



Town of Amherst, NH
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES
Barbara Landry Meeting Room
2 Main Street
Monday, November 22, 2021, 6:30PM

1. Call to Order

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

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

Ways & Means Committee present: Lisa Eastland, Mike Patterson, Bill Loscocco, and Jim Kuhnert.

Also present: Town Administrator Dean Shankle and Recording Secretary Kristan Patenaude (remote).

2. Pledge of Allegiance – led by Christian Littlefield.

3. Citizen's Forum – none.

4. Scheduled Appointments

4.1 Conservation Commission, and presentation of donation

Chair of the Conservation Commission, Rob Clemens, explained that the Commission recently received a very generous donation of \$15,000 from Bill & Candice Rapf. He is asking that this be deposited into the Commission's Gift Account.

Chairman Lyon explained that donations of this size must be accepted at a public hearing. The Board will hold a public hearing for this at a future meeting. The Board thanked the Rapfs for their generous donation.

4.2 AFR Association President John Leonard, Solar System donation

Mr. Leonard stated that the Fire Rescue Department recently received an anonymous donation of a solar system to be placed on the roof of the station. This will be used to offset the electricity costs of the Department and will become part of the Town's capital equipment. The value of the system is approximately \$50,000.

In response to a question from Chairman Lyon, Mr. Leonard explained that funding for the system is being donated to the Amherst Fire Department Relief Association, as it is a non-profit entity. The Association will then donate the array to the Town. The system has a 12-year warranty on the inverter, a 25-year warranty on the panels, and a 12-year warranty on the workmanship.

Selectman Brew suggested that the Board hold a public hearing for this item at a future meeting as well.

Selectman Grella noted that this item will need to be approved by the Historic District Commission, as the Station is located in the Historic District.

Chief Conley explained that an engineer will initially come out to examine the roof structure for the system. He noted that this system will sit on the back of the building and will not be visible from Amherst Street.

There was discussion regarding the potential tax credit from installing the system.

Selectman D'Angelo noted that the system will eventually need to be removed and disposed of properly. The Department may also want to upgrade the panels to the newest technology at some point in the future.

Selectman Pray asked if this donation is contingent with the ability to install the system. Chief Conley stated that this would need to be further discussed with the donor.

In response to a question from Chairman Lyon, Chief Conley stated that the Association is hoping to have the donation accepted this year, but it is unclear when the work will be completed. Chief Conley stated that the system is proposed to be placed on a Town building, which is why the Association is looking for approval for this donation.

Chairman Lyon requested that the Association work closely with the Community Development Office and the Department of Public Works on the installation of the system.

The Board agreed it was comfortable moving this item forward to a public hearing at a future date.

5. Eagle Scout Recognition, Andrew Mullin

Selectman Brew stated that Andrew Mullin recently installed the flagpole and seating at the new Forestview Cemetery as part of his Eagle Scout project. He is pleased to report that on September 22, 2021, Mr. Mullin was officially awarded the rank of Eagle Scout. Eagle Scout is the highest achievement or rank attainable in the Boy Scouts of America program. Since its inception in 1911, only 4% of Scouts have earned this rank after a lengthy review process. The Eagle Scout rank has been earned by over 2.5 million youth. On behalf of the Cemetery Trustees and the Town of Amherst, Selectman Brew thanked Mr. Mullin for the flagpole and seating at Forestview Cemetery, which will serve the Town for many years to come. He also congratulated Mr. Mullin on earning and being awarded the rank of Eagle Scout.

6. Board Appointment, Conservation Commission open seat

6.1 Christian Littlefield

A MOTION was made by Selectman Grella and SECONDED by Selectman Brew to appoint Christian Littlefield as an alternate member of the Amherst Conservation Commission, term ending in 2023.

