



Town of Amherst, NH
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES
Barbara Landry Meeting Room
2 Main Street
Monday, August 28, 2017

1. Call to Order

Chairman Dwight Brew called the non-public meeting to order at 5:45 p.m.

Attendees: Chairman Dwight Brew, Selectmen Tom Grella, Peter Lyon, and Reed Panasiti. Also present: Town Administrator, Jim O'Mara.

2. Non-Public Session, RSA 91-A:3 II (d)

3. Pledge of Allegiance – Declan and Finn Steele, Boy Scouts in Amherst, led the pledge.

Chairman Brew next took up agenda #5 - Citizens Forum.

Marie Grella came forward to inform the Board about the Wreaths Across Amherst campaign. She is looking to raise \$5,000 in order to place wreaths on veterans' graves in the five Amherst cemeteries which number 480. She has made bows for the wreaths. Her granddaughter helped her develop a Go Fund me page and donations can be made by visiting: gofundme.com/wreaths-across-amherst-nh. Each donation covers the cost of one wreath and will be accepted through November 1, 2017.

Mrs. Grella then described the Moving Wall Project which is the only replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial constructed for the sole purpose of sharing. The wall would come to Amherst from September 19-23; an appropriate location has not yet been decided upon. An opening ceremony is typically held within the first couple of days of the wall's arrival. Mrs. Grella said there are 58,318 names listed on the memorial wall with approximately 1,300 of these still unaccounted for prisoners of war and missing in action. She left the Board members with packets of information about the project.

Veteran and Selectman Panasiti thanked Mrs. Grella for the "magnificent gesture". Police Chief Mark Reams rose to state that Amherst Police Association had raised \$500 toward the Wreaths Across Amherst campaign. Mrs. Grella expressed her thanks.

4. Public Hearing – No Parking Ordinance

At 6:45 p.m., Selectman Grella moved, second by Selectman Panasiti, to open the second of two public hearings on the "no parking ordinance" on Broadway. Motion passed unanimously, 4-0. There was no

public input. At 6:46 p.m., Selectman Grella moved, second by Selectman Panasiti, to close the public hearing. Motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

5. Citizens Forum – Taken Up Earlier

6. Departments Quarterly Reports

6.1 Library

Amy Lapointe, Library Director, came forward. She said FY17 ended with only \$28 left in her budget. Circulation is down a bit. Her door count last year was 113,000 or 2,100 a week. About 2,000 people attended an adult program. Recreational venues – concerts, cooking segments, and the like, remain popular. 478 kids signed up for their themed program “Build A Better World”. 2,731 kids attended an event this summer. Director Lapointe thanked local businesses for their contributions to the summer reading program. The library celebrated with Sue Ruggerio on her retirement after 15 years serving the library patrons. They’ve added 42 new editions to the collection; one being the US Newstream. Light fixtures were replaced in August. The library will be closed on Labor Day. Director Lapointe asked everyone to mark their calendars for the Book Sale on September 16th. They are in need of volunteers for the event. In response to a Board member question, Ms. Lapointe said she has served as Library Director for 12 years. On behalf of the Board, Chairman Brew thanked her for her report.

6.2 Tax & Assessing

Gail Stout, Tax Collector, came forward and reported the following [copy attached]:

- The town recently entered into a five year contract with KRT Appraisal for services to include the quarterly review of all property data for the next town-wide revaluation scheduled for tax year 2021.
- As a result of the 2016 valuation update, Amherst’s net valuation increased by 116.5 million dollars to a total of \$1,693,564,637 which was used to calculate the 2016 tax rate of \$25.10 that was \$1.38 less than the 2015 tax rate.
- The July 2017 property tax bills released on May 31, 2017 are currently 96 percent collected. Liens were placed on May 5, 2017 for 72 properties with outstanding property taxes from the 2016 tax year.
- A total of 77 abatement applications were received for the 2016 tax year. The Board has taken action on all 77. There are currently no active appeals with the Board of Tax and Land Appeals.
- An upgrade to the tax collection software is scheduled for September 1, 2017. The upgrade will include online payment options. Once enabled, ACH payments can be processed from the town website for a fee of \$1.50 and credit card payments with an additional fee of 2.95 percent of the amount being charged.
- Vision Government Solutions is now recommending an upgrade of version 6.5 to version 8. The cost for the upgrade is estimated at \$25,000. The current software will continue to be supported until FY20. It is staff’s goal to include this item in their FY19 strategic initiatives.
- Two abandoned properties were recently taken for non-payment of property taxes. Tax deeds were filed at the Hillsborough County Registry of Deeds on August 11, 2017.

