



**Town of Amherst, NH**  
**BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES**  
**Barbara Landry Meeting Room**  
**2 Main Street**  
**Monday, January 9, 2017**

**1. Call to Order**

Chairman Dwight Brew called the public meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Attendees: Chairman Dwight Brew, Vice Chairman Reed Panasiti, Selectmen Nate Jensen and Tom Grella. Also present: Town Administrator, Jim O'Mara, and Suzanne Beauchesne taking minutes. Selectman Peter Lyon was excused.

**2. Pledge of Allegiance** – Erica Lussier, Audit Manager with Melanson Heath, led the pledge.

**3. FY16 Audit Review**

Erica Lussier provided an overview of the town's FY16 financial audit. Highlights include:

- As of the close of the current year, the total of assets exceeded liabilities by \$24,677,748, a change of \$3,384,331 in comparison to the prior year.
- As of the close of the current year, governmental funds reported combined ending fund balances of \$8,427,873, a change of \$(942,416) in comparison to the prior year.
- At the end of the current year, unassigned fund balance for the general fund was \$5,218,994, a change of \$865,459 in comparison to the prior year.
- Total long term debt (notes payable) at the close of the current fiscal year was \$8,287,569, a change of \$1,037,306 in comparison to the prior year.

Ms. Lussier said the requirement is to maintain the unassigned fund balance between 8 and 17 percent of growth; the town policy is 10 percent. The unassigned fund balance from last year was at 12.7%; this year 11.88%. The statement of revenue and expenses showed a revenue surplus of \$403,458. Total expenditures indicate that departmental turn back amounted to \$759,320 and excess of revenues over expenditures totaled \$1,162,778. Ms. Lussier went through the Management Letter that included recommendations as follows:

- 1) Requiring dual signatures for collecting cash and checks. Chairman Brew thought that this had already been responded to. He asked that a response be provided by May 1<sup>st</sup>.
- 2) Computer Access Control: users should be able to change passwords.
- 3) Complete Policy and Procedures Manual: there should be one single manual that is reviewed from time-to-time.
- 4) A new actuarial will be needed by July 1, 2017.

Town Administrator, Jim O'Mara asked if someone would be available to assist with the policy development. Ms. Lussier said they could provide assistance. Chairman Brew thanked her for coming in.

#### **4. Public Hearing – RSA 674:40-a, III**

##### **Town Road Acceptance**

##### **a. Founder's Way**

##### **b. Potter Way**

##### **c. Trask Way**

Selectman Jensen moved, second by Vice Chairman Panasiti, to open the public hearing on accepting Founder's Way, Potter Way, and Trask Way as town roads. Chairman Brew indicated that the Department of Public Works had followed all guidelines in order for the town to accept the road. Gordon Leedy, Director of Community Development, came forward to state that the road deeds are ready for recording. After recording, the town will release to the developer, Michachunk Development, Inc., the escrow account of approximately \$100,465.29, the construction review escrow account of approximately \$11,064.52, and the Planning Board review escrow account of about \$1,109.08. In return, Michachunk provided the town with an Irrevocable Letter of Credit in the amount of \$53,970, which amount will act as a two-year Maintenance Bond to cover the cost of the final wearing course of the blacktop pavement. Vice Chairman Panasiti asked if North Street was connected. Michael Foisie of Michachunk Development stated that the road will be connected in Phase III to meet emergency criteria and it will be gated. There are two more phases to complete the project.

Selectman Jensen moved, second by Selectman Grella, to close the public hearing at 6:40 p.m. Motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

Selectman Jensen moved, second by Selectman Grella, to accept the town roads as proposed and to authorize the Chairman to sign all related documents on behalf of the Board. Motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

Prior to the beginning of the next scheduled public hearing, Chairman Brew adjusted the agenda and took up the following **Agenda Items**.

#### **9.1 BTLA Settlement – 2015**

Vice Chairman Panasiti moved, second by Selectman Jensen, to approve the 2015 BTLA settlement amount of \$725,000 and grant abatement in the amount of \$1,202 for Map 5, Lot 59-41. Motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

#### **9.2 Abatements**

Vice Chairman Panasiti moved, second by Selectman Jensen, to approve the abatement for the property located at 6 Potter Way, Map 5, Lot 59-41, in the amount of \$1,521. Motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

### 9.3 Land Use Change Tax

Vice Chairman Panasiti moved, second by Selectman Jensen, to approve the Land Use Change Tax for property located at 3 Victoria Ridge, Map 4, Lot 147-15 in the amount of \$13,450. Motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