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

86
87 **7. Administration**

88 **7.1 Administrative Updates**

89 Town Administrator Shankle explained that he spoke with Primex regarding increased liability
90 coverage on easements in Town. Primex is limited to \$1M/occurrence and \$1M/coverage
91 period but noted that Primex rarely sees claims from injured third parties as Recreational Use
92 Immunity often applies.
93

94 Town Administrator Shankle noted that the Town reviewed its health insurance plan in 2018
95 and 2020 but did not find enough of a savings to make a switch at those times. The Town
96 could consider hiring an insurance broker as a consultant to try to find savings in health
97 insurance.
98

99 The Board discussed moving forward with receiving bids from health insurance providers:
100 NH Interlocal Trust, Health Trust, and School Care. The Board agreed to allow Town
101 Administrator Shankle to speak with Primex regarding possible consultant names for this
102 project.
103

104 **7.2 ARPA Committee**

105 Chairman Lyon explained that he is suggesting that Bill Stoughton (Conservation
106 Commission and Planning Board) help Town Administrator Shankle and others with the
107 direction of ARPA funds for the Town. The Board agreed on this suggestion.
108

109 Bill Stoughton, 11 Pinetop Road, explained that he will work with Town Administrator
110 Shankle and come back before the Board in the future to present possible options.
111

112 *A MOTION was made by Selectman Pray and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo to*
113 *appoint Bill Stoughton to work with Town Administrator Shankle on ARPA funding and how it*
114 *can be used in Amherst.*

115 *Voting: 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*
116

117 **7.3 General Discussion of the Budget / COLA**

118 Selectman Brew stated that he previously proposed coupling part of the COLA rate and a
119 reduction in medical insurance costs. Upon further consideration, he has decided that, while
120 he would still like to see the latter item addressed, he is no longer proposing coupling the two
121 items and is supporting a 4% COLA.
122

123 Jim Kuhnert stated that he believes 4% may be a bit low, considering the macro environment
124 and staffing issues.
125

126 Chairman Lyon stated that the Board will discuss the budget again on December 6, 2021.
127 There is a public hearing on the budget scheduled for January 10, 2022. A 4% COLA would
128 equate to approximately \$180,000, leading to a proposed 4.1% increase over last year's
129 budget.
130
131

7.4 Proposed Warrant Articles

Chairman Lyon explained that all but two of the proposed warrant articles are recurring warrant articles. The proposed warrant articles for this year are: 1) Fire Vehicles Capital Reserve Fund (CRF) \$257,000, 2) Bridges Repair and Replacement CRF \$200,000, 3) DPW Vehicles CRF \$120,000, 4) Contingency Fund \$120,000, 5) Bicycle Pedestrian CRF \$98,000, 6) Bicycle Pedestrian CRF \$75,000, 7) Recreation Fields CRF \$50,000, 8) Communications Center CRF \$25,000, 9) Assessing Revaluation CRF \$25,000, 10) Tax Exemption Adjustments – elderly, disabled, and blind.

In response to a question from Selectman Grella, Town Administrator Shankle noted that the recurring Computer CRF is not being proposed this year, as there is enough funding in it at this time.

Chris Buchanan, Chair of the Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC), explained that the proposed warrant article for the \$75,000 CRF addition is the second of a three-year request to fund the AMS/SHS School Campus project. The intent of this CRF is to raise the funds necessary for this project, while also applying for grants to offset some/all of the costs. The BPAC has applied to two grants thus far and has a third grant application in the works. This project looks to construct a side path between the crosswalk at Homestead Road and the Scott Conservation Land, with a branch leading to AMS. One major portion of this project includes a water crossing at Honey Pot Pond. It is yet unclear what the cost of this item might be.

In response to a question from Lisa Eastland, Chris Buchanan stated that, if a federal grant is awarded for this project, funding the CRF for this project would no longer be requested. Chairman Lyon explained that the warrant article is worded such that funds in the CRF can be used for other multimodal projects around Town.

Chris Buchanan explained that the second warrant article proposed for this year is for \$98,000, to help fund the Village Multimodal Improvements project. There is approximately \$1.9M in federal funding that could be available for this project, and so this warrant article is to hopefully leverage a local match to be more competitive for this grant. The proposal of the overall project is to reconstruct a number of roads in the Village, already scheduled for road reconstruction, in a different manner to make them successful from a multimodal strategy. The \$98,000 would be used to fund the design and engineering of this project. The BPAC and DPW have been speaking with a national expert in shared street designs in hopes of forwarding this project.