Selectman Lyon asked if it might be beneficial to explore other vendors beyond Vision. Ms. Stout said she is not sure competition would do better. Chairman Brew suggested that between now and

budgeting time, it might make sense to explore options and perhaps put into the upcoming budget. Tax Collector Stout will follow-up.

6.3 Police Department

Police Chief Mark Reams came forward and presented his department's update for the FY17 fourth quarter [copy attached]. His report presented a comparison of the current quarter with a three year average (FY14-16) as opposed to the previous year only. Calls for service for directed patrols increased by 100 while pistol permits issued decreased by 35 which can be attributed to the latest change in the law. Lobby walk-in service increased significantly. Other data was presented on investigations and enforcement, in-service training, and projects, actions, and events. Other information included:

- The department participated in the annual scheduled drug disposal program (started by Chief Lyon). 500 pounds of prescription drugs collected by APD over the course of the last 12 months were disposed of from the box located in the department lobby.
- Architect Dennis Mires conducted an initial walkthrough of APD/EMS facility to develop conceptual blueprint plans for future structure remodeling.
- The Souhegan High School Seatbelt Challenge Team took first place in statewide competition held annually at the NH Policy Academy. This is the fourth time SHS team has finished in first place during the last six competitions.
- The Chief's quarterly officer spotlight went to Officer Kevin Kelly who has participated for the 9th year in the Battle of the Badges and personally raised \$25,000. Chief Reams relayed a story of how Officer Kelly bought dinner to a resident who one evening couldn't cash a check and was down and out.

6.3.1 Department Structure

Chief Reams sought the Board's approval to move forward with a moderate organizational restructuring of the command staff to provide an improved balance of patrol and supervisory coverage that will better serve and protect the residents and community. The Chief is looking to increase his sergeant staffing from two positions to three positions. The anticipated appointment date would be on or about January 1, 2018. The funding for the position has already been built into the department's FY18 budget.

Selectman Lyon moved, second by Selectman Panasiti, to approve the Police Department's organizational restructuring to include three sergeant positions as presented by Chief Reams. Motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

6.3.2 APD Dispatch New Hire

Selectman Grella moved, second by Selectman Panasiti, to approve the hiring of Noemi Bickford to the position of part-time dispatcher effective August 28th, 2017 at an hourly wage of \$16.37 per hour. Motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

6.4 Fire Rescue

Fire Rescue Chief Matt Conley came forward to present his department's quarterly report. He broke out the number of calls for service and training data by each division, Fire and EMS. The Chief said his department conducted 528 inspections and held 25 fire drills over the last fiscal year. He promoted three staff. Projects and events include:

- A new graphic on Ambulance 2 Fire Rescue was shown
- Former Paramedic SUV – to be used for training
- Fire Engine Replacement – the 1991 is the next to go
- File of Life Program – a second blood drive will be held in October
- Second Floor Build Out – still to do includes: updating the phone system; installation and enhancement of radio and alert system; purchase of beds and mattresses

Selectman Lyon asked for statistics on trends transpiring. Chief Conley will provide the information at the Board's next meeting, along with more information on truck replacement.

7. Selectman Candidates' Interviews

Six residents expressed interest in the open selectman seat. They are: Mike Akillian, John D'Angelo, Glenn Noble, Helen Holden Slottje, Charles Vars, and Elaina Bedio. All were present except for Elaina Bedio who was to take interview questions over the phone. Each candidate was asked four questions in an assigned order as drawn. The questions were:

- 1) Please take a moment and tell us about yourself. How long have you lived in town and what type of work do you do?
- 2) Have you served the community in any other capacity? If so, please describe what you did.
- 3) How do you think you can help the Board continue to move the town forward in a stable and sustainable manner? What skill set will you bring to the Board?
- 4) Where do you believe town operations could be improved or enhanced?