### 9.4 Prorated Assessment Recommendation

Vice Chairman Panasiti moved, second by Selectman Jensen, to approve the revised assessment of \$299,500 and grant abatement in the amount of \$454.31 for property located at 32 Merrimack Road, Map/Lot 3-166-2 for the 2016 tax year. Motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

## 5. Public Hearing – RSA 33:8-a

### a. FY18 Budget

At 6:45 p.m., Selectman Jensen moved, second by Vice Chairman Panasiti, to open the public hearing on the FY18 Budget. Chairman Brew stated that the Board is required to present the budget and all warrant articles and get feedback from the town residents. The Board tonight will vote on warrant articles they wish to present at the deliberative session which will be held on Wednesday, February 8, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. at the Souhegan High School Gymnasium. Chairman Brew provided a PowerPoint (attached) overview that included:

- Tax Rate – Amherst versus other Hillsborough County towns
- Amherst town portion of overall tax impact
- FY17 Town Government highlights
- FY18 Proposed Budget
- How Your Tax Dollars are Apportioned
- FY18 Proposed Budget & Initiative Highlights
- Default Budget

Chairman Brew indicated that the Town of Amherst's municipal tax rate is \$5.10 as compared to the Hillsborough County average municipal tax rate of \$7.22, and that the Town portion of the tax bill equals 20.3%; the schools portion \$74.7% and the county portion 5.0%. The Chairman went through departmental highlights that made up the FY 2018 proposed budget of \$13,189,021 without warrants; \$292,912, or 2.27% higher than the current year's budget. The proposed budget summary breaks out as follows:

DPW: \$4,260,335 or 33%  
Fire/Police: \$4,154,373 or 31%  
Administration: \$1,594,767 or 12%  
Debt Services: \$1,418,290 or 11%  
Library: \$950,015 or 7%  
Community Development: \$404,519 or 3%  
Recreation: \$340,969 or 3%  
Welfare & Health Agencies: \$65,753 or 0%

Chairman Brew then went over new initiatives, global assumptions, and budget comparisons between the FY17 operating budget and the proposed FY18 budget. He also indicated that the FY17 tax rate per \$1,000 was \$5.10 and that the total proposed budget tax rate amounts to \$5.41, a

31 cent increase over the FY17 tax rate. He noted that the operational budget portion of the tax rate will be \$5.12. There are two ways to look at the tax impact of the operational budget. If only the operational budget warrant article is passed by the voters, and all other articles are rejected, then the tax increase is only \$0.02 per \$1000. However, the FY2017 operational budget was only \$4.95 of the \$5.10 tax rate per \$1000 a difference of \$0.17 so one could also say that the tax impact of the operational budget warrant article is \$0.17 per \$1000. Chairman Brew stated that Board of Selectmen offer both the \$0.02 and \$0.17 tax impact calculations for the operational budget to the voters in the interest of full transparency.

The presentation included a history and breakdown of revenue. The FY2018 default budget calculation, at \$12,885,989, came in at less than the proposed budget.

Chairman Brew read Article 22: Operating Budget: "Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purposes set forth herein, totaling \$13,189,021. Should this article be defeated the default budget shall be \$12,891,365 which is the same as last year with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Town or by law; or the governing body may hold one special meeting in accordance with RSA 40:13 X and XVI to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only. This operating budget warrant article does not include appropriations contained in any other warrant articles." The Board of Selectmen supports this article by a vote of 5-0-0. The Ways and Means Committee has not yet voted on this article. This article has an estimated tax impact of \$0.02 or \$0.17 per thousand as noted above.

Board members went through Warrant Articles as follows:

Article 23: Contingency Fund – The Board of Selectmen supports this article by a vote of 5-0-0. The Ways and Means Committee supports this article by a vote of 7-0. This article has zero estimated tax impact

Article 24: Police Union Contract – The Board of Selectmen support this article by a vote of 3-0-0. The Ways and Means Committee has not yet voted on this article. This article has an estimated tax impact of \$0.03 per thousand.

Article 25: Special Meeting if Collective Bargaining Agreement is defeated – The Board of Selectmen supports this article by a vote of 5-0-0. The Ways and Means Committee supports this article by a vote of 6-0-0. This article has zero estimated tax impact.

Article 26: Assessing Revaluation Capital Reserve Fund – The Board of Selectmen supports this article 5-0-0. The Ways and Means Committee supports this article by a vote of 7-0-0. This article has an estimated tax impact of \$0.01 per thousand. The Assessing Revaluation CRF balance: \$7,269.32 as of November 30, 2016.