The Board noted that making the language for this warrant article broader would allow the funds to be used for additional projects, if necessary.

Selectman Brew suggested that this warrant article might function better as a one-time funding request for engineering, instead of as a CRF. He also noted that he would like for an update to the Board regarding the Amherst Street side path in the near future.

170 In response to a question from Will Ludt, 3 School Street, Chris Buchanan stated that the
171 \$98,000 could not be used to bury the wires in the Village. If the project design moves
172 forward, this is an item that could be further discussed.

173 In response to a question from Mike Patterson, Chris Buchanan explained that the \$98,000
174 would be a one-time cost to engineer the project, thus making the project more competitive
175 for the federal grant. Shared streets contain traffic calming measures to make them safer for
176 pedestrians and bicyclists.

177 George Bower, BPAC, explained that a good example of a street in Amherst that incorporates
178 the proposed design concepts, is the one located at the front of the Michael's storefront area.
179 The cobblestone effect is designed to slow down vehicles and give preference to pedestrians.
180 There are also water gardens in this area that serve as treatment swales.

181 In response to a question from Chairman Lyon, Chris Buchanan explained that having
182 engineering completed on this project and showing that the Town is willing to match its share,
183 maximizes the Town's chances of being awarded a federal grant.

184
185 In response to a question from Selectman Pray, Chris Buchanan explained that data from
186 traffic counts in the Village, conducted by NRPC, will help toward additional information for
187 the overall project.

188
189 Gail Stout, Tax Collector, explained that the proposed warrant article for tax exemption
190 adjustments is to maintain the 2020 level of benefit for these exemptions. After a revaluation,
191 values tend to increase, while the tax rate decreases. Exemptions are multiplied by the tax
192 rate, and so they also tend to decrease, as do the benefits to any applicants. Thus, the proposal
193 is to adjust the exemption amounts so that the benefit amount remains constant. The RSA first
194 allows the Town to set the exemption amount. Then the Town can also set a maximum
195 income rate and maximum asset level for the blind and elderly exemptions; these have not
196 been adjusted since 2012. She suggested that these numbers be rounded to the nearest
197 thousand.

198
199 In response to a question from Selectman Brew, Ms. Stout stated that she believes the
200 numbers in the packet should be used by the Board because the actual tax rate was utilized to
201 determine them, instead of using a memo from the Assessor.

202
203 In response to a question from Selectman D'Angelo, Ms. Stout stated that she tried to balance
204 the impact of this, but that the Board can consider additional adjustments due to increases in
205 inflation, if it desires.

206
207 Selectman Pray voiced concerns over the income limits proposed. She reviewed other
208 surrounding towns and stated that Amherst's proposed limit is low.

209
210 Selectman Brew stated that he is in favor of the proposed exemption amount. He is also
211 comfortable with the asset limits but would be okay with a small increase to the proposed
212 single and married income limits.

The Board agreed with increasing the married and single income levels to match that of the highest of the towns listed. The Board will review this again on December 6, 2021.

In response to a question from Lisa Eastland, Ms. Stout stated that the proposal would add approximately \$0.03 to the tax rate. Ms. Stout noted that the number of applicants has been decreasing over the years.

9. Approvals

9.1 Assessing

Land Use Change Tax

A. The lot was purchased on 11/25/2021 and is less than 10 acres. The Land Use Change Tax in the amount of \$29,000 represents 10% of the full and true market value of \$290,000.

A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman Grella to approve the Land Use Change Tax in the amount of \$29,000.00 for Tax Map 005, Lot 059-030. Voting: 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

B. The lot was purchased on 10/28/2021 and is less than 10 acres. The Land Use Change Tax in the amount of \$13,300 represents 10% of the full and true market value of \$133,000.