After the second question, Elaina Bedio withdrew her application as she was having difficulty hearing the conversation.

7.1 Selection

Each Board member thanked every candidate for their interests, then provided their thoughts and rationale for their choice of selectman. Selectman Lyon moved, second by Selectman Grella, to appoint Mike Akillian to fill the term of Nate Jensen who resigned from the Board on August 14, 2017. Motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

7.2 Swearing In

Town Administrator, Jim O'Mara, swore in Mr. Akillian to applause and congratulations.

8. Town Administrator

8.1 Letter of Recognition – Was Not Taken Up

8.2 MS-1, Inventory of Valuation

Administrator O'Mara asked that the Board review the MS-1 form, Summary Inventory of Valuation which was included in the Board packet and is ready to be submitted to the Department of Revenue Administration (DRA). The net valuation for 2017 marks an increase of approximately \$5,952,463 from 2016. The increase is largely due to growth through new construction and building permit activity that continues to drive the upward valuation trend.

Selectman Grella moved, second by Selectman Panasiti, to approve and sign the DRA MS-1 report for 2017. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

8.3 MS-61, Tax Collector's Report

Selectman Grella moved, second by Selectman Lyon, to approve the MS-61 form, the Tax Collector's report for FY17 which must be submitted to the DRA prior to September 1st of each year. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

8.4 MS-434, Revised Estimated Revenues

Administrator O'Mara stated the form indicates an increase in revenue of \$100,000 over what was indicated during the budget process, mostly due to car registrations. Chairman Brew stated that if revenue comes in lower than projected, "we need to spend less". Administrator O'Mara said DRA will send back a form 434R indicating their agreement. This becomes the official document by which the tax rate is set.

Selectman Grella moved, second by Selectman Lyon, to accept MS-434 as presented. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

8.5 MS-535, Annual Financial Report

Selectman Grella moved, second by Selectman Lyon, to approve the MS-535, Annual Financial Report, as presented. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

8.6 CLG Grant thru DHR for CAMP – Community Development

Administrator O'Mara announced that Community Development Director, Gordon Leedy, had received notice from the Division of Historical Resources that the town's application for a CLG grant had been selected for funding from the 2017 pool of applicants. The grant amount is \$7,300.

Selectman Lyon moved, second by Selectman Grella, to accept the CLG grant in the amount of \$7,300 to fund the National Alliance of Preservation Commission's Assistance and Mentoring Program (NAPC's CAMP Training). Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

Selectman Lyon read into the record the following:

"RESOLVED: That this municipality shall enter into a contract with the State of New Hampshire, acting by and through the Department of Cultural Resources providing for the performance by this Municipality of certain services as documented within the foregoing grant application, and that the official listed, James O'Mara, on behalf of this municipality, is authorized and directed to enter into said grant agreement with the State of New Hampshire,, and that they are to take any and all such actions that may be deemed necessary, desirable and appropriate in order to execute, seal, acknowledge and deliver any and all documents, agreements and other instruments on behalf of this Municipality in order to accomplish the same.

"RESOLVED: That the signature of the above authorized party or parties of this Municipality, when affixed to any instrument or document described herein, or contemplated, by these resolutions, shall be conclusive evidence of the authority of said parties to bind the Municipality thereby."

238 **8.7 State of NH, Road Salt Bid – DPW**

239
240 Administrator O'Mara presented a sole source state bid for road salt. Selectman Grella moved, second
241 by Selectman Lyon, to approve the purchase of road salt via NH Department of Transportation
242 contract award #8002193 to Granite State Minerals for \$54 per ton of bulk road salt for the 2017-18
243 season. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.
244

245 **8.8 Historic District Commission Resignation**

246
247 Selectman Grella moved, second by Selectman Akillian, to accept, with regret, the resignation of
248 Susan Clark from the Historic District Commission. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.
249