Article 27: Communications Center Capital Reserve Fund – The Board of Selectmen supports this article by a vote of 5-0-0. The Ways and Means Committee supports this article by a vote of 7-0-0. This article has an estimated tax impact of \$0.01 per thousand. The Communication CRF balance: \$66,133.27 as of November 30, 2016.

Article 28: Change of Purpose, Fire Truck Refurbish and Purchase Capital Reserve Fund – The Board of Selectmen supports this article by a vote of 5-0-0. The Ways and Means Committee supports this article by a vote of 6-0-0. This article has zero estimated tax impact per thousand.

Article 29: Fire Rescue Vehicle and Equipment Purchase and Repair Capital Reserve Fund – The Board of Selectmen supports this article by a vote of 5-0-0. The Ways and Means Committee supports this article by a vote of 6-0-0. This article has an estimated tax impact of \$0.07 per thousand. The Fire Truck CRF balance: \$593,156.23 as of November 30, 2016.

Article 30: Ambulance Capital Reserve Fund – The Board of Selectmen supports this article by a vote of 5-0-0. The Ways and Means Committee supports this article by a vote of 7-0-0. This article has an estimated tax impact of \$0.03 per thousand. The Ambulance CRF balance: \$67,866.39 as of November 30, 2016.

Article 31: Bridge Repair and Replacement Capital Reserve Fund – The Board of Selectmen supports this article by a vote of 5-0-0. The Ways and Means Committee supports this article by a vote of 7-0-0. This article has an estimated tax impact of \$0.07 per thousand. The Bridge Replacement CRF has a balance of \$45,166.98 as of November 30, 2016.

Article 32: Town Computer System Capital Reserve Fund – The Board of Selectmen supports this article by a vote of 5-0-0. The Ways and Means Committee supports this article by a vote of 6-0-0. This article has an estimated tax impact of \$0.01 per thousand. The Computer System CRF balance: \$59,925.82 as of November 30, 2016.

Article 33: Elderly, Blind, and Disabled Exemption – The Board of Selectmen voted 5-0-0 to support this article. The Ways and Means Committee voted 6-0-0 to support this article. This article has an estimated tax impact of \$0.01 per thousand.

Article 34: All Service Veterans' Tax Credit

Vice Chairman Panasiti indicated that “in 2014, the Legislature provided for Reservists or National Guardsmen to receive the tax credit if they received active duty Title 10 training during periods of conflict included in their at least 90 days of active duty service during a qualified period of conflict. This new optional credit allows for a community to provide the credit, as it states, to all honorably discharged veterans and it appears to now include Reservists and National Guardsmen with active duty Title 10 training at any time via section IV. If you approve this article, all honorably discharged veterans including qualifying Reservists and National Guardsmen can receive a tax credit equal to the amount of the tax credit afford to those veterans who served during war time. The 12 cents per \$1,000 tax impact represents a worst case scenario. Using a formula similar to other towns, we used available data to calculate how many Amherst property owners would qualify for this new credit. There is no real way of knowing how many veterans will apply; we felt it appropriate to use this “worst case” tax impact”.

The Board of Selectmen supports this article by a vote of 5-0-0. The Ways and Means Committee supports this article by a vote of 6-0-0. This article has an estimated tax impact of \$0.12 per thousand.

Article 35: Build Forest View Cemetery – The Board of Selectmen supports this article by a vote of 5-0-0. The Ways and Means Committee supports this article by a vote of 5-1-1. This article has zero estimated tax impact.

Chairman of the Ways & Means Committee, John D’Angelo, expressed concern over Article 24; specifically that the salary adjustment is substantial. He also said the addition of a police officer needed to be better explained to the voters. Paul Mancini rose and asked for the rationale in hiring another patrolman. Chairman Brew indicated that union contracts have to be on the warrant. Selectman Jensen indicated that an additional patrolman would allow for a three patrol model and will bring the Town closer to the staffing levels of similarly populated towns. Chief Reams came forward and stated that he is looking to increase neighborhood patrols in order to deter crime before crime occurs. Discussion about the need for an additional officer was discussed at length with a number of Ways & Means Committee members asking for more data that would justify adding the position. Chris Ager expressed kudos to the police department and suggested including the additional patrolman as a warrant article to allow debate to occur. Chairman Brew said the Board is charged with putting together a budget that is best for all the people and noted that \$160,000 in reductions were made. Mr. Mancini commended the Board for their work.