A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman Grella to approve the Land Use Change Tax in the amount of \$13,000.00 for Tax Map 006, Lot 079-009. Voting: 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

Veteran Tax Credit 72:38

C. I have reviewed the attached Veteran Tax Credit Application provided and the applicant qualifies for the Tax Credit under RSA 72:28 for the 2022 tax year.

A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman Grella to approve the Veteran Tax Credit for tax year 2022 in the amount of \$500.00 for Map 011, Lot 012-031. Voting: 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

Levy of December 2021 Tax Warrant

D. The attached is a Levy of 2021 Tax Warrant directing the Tax Collector to collect the taxes in the list herewith committed in the sum of \$24,307,778.00. The Department of Revenue requires the Warrant be signed by the governing Board of Selectmen.

A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman Grella to approve and sign the December 2021 Tax Warrant in the amount of \$24,307,778.00. Voting: 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

A CORRECTED MOTION was made by Selectman Brew for Item B. and SECONDED by Selectman Grella to approve the Land Use Change Tax in the amount of \$13,300.00 for Tax Map 006, Lot 079-009. Voting: 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

261
262 **9.2 Baboosic Lake Community Septic Warrants**

263 *A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman Grella to approve*
264 *and sign the Baboosic Lake Community Septic Quarterly Warrants due on January 3, 2022 as*
265 *follows:*

266 *Phase I \$2,025.60*

267 *Phase II \$5,493.30*

268 *Phase III \$6,744.81*

269 *Phase IV \$4,783.47*

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

271
272 **9.3 Payroll, AP, & Minutes**

273 ***Payroll***

274 *A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Pray to*
275 *approve one (1) FY21 Payroll Manifest in the amount of \$1,869.60 dated November 9, 2021,*
276 *subject to review and audit.*

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

278
279 *A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Pray to*
280 *approve one (1) FY21 Payroll Manifest in the amount of \$38.31 dated November 10, 2021,*
281 *subject to review and audit.*

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

283
284 *A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Pray to*
285 *approve one (1) FY21 Payroll Manifest in the amount of \$230,777.92 dated November 18,*
286 *2021, subject to review and audit.*

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

288
289 ***Accounts Payable***

290 *A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Pray to*
291 *approve one (1) FY21 Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$37,652.97 dated*
292 *November 16, 2021, subject to review and audit. (NH DMV)*

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

294
295 *A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Pray to*
296 *approve one (1) FY21 Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$151,970.44 dated*
297 *November 9, 2021, subject to review and audit.*

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

299
300 *A MOTION was made by Selectman Pray and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo to*
301 *approve the Board of Selectmen meeting minutes of November 4, 2021, as amended.*

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

303
304 *A MOTION was made by Selectman Pray and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo to*
305 *approve the Board of Selectmen meeting minutes of November 8, 2021, as presented.*

306 *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 non-public meeting minutes of November 11, 2021, as presented.
Voting: 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

8. Action Items

The Board reviewed its action items.

9. Old/New Business

Selectman Brew stated that last Monday night, the Master Plan Steering Committee held a public forum for the Master Plan update. Online comments on several aspects of the Town will be accepted for the next month or so. This can be accessed through the Town website.

Selectman Brew stated that he would like more complete information in the Board packets for certain items that require action going forward.

Selectman Grella stated that the Historic District Commission recently met for a work session to discuss updating the application checklist and Commission procedures.

Selectman D'Angelo stated that the schools plan to finalize their budgets at their December meetings, for public hearings in January.

10. Non-Public Session

12.1. RSA 91-A:3, II (b) The hiring of any person as a public employee

A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Pray to enter into Non-Public Session per RSA 91-A:3,II(b) at 8:43pm.

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

A MOTION was made by Selectman Grella and SECONDED by Selectman Pray to leave Non-Public session at 8:58 pm.

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

Chairman Lyon announced that no motions were made and no action was taken in the Non-Public session.

A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman Pray to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 pm.

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

NEXT MEETING: Monday, December 6, 2021

Selectman Danielle Pray

Date