repair and Replacement Capital Reserve Fund*

353 *Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of two hundred thousand (\$200,000) to*
354 *be added to the Bridge Repair and Replacement Capital Reserve Fund, previously*
355 *established. (Tax Impact = \$0.11) (Majority vote required) The Bridge Repair and*
356 *Replacement CRF balance: \$586,021.38 as of 11/30/2020.*

357

358 Selectman Panasiti stated that the Town completed a bridge repair in 2020 on Spring Road. In
359 FY2022 there will be a bridge repair proposed on Mont Vernon Road. This will cost
360 approximately \$1,980,000 and will be 80% State funded. There will also be a bridge repair
361 proposed in FY2023 on Thornton Ferry I Road, with the same parameters. The Town's
362 responsibility for each of these bridges will be approximately \$396,000. In the future,

363 FY2024, there will be a repair proposed on a Northern Blvd bridge with no State funding, and
364 a cost to the Town of approximately \$150,000. In FY2025, there will be a bridge repair
365 proposed on Brook Road, with 80% State funding, for a total cost of about \$960,000. In
366 FY2026, there will be a bridge repair proposed on Boston Post Road with no State funding,
367 for a total Town cost of approximately \$200,000.

368

369 Danielle Pray, Ways & Means Committee, noted that the Committee voted 7-0-0 on this
370 Warrant Article.

371

372 There were no additional questions/comments from the Board, Ways & Means Committee, or
373 public at this time.

374

375 Selectman Brew read Warrant Article 29:

376 *ARTICLE 29: Fire Rescue Vehicle and Equipment Purchase and Repair Capital Reserve*
377 *Fund*

378 *Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of two hundred fifty-seven thousand*
379 *dollars (\$257,000) to be added to the Fire Rescue Vehicle and Equipment Purchase and*
380 *Repair Capital Reserve Fund, previously established. (Tax Impact = \$0.15) (Majority vote*
381 *required). The Fire Rescue Vehicle & Equipment Purchase and Repair CRF balance:*
382 *\$996,283.97 as of 11/30/2020.*

383

384 Selectman Brew explained that the Fire Rescue Department has a number of expensive trucks
385 and pieces of equipment that need to be replaced over time, but not in a linear fashion. The
386 next purchase needed will be to replace the 1991 fire truck and an ambulance. The funds were
387 used in 2020 to purchase a Toyne Fire Engine, to replace a 1994 truck.

388

389 There were no questions/comments from the Board, Ways & Means Committee, or public at
390 this time.

391

392 Selectman Brew read Warrant Article 30:

393 *ARTICLE 30: Establish DPW Vehicles & Equipment Acquisition & Replacement CRF*

394 *Shall the Town vote to establish a DPW Vehicles & Equipment Acquisition & Replacement*
395 *Capital Reserve Fund under the provisions of RSA 35:1 for the purpose of acquisition and*
396 *replacement of DPW vehicles and equipment and to raise and appropriate the sum of One*
397 *Hundred Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$120,000) to be placed in this fund. Further, to name the*
398 *Board of Selectmen as agents to expend from said fund. (Tax Impact = \$0.07) (Majority vote*
399 *required)*

400

401 Selectman Brew explained that the Department of Public Works currently has 25 vehicles and
402 pieces of equipment that cost anywhere from \$25,000 - \$300,000. The expected life of this
403 equipment and vehicles ranges from 10-30 years. The Town doesn't want to replace these
404 items if they are operating well, regardless of age, but needs to make sure funding is available
405 when replacement is necessary. In previous years, the Town budgeted \$250,000 annually to
406 replace DPW vehicles using a lease purchase agreement. By including these funds in the
407 operating budget, the amount budgeted cannot carry over from year-to-year. The Town plans
408 to pay off the remaining lease purchases by including \$46,000 in the operating budget for
409 each of the next two years. The Town will then start transferring the funding of these vehicles

410 and equipment by requesting that \$130,000 be included in the operating budget annually, and
411 that the voters fund a CRF with \$120,000 annually. The current plan is to migrate to a CRF
412 after only two year, removing the remaining \$130,000 from the operating budget and
413 increasing the CRF request amount.