Selectman Jensen moved, second by Selectman Grella, to close the public hearing at 8:40 p.m. Motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

Selectman Jensen said he was opposed to putting a police officer on the warrant because legally the vote is binding so the Board would not be able to take action to the contrary if necessary. Vice Chairman Panasiti said a warrant article is not the best way to go. “No means No”. The department has been asking for this for 10-12 years. Selectman Grella agreed and stated that the last three police chiefs have made the same request and it is up to the Board to decide. Chairman Brew felt it would not be good precedence to put adding or changing staff on a warrant article. All four Board members agreed.

Ways & Means Committee members again asked for more data justifying the need for an additional patrolman. Chief Reams said other like communities have 1.8 officers per 1,000; Amherst is at 1.5 per 1,000. He said he has provided all the information he is able to and perhaps he and the Ways and Means Committee will have to “agree to disagree”.

## **6. Town Treasurer, Tax Cycle Investments**

Town Treasurer, Liz Overholt, came forward to provide an investments report. Treasurer Overholt said that during this tax cycle (July 1 – December 1) the tax collector received a little over \$20 million in tax payments. Each month the town needs about \$3 million to operate; \$2.6 million of which goes to schools.

After inquiring with seven or eight different banks, investments were made, all properly insured and collateralized, as follows:

- \$10 million went to the money market account at Century Bank at a 0.65% interest rate. The interest earned from the money market for FY16 is \$37,515.50.
- Four million dollars was invested in a new money market account at Enterprise Bank at the same 0.65% interest rate.

Treasurer Overholt said there is a \$3 million CD at Century at an interest rate of 1.35% due in February 2017 that is part of the undesignated fund balance. In three years it has earned \$115,894.52. She said she would invest in another CD when this current one is matured with \$3,750,000 that will also have a no penalty for early withdrawal clause.

In addition, Treasurer Overholt invested \$2 million in a separate CD at Century at 1.35% with this tax cycle's tax money because it was determined that the amount collected during the two-three weeks before the due date of the tax cycle, and it is safe to tie up the money for the three years. It also has no penalty for early withdrawal clause.

There is \$102,000 at the Lake Sunapee Bank which is where the credit card money is sent. Current balances are:

Citizens	\$1.1 million
Century Money Market	\$8 million
Enterprise Money Market	\$4 million
Century 3-Year CD	\$2 million
Century 3-Year CD	\$3.1 million (undesignated fund balance)
Lake Sunapee	\$102,000

**Selectman Grella was excused at 9:38 p.m.**

**7. Fire Station Update – Chairman Brew took this item up later in the meeting.**

**8. Town Administrator**

**8.1 Mailbox Standard Policy Review**

A copy of Amherst's Mailbox Standard Policy was included in the Board packet. Bruce Berry, Director of Public Works stated that the only change was the date of acceptance. Selectman Jensen moved, second by Vice Chairman Panasiti, to approve the policy as presented. Motion passed unanimously, 3-0.

**8.2 Snow & Ice Removal Policy Review**

The Board reviewed the Snow & Ice Removal Policy. Selectman Jensen moved, second by Vice Chairman Panasiti, to approve the Snow & Ice Removal Policy as presented. Motion passed unanimously, 3-0.

**8.3 Town Report Printing Bids**

Town Administrator, Jim O'Mara, indicated that three bids were received and recommended the bid be awarded to Smith & Town. Selectman Jensen moved, second by Vice Chairman Panasiti, to award the Town Report Printing bid to the lowest bidder, Smith & Town, of Berlin, NH at \$1.73 per report for 1,500 reports. Motion passed unanimously, 3-0.

**8.4 Town Report Cover Options – Joshua's Park**

The Board reviewed a number of cover options and chose the third offered of Joshua's Park.

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330 **8.5 Town Report Dedication**  
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332 The Board agreed to dedicate the Town Report to Carol H. (Quinn) Holden and William Henry  
333 Overholt, Jr.  
334

335 **Agenda Item 7 – Fire Station Update**  
336

337 Town Administrator O'Mara said that an official agreement will be executed. Fire Chief Matt  
338 Conley and Health Officer, Scott Tenney, will be involved at a meeting onsite on January 31<sup>st</sup>.  
339

