



Town of Amherst, NH

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES

Barbara Landry Meeting Room
2 Main Street
Tuesday, January 26, 2021 5:00PM

1 **1. Call to Order**

2 Chairman Peter Lyon called the meeting to order at 5:01 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 Other attendees and the public accessed the meeting via Zoom.

9
10 Chairman Lyon explained that, pursuant to the State of Emergency declared by the
11 Governor as a result of the COVID19 pandemic and in accordance with his Emergency
12 Order #12, this meeting is authorized to take place electronically. There is no physical
13 location to observe and listen to this meeting. However, in accordance with the
14 Emergency Order, we are:

15
16 Utilizing Zoom teleconferencing for this meeting. All members of the Board have the
17 ability to communicate during the meeting through this platform and the public has access
18 to contemporaneously listen and if necessary, participate in the meeting by dialing +1 301
19 715 8592 and using a webinar ID of 854-3847-0216 or by using the link contained in the
20 agenda posted at amherstnh.gov.

21
22 Notice of the meeting and means to access it were previously posted in accordance with
23 law. Members of the public that have phoned into the meeting can raise their hand by
24 pressing the *9 on their phone, in order to make it known that they would like to speak to
25 the Board. If anyone has a problem accessing the meeting, please call 603-440-8248 for
26 assistance. In the event the public is unable to access the meeting, the meeting will be
27 adjourned and rescheduled.

28
29 All votes will be taken by roll call and for ease, in alphabetical order.
30 Lastly, the meeting is being recorded and will be replayed on ACATV.

31
32 The Board started by taking a roll call vote and stating if they were alone.

33
34 *Roll call vote: Selectman Brew – present; Selectman D'Angelo – present; Selectman*
35 *Grella – present; Selectman Panasiti – present; Chairman Lyon – present. All noted*
36 *themselves as being alone.*

39 **2. Citizen's Forum**

40
41 **3. Administration**

42 **3.1 Relative to Governor's Emergency Order #83**

43 Chairman Lyon explained that the Governor issued Emergency Order 83, allowing SB2 towns
44 in the State to postpone Deliberative Sessions and polling days. Currently, the Town's
45 Deliberative Session is scheduled for February 3, 2021, and Voting Day is scheduled for
46 March 9, 2021. After consulting with the Town Clerk and Town Moderator, it was determined
47 that postponing these dates would be a possible option. He met with Town Administrator
48 Shankle, Moderator Steve Coughlan, the Mont Vernon Selectmen, and members of the School
49 Districts yesterday; there was consensus to postpone these days and that, if one entity decides
50 to postpone, all entities should. The Souhegan School Board and Amherst School Board each
51 voted last night to delay these dates.

52
53 Chairman Lyon explained that the possible options include not changing the dates and moving
54 forward as planned, delaying the Deliberative Session to Wednesday, May 5, 2021, and the
55 polling date to June 8, 2021. He noted that, per the State's guidance, the Town could choose
56 to move the Polling date to specific proposed dates in either April, May, June or July. The
57 various Town entities agreed to schedule the three Deliberative Sessions back-to-back on
58 evenings in May.

59
60 Chairman Lyon stated that he believes these dates should be delayed out of respect to the
61 Town's residents' safety. Delaying these dates should allow for increased vaccines, less of a
62 COVID-19 peak, and the option to possibly meet outside in nicer weather.

63
64 Selectman Brew agreed with delaying these dates. He believes the vaccines may be more
65 widely available by later dates. He also believes that the Town should follow the School
66 Districts. He noted that he believes the dates should be in May and June in order to keep the
67 election within the school year. If the vote were to occur in July, there may be a different
68 demographic in Town voting.

69
70 Selectman D'Angelo noted that this agreement was already made by the Town and Schools;
71 this vote will ratify that. He is in favor of the delay.

72
73 Selectman Grella stated that he is in favor of delaying for the reasons given.

74
75 Selectman Panasiti agreed with delaying these dates.

76
77 Chairman Lyon noted that there are questions about having the start some of the already
78 completed processes over again, such as the public hearings and candidacy filing dates. These
79 items are yet unclear and will need clarification from the State.

80
81 Town Administrator Shankle stated that anyone considering running for open places on Town
82 boards/commissions should still plan to file by the original deadline of Friday, just to be safe.

83
84 *A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti -*

85 On Friday, January 22 Governor Sununu issued Emergency Order #83, which, in section 3
86 (a), indicates that “Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, for calendar year 2021, where
87 concern exists for conducting the annual meeting and election during the COVID-19 health
88 emergency, the governing body of a town, school district, or village district, in consultation
89 with the moderator and the clerk, may postpone the official ballot voting day to the second
90 Tuesday of April, May, June, or July. The governing body may also postpone the business or
91 deliberative session of the annual meeting to one or more dates later in 2021.”

92 After deliberations with the Town Moderator and Town Clerk, the Amherst Board of
93 Selectmen feels that postponing the Deliberative Session of Town Meeting until Wednesday
94 May 5, 2021 and the Official Ballot Voting Day until Tuesday, June 8, 2021 would be in the
95 best interests of the town given the COVID-19 health emergency.

96 We believe that by then COVID-19 will likely be less of a risk due to the increasing number of
97 people who will be vaccinated and the fact that the warmer weather will give us options,
98 including possibly using an outdoor venue, to make the process as safe as possible.

99 I move therefore, that the Amherst Board of Selectmen postpones the Deliberative Session of
100 the 2021 Town Meeting until Wednesday, May 5, 2021 and the Office Ballot Voting Day until
101 Tuesday, June 8, 2021.

102 In response to a question from Selectman Grella, Selectman Brew stated that he believes the
103 language in paragraph three of the motion to “postpone” the dates is sufficient to explain that
104 there were previously established dates that will now be postponed.

105
106 By roll call vote: Selectman Brew – aye; Selectman D’Angelo – aye; Selectman Grella – aye;
107 Selectman Panasiti – aye; Chairman Lyon – aye. 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

108
109 A MOTION was made by Selectman D’Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Grella to
110 adjourn the meeting at 5:30pm.

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

113
114 **NEXT MEETING: Monday, February 8, 2021**

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116
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119 _____
Selectman Reed Panasiti

Date