414

415 Selectman D'Angelo stated that he opposes this Warrant Article because he is opposed to
416 moving a budget line item into a recurring Warrant Article. This CRF will then need to be on
417 the ballot and approved by the voters year each. If the CRF is not approved in a given year, it
418 will be difficult for the Town to purchase these items. He doesn't believe that this CRF is
419 being proposed as a way to deceive taxpayers, but that it does make the budget look smaller
420 than it really is, by removing the funds into a separate CRF. If these funds were left in the
421 operating budget, the increase from last year's budget would actually be approximately 3%,
422 which is misleading to voters. He believes the proposal is a bad idea and poorly implemented.
423 He suggested leaving the current amount in the operating budget and moving the money into
424 the CRF slowly. He also noted that this proposed Warrant Article would also lead to less
425 money being available to offset taxes. He explained that most of the operating budget money
426 for these items has spent each year, which means that a CRF for these items will potentially
427 be drawn down to almost zero each year.

428

429 Chairman Lyon stated that the Warrant Article slides as presented break down the total cost to
430 the taxpayers very clearly; the proposal is clearly not being made to deceive taxpayers. This
431 proposal will actually make things more transparent, not less.

432

433 Chris McNamara, 2 Sawmill Lane, stated that these Fire Rescue department vehicles and
434 pieces of equipment seem to be recurrent items and thus should be budgeted for in the general
435 operating budget each year. He believes Warrant Articles are meant to be for special one-time
436 items.

437

438 Chairman Lyon explained that the proposed Warrant Article amount will eventually be
439 leveled, but the amount spent on these DPW items will increase/decrease from year-to-year. If
440 these items were left in the operating budget, it would cause the budget to bounce from year-
441 to-year. This proposal is meant to provide levelness to the taxpayer. It also provides the DPW
442 and Board with flexibility to decide each year which truck to replace.

443

444 In response to a question from Chris McNamara, Selectman Brew explained that this CRF
445 will be pulled from over time. If the funds are not needed, they will continue to sit in the CRF,
446 whereas, if the funds were in the operating budget, they would not carry over from year-to-
447 year. The CRF will allow these purchases to be funded equally, with no wild fluctuations over
448 time.

449

450 In response to a question from Tom Quinn, 30 Christian Hill Road, Chairman Lyon explained
451 that there is money in the DPW budget for smaller equipment purchases that do not rise to the
452 level of those proposed to be included in this CRF. Selectman Brew noted that there are 25
453 vehicles and equipment, varying drastically in price – but each worth in excess of \$20,000,
454 that could be replaced using the CRF funds, if approved.

455

456 Selectman D'Angelo read Warrant Article 31:

457 *ARTICLE 31: Police Station Renovation Completion*
458 *Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Two Hundred Thousand Dollars*
459 *(\$200,000) for the purpose of completing the 3rd floor of the Police Station renovation. Said*
460 *sum shall come from the undesignated fund balance and no amount to be raised from*
461 *taxation. Any appropriation left in the fund at the end of the year will lapse to the general*
462 *fund. (Tax Impact = \$0.0) (Majority vote required)*
463

464 Selectman D'Angelo explained that this CRF is to finish funding the third floor of the Police
465 Station renovation. It was initially believed that the amount raised was enough, but
466 unexpected expenses, namely the HVAC system, arose during construction. This amount will
467 be funded from the unassigned fund balance; thus, this Warrant Article will have no additional
468 impact on taxpayers.
469

470 Lisa Eastland stated that she appreciates the Board understanding that this project was
471 proposed to the taxpayers as a three-year funding process and agreeing to use other funds to
472 complete the additional necessary renovations.
473

474 Selectman D'Angelo read Warrant Article 32:

475 *ARTICLE 32: Establish and fund CRF for Amherst Multimodal Facilities*
476 *Shall the Town vote to establish an Amherst Multimodal Facilities Capital Reserve Fund*
477 *under the provisions of RSA 35:1 for the purpose of design and construction of projects and*
478 *provide matching funds for grants for such projects, and to raise and appropriate the sum of*
479 *Seventy-Five Thousand Dollars (\$75,000) to be placed in this fund. Further, to name the*
480 *Board of Selectmen as agents to expend from said fund. (Tax Impact = \$0.04) (Majority vote*
481 *required)*
482