340 **9. Approvals**  
341

342 **9.1 BTLA Settlement – 2015 – Taken Up Earlier**

343 **9.2 Abatements – Taken Up Earlier**

344 **9.3 Land Use Change Tax – Taken Up Earlier**

345 **9.4 Prorated Assessment Recommendation – Taken Up Earlier**  
346

347 **9.5 Timber Tax Levy/Certification of Yield Tax**  
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349 Vice Chairman Panasiti moved, second by Selectman Jensen, to approve and sign the Timber Tax  
350 Levy and Certification of Yield Tax in the amount of \$2,390.76 for Map 1, Lots 17 and 19, Town  
351 Farm Road. Motion passed unanimously, 3-0.  
352

353 **9.6 Payroll**  
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355 Selectman Jensen moved, second by Vice Chairman Panasiti, to approve one (1) FY17 Payroll  
356 Manifest in the amount of \$209,792.72 dated December 22, 2016, subject to review and audit.  
357 Motion passed unanimously, 3-0.  
358

359 Selectman Jensen moved, second by Vice Chairman Panasiti, to approve one (1) FY17 Payroll  
360 Manifest in the amount of \$214,355.32 dated January 5, 2017, subject to review and audit. Motion  
361 passed unanimously, 3-0. It was noted that two Board members were not included on this  
362 manifest. Administrator O'Mara will insure they will be included on the next manifest.  
363

364 **9.7 Accounts Payable**  
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366 Selectman Jensen moved, second by Vice Chairman Panasiti, to approve one (1) FY17 Accounts  
367 Payable Manifest in the amount of \$25,998.92 dated December 15, 2016, subject to review and  
368 audit. (Town Clerk Transfers to the State of NH). Motion passed unanimously, 3-0.  
369

370 Selectman Jensen moved, second by Vice Chairman Panasiti, to approve one (1) FY17 Accounts  
371 Payable Manifest in the amount of \$27,878.68 dated December 31, 2016, subject to review and  
372 audit. (Town Clerk Transfers to the State of NH). Motion passed unanimously, 3-0.  
373

374 Selectman Jensen moved, second by Vice Chairman Panasiti, to approve one (1) FY17 Accounts  
375 Payable Manifest in the amount of \$428,502.06 dated December 13, 2016, subject to review and  
376 audit. Motion passed unanimously, 3-0.  
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Selectman Jensen moved, second by Vice Chairman Panasiti, to approve one (1) FY17 Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$130,891.07 dated December 28, 2016, subject to review and audit. Motion passed unanimously, 3-0.

Selectman Jensen moved, second by Vice Chairman Panasiti, to approve one (1) FY17 Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$2,641,533.00 dated January 2, 2017, subject to review and audit. (School Disbursements). Motion passed unanimously, 3-0.

Selectman Jensen moved, second by Vice Chairman Panasiti, to approve one (1) FY17 Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$2,151,794.00 dated December 19, 2016, subject to review and audit. (Hillsborough County Tax). Motion passed unanimously, 3-0.

#### **9.8 Concentration Account**

Selectman Jensen moved, second by Vice Chairman Panasiti, to approve one (1) FY 17 Concentration Account Manifest in the amount of \$615.81 dated December 14, 2016, subject to review and audit. Motion passed unanimously, 3-0.

#### **9.9 Previous Meeting Minutes – December 12, 19, 26, 2016**

Selectman Jensen moved, second by Vice Chairman Panasiti, to approve the Board of Selectmen meeting minutes of December 12, 2016, as presented. Motion passed unanimously, 3-0.

Selectman Jensen moved, second by Vice Chairman Panasiti, to approve the Board of Selectmen meeting minutes of December 19, 2016, as presented. Motion passed unanimously, 3-0.

The December 26, 2016 meeting minutes will be taken up at the Board's next meeting,

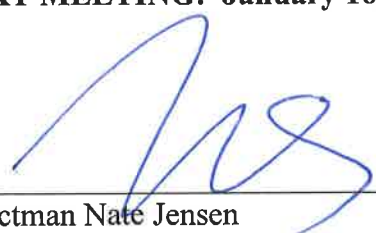
#### **10. New/Old Business**

Town Administrator O'Mara reported that a planner, Simon Corson, had been hired and will start work next week. Selectman Jensen said one action item from tonight's meeting is drafting a response to the audit recommendations. Chairman Brew said the Land Committee had developed a list of all town land and will be meeting again soon.

#### **11. Adjournment**

Selectman Jensen moved, second by Vice Chairman Panasiti, to adjourn the meeting at 10:02 p.m. Motion passed unanimously, 3-0.

**NEXT MEETING: January 16, 2017**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Selectman Nate Jensen  
Clerk, Board of Selectmen

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date