483 Selectman D'Angelo explained that "multimodal" infrastructure is for bicyclists, pedestrians,
484 mobility scooters, etc. Traditional sidewalks are not allowed to be used by bicyclists, per State
485 law, which is why side paths are being examined as part of this proposed Warrant Article.
486 This Warrant Article will create available funds to take advantage of cost-effective
487 opportunities, such as grant programs that will typically cover 80% of a proposed project, if
488 the Town has 20% of its matching funds raised in advance. Without this advanced funding, it
489 is very difficult for towns to secure these grant opportunities. The proposed figure represents
490 1/3 of the estimated cost of the Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee's highest priority
491 project, the Boston Post Road School Campus Sidepath. This has been the most requested
492 multimodal facility in Amherst since 1984.
493

494 Chris Buchanan, Chair of the Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee, explained that the
495 Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant was recently announced. It will occur this
496 year. The hope is that this Warrant Article will raise money that the Town can use to leverage
497 the 20% match portion of this grant to be used toward the primary project of the Boston Post
498 Road School Campus Sidepath. The Committee will be learning more about the TAP grant as
499 soon as it can. This Warrant Article will give the Town a significant ability to get facilities for
500 a lesser tax impact.
501

502 In response to a question from Tom Quinn, Chairman Lyon explained that this proposed side
503 path would join Cross Road, to Stearns Road, and down towards the Homestead Market and
504 associated neighborhoods.

505 In response to a question from Tom Quinn, Chris Buchanan explained that the Town has no
506 ability to take land from landowners, but also that this would not be necessary as part of this
507 project. The project looks to stay within the right-of-way along Boston Post Road. The
508 Committee is hoping to have a survey done in order to determine the exact width of this right-
509 of-way.

510
511 In response to a question from Rolf Vanbibber, Chairman Lyon explained that the proposed
512 sidepath project will undergo all of the necessary engineering to be completed within the
513 right-of-way to create a sidepath that will be safe for all who travel that route.

514
515 Chris McNamara explained that he would like to see a time limit placed on this Warrant
516 Article. Chairman Lyon stated that this Warrant Article looks to create a CRF and fund it with
517 \$75,000. It is thought that this Warrant Article will be proposed for each of the next three
518 years. The Board can alter the amount sought each year. Selectman Brew explained that this
519 Warrant Article only applies to this year. Each year that the Warrant Article is proposed, the
520 voters would need to approve it.

521
522 Chairman Lyon read Warrant Article 33:
523 *ARTICLE 33: Recreation Facilities Acquisition, Construction, and Maintenance CRF*
524 *Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000) to*
525 *be added to the Recreation Facilities Capital Reserve Fund, previously established. (Tax*
526 *Impact = \$0.03) (Majority vote required)*

527
528 Chairman Lyon explained that this Warrant Article is part one of three, seeking to eventually
529 fund the CRF with \$150,000. These funds would be used for Town fields, etc. The Recreation
530 Director is also applying for matching grant funding through the Land Water Conservation
531 Fund. The total project cost at Buck Meadow is approximately \$300,000.

532
533 Chairman Lyon reviewed Warrant Article 10 from 2006, that established a Recreation
534 Acquisition and Construction Fund. This fund was not created for maintenance items. He
535 questioned if the Board would like to create a new CRF or alter the language of the existing
536 warrant article or to utilize the existing 2006 CRF. He noted that there is no intention to use
537 these funds on the Buck Meadow building, but instead to build two rectangular playing fields,
538 to enlarge the parking lot, and to possibly build a picnic/playground area. He suggested that
539 the Board amend the language of Warrant Article 33 to reflect the existing Recreation CRF
540 from 2006, and to use the funds only for acquisitions and the construction of fields.

541
542 Selectman Brew, Grella, and Panasiti stated that they agreed with the suggestion. Selectman
543 D'Angelo also agreed with the suggestion, as long as it is reviewed by Town Counsel.

544
545 Lisa Eastland also stated that she would like for this to be reviewed by Town Counsel but is
546 only with the suggestion for this year's Warrant Article.

547

548 A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman Grella to amend
549 Warrant Article 33 so that the title reads: "Recreation Fields Acquisition and Construction
550 Capital Reserve Fund" and for the language to read, "Shall the Town vote to raise and
551 appropriate the sum of Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000) to be added to the Recreation
552 Facilities Capital Reserve Fund, previously established. (Majority vote required).
553 By roll call vote: Selectman Brew – aye; Selectman D'Angelo – aye; Selectman Grella – aye;
554 Selectman Panasiti – aye; Chairman Lyon – aye. 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

555
556 Chairman Lyon noted that the year-to-year tax comparison presented tonight will be lowered
557 slightly, due to the ACC Warrant Article bond cap being voted to be reduced earlier.

558
559 A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to
560 close the Public Hearing.
561 By roll call vote: Selectman Brew – aye; Selectman D'Angelo – aye; Selectman Grella – aye;
562 Selectman Panasiti – aye; Chairman Lyon – aye. 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

563
564 **4. Public Hearing Information**

565 **4.1 FY22 Warrant Draft, Public Budget Hearing Presentation, FY22 Budget**
566 **Draft #4**

567
568 A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman Grella to place
569 Warrant Article 22 on the ballot.
570 By roll call vote: Selectman Brew – aye; Selectman D'Angelo – aye; Selectman Grella – aye;
571 Selectman Panasiti – aye; Chairman Lyon – aye. 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

572
573 A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman Grella to support
574 Warrant Article 22.
575 By roll call vote: Selectman Brew – aye; Selectman D'Angelo – aye; Selectman Grella – aye;
576 Selectman Panasiti – aye; Chairman Lyon – aye. 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

577
578 A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman Grella to place
579 Warrant Article 23 on the ballot.
580 By roll call vote: Selectman Brew – aye; Selectman D'Angelo – aye; Selectman Grella – aye;
581 Selectman Panasiti – aye; Chairman Lyon – aye. 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

582
583 A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman Grella to support
584 Warrant Article 23.
585 By roll call vote: Selectman Brew – aye; Selectman D'Angelo – nay; Selectman Grella – aye;
586 Selectman Panasiti – aye; Chairman Lyon – aye. 4-1-0; motion carried.

587
588 A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to place
589 Warrant Article 24 on the ballot.
590 By roll call vote: Selectman Brew – aye; Selectman D'Angelo – aye; Selectman Grella – aye;
591 Selectman Panasiti – aye; Chairman Lyon – aye. 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

592
593 A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to support
594 Warrant Article 24.

595 *By roll call vote: Selectman Brew – aye; Selectman D’Angelo – aye; Selectman Grella – aye;*
596 *Selectman Panasiti – aye; Chairman Lyon – aye. 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*
597
598 *A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman Grella to place*
599 *Warrant Article 25 on the ballot.*
600 *By roll call vote: Selectman Brew – aye; Selectman D’Angelo – aye; Selectman Grella – aye;*
601 *Selectman Panasiti – aye; Chairman Lyon – aye. 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*
602
603 *A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman Grella to support*
604 *Warrant Article 25.*
605 *By roll call vote: Selectman Brew – aye; Selectman D’Angelo – aye; Selectman Grella – aye;*
606 *Selectman Panasiti – aye; Chairman Lyon – aye. 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*
607
608 *A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman D’Angelo to place*
609 *Warrant Article 26 on the ballot.*
610 *By roll call vote: Selectman Brew – aye; Selectman D’Angelo – aye; Selectman Grella – aye;*
611 *Selectman Panasiti – aye; Chairman Lyon – aye. 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*
612
613 *A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman D’Angelo to*
614 *support Warrant Article 26.*
615 *By roll call vote: Selectman Brew – aye; Selectman D’Angelo – aye; Selectman Grella – aye;*
616 *Selectman Panasiti – aye; Chairman Lyon – aye. 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*
617
618 *A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to place*
619 *Warrant Article 27 on the ballot.*
620 *By roll call vote: Selectman Brew – aye; Selectman D’Angelo – aye; Selectman Grella – aye;*
621 *Selectman Panasiti – aye; Chairman Lyon – aye. 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*
622
623 *A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to support*
624 *Warrant Article 27.*
625 *By roll call vote: Selectman Brew – aye; Selectman D’Angelo – aye; Selectman Grella – aye;*
626 *Selectman Panasiti – aye; Chairman Lyon – aye. 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*
627
628 *A MOTION was made by Selectman D’Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Grella to place*
629 *Warrant Article 28 on the ballot.*
630 *By roll call vote: Selectman Brew – aye; Selectman D’Angelo – aye; Selectman Grella – aye;*
631 *Selectman Panasiti – aye; Chairman Lyon – aye. 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*
632
633 *A MOTION was made by Selectman D’Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to*
634 *support Warrant Article 28.*
635 *By roll call vote: Selectman Brew – aye; Selectman D’Angelo – aye; Selectman Grella – aye;*
636 *Selectman Panasiti – aye; Chairman Lyon – aye. 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*
637
638 *A MOTION was made by Selectman D’Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to*
639 *place Warrant Article 29 on the ballot.*
640 *By roll call vote: Selectman Brew – aye; Selectman D’Angelo – aye; Selectman Grella – aye;*
641 *Selectman Panasiti – aye; Chairman Lyon – aye. 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*

642
643 *A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to*
644 *support Warrant Article 29.*
645 *By roll call vote: Selectman Brew – aye; Selectman D'Angelo – aye; Selectman Grella – aye;*
646 *Selectman Panasiti – aye; Chairman Lyon – aye. 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*
647
648 *A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to*
649 *place Warrant Article 30 on the ballot.*
650 *By roll call vote: Selectman Brew – aye; Selectman D'Angelo – aye; Selectman Grella – aye;*
651 *Selectman Panasiti – aye; Chairman Lyon – aye. 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*
652
653 *A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to*
654 *support Warrant Article 30.*
655 *By roll call vote: Selectman Brew – aye; Selectman D'Angelo – nay; Selectman Grella – aye;*
656 *Selectman Panasiti – aye; Chairman Lyon – aye. 4-1-0; motion carried.*
657
658 *A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to*
659 *place Warrant Article 31 on the ballot.*
660 *By roll call vote: Selectman Brew – aye; Selectman D'Angelo – aye; Selectman Grella – aye;*
661 *Selectman Panasiti – aye; Chairman Lyon – aye. 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*
662
663 *A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to*
664 *support Warrant Article 31.*
665 *By roll call vote: Selectman Brew – aye; Selectman D'Angelo – aye; Selectman Grella – aye;*
666 *Selectman Panasiti – aye; Chairman Lyon – aye. 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*
667
668 *A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to*
669 *place Warrant Article 32 on the ballot.*
670 *By roll call vote: Selectman Brew – aye; Selectman D'Angelo – aye; Selectman Grella – aye;*
671 *Selectman Panasiti – aye; Chairman Lyon – aye. 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*
672
673 *A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to*
674 *support Warrant Article 32.*
675 *By roll call vote: Selectman Brew – aye; Selectman D'Angelo – aye; Selectman Grella – aye;*
676 *Selectman Panasiti – aye; Chairman Lyon – aye. 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*
677
678 *A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to*
679 *place Warrant Article 33 on the ballot.*
680 *By roll call vote: Selectman Brew – aye; Selectman D'Angelo – aye; Selectman Grella – aye;*
681 *Selectman Panasiti – aye; Chairman Lyon – aye. 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*
682
683 *A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to*
684 *support Warrant Article 33.*
685 *By roll call vote: Selectman Brew – aye; Selectman D'Angelo – aye; Selectman Grella – aye;*
686 *Selectman Panasiti – aye; Chairman Lyon – aye. 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*
687

688 A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman Grella to
689 reconsider the motion on Warrant Article 22.
690 By roll call vote: Selectman Brew – aye; Selectman D’Angelo – aye; Selectman Grella – aye;
691 Selectman Panasiti – aye; Chairman Lyon – aye. 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.
692 A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman Grella to amend
693 the motion to reflect Warrant Article 22 as amended.
694 By roll call vote: Selectman Brew – aye; Selectman D’Angelo – aye; Selectman Grella – aye;
695 Selectman Panasiti – aye; Chairman Lyon – aye. 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

696
697 **5. Old/New Business**

698 Town Administrator Shankle stated that the Ways & Means Committee will be meeting next.

699
700 Selectman Brew explained that the Master Plan Survey closes one week from tonight. There
701 have been just under 1,700 responses received so far.

702
703 Selectman D’Angelo explained that the schools will be holding their public hearings on
704 Wednesday 13th at 6pm and 7pm.

705
706 A MOTION was made by Selectman D’Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Brew to
707 adjourn the meeting at 9:01pm.

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

710 **NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, January 19, 2021**

711
712
713
714
715 _____
716 *Selectman Reed Panasiti*

Date