250 **8.9 P.I.L.O.T. Request – SNHRMC**

251
252 Administrator O'Mara reported on a letter received from the Southern NH Medical Center regarding
253 their exemption request that was not granted at the Board's last meeting. Via its Vice President of
254 Facilities & Emergency Management, Scott Cote, the medical center asked for an opportunity to
255 discuss with the Board the option of a PILOT program rather than their proceeding with an appeal.
256 The Board discussed the matter. Administrator O'Mara will reach out to arrange a meeting with
257 Chairman Brew and Selectman Lyon who will report back to the full Board at its next meeting.
258

259 **8.10 Ciderfest**

260
261 Selectman Grella moved, second by Selectman Panasiti, to authorize support of the annual Ciderfest
262 events to be held on September 23rd from 12:00-4:00 p.m. in Lindabury Orchard. Support will include
263 coverage under the town's insurance, DPW supplying five trash barrels, and support from the police
264 and fire departments. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.
265

266 **8.11 FY19 Budget Calendar Review**

267
268 The Board reviewed the proposed FY19 Budget Schedule and discussed at length the sequence of
269 when department head initiatives are proposed and when is the most effective time for the Board to
270 weigh in. The Board suggested two changes to the timeline: 1) the Board meeting listed as
271 September 16th should be September 18th; and 2) remove the meeting to be held on December 26th and
272 include meetings on two of the three dates of December 4th and December 18th.
273

274 **8.12 FY19 Budget Spreadsheet Review**

275
276 The Board discussed the spreadsheet presented. Chairman Brew felt it was too complicated.
277 Selectman Akillian said the first sheet was not helpful and calling attention to the lines representing
278 significant change would be helpful. Administrator O'Mara will re-format and bring back to the
279 Board.
280

281 **8.13 September Meeting Schedule**

282
283 There will be no meeting of the Board on September 11th. Board meetings will be held on September
284 18th and September 25th, 2017.
285
286
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289 **9. Approvals**

290
291 **9.1 Baboosic Lake Septic Warrants**

292
293 Selectman Lyon moved, second by Selectman Grella, to approve and sign the Quarterly Maintenance
294 Warrants for the Baboosic Lake Community Septic bills due October 2, 2017 as follows: Phase I =
295 \$899.52; Phase II = \$4,978.61; Phase III = \$5,739.26; and Phase IV = \$4,048.76. Motion passed
296 unanimously, 5-0.

297
298 **9.2 Hawkers & Vendors Permit Application**

299
300 Selectman Lyon moved, second by Selectman Panasiti, to approve the hawkers and vendors
301 application and grant a permit to Steven Walton to sell coffee and food concessions for the period
302 from August 28, 2017 through August 28, 2018. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0. Administrator
303 O'Mara said Mr. Walton will serve as a replacement vendor at the Garden Center.

304
305 **9.3 Assessing**

306
307 Selectman Lyon moved, second by Selectman Grella, to approve a Land Use Change Tax for property
308 located at 21 Thornton Ferry Road II, Map/Lot 4-63-4, in the amount of \$3,340. Motion passed
309 unanimously, 5-0.

310
311 Selectman Lyon moved, second by Selectman Panasiti, to approve a Land Use Change Tax for
312 property located at 7 Victoria Ridge, Map/Lot 4-147-13, in the amount of \$19,000. Motion passed
313 unanimously, 5-0.

314
315 Selectman Lyon moved, second by Selectman Panasiti, to approve a Land Use Change Tax for
316 property located at 18 Lyndeborough Road, Map/Lot 5-60-1, in the amount of \$13,200. Motion
317 passed unanimously, 5-0.

318 Selectman Lyon moved, second by Selectman Panasiti, to approve a Land Use Change Tax for
319 property located at 64 Dodge Road, Map/Lot 7-43, in the amount of \$6,200. Motion passed
320 unanimously, 5-0.

321
322 Selectman Lyon moved, second by Selectman Panasiti, to approve a Land Use Change Tax for
323 property located at 34 Hillside Avenue, Map/Lot 24-41, in the amount of \$7,900. Motion passed
324 unanimously, 5-0.

325
326 **9.4 Payroll**

327
328 Selectman Lyon moved, second by Selectman Panasiti, to approve one (1) FY 18 Payroll Manifest in
329 the amount of \$234,694.03 dated August 17, 2017 subject to review and audit. Motion passed
330 unanimously, 5-0.

331
332 **9.5 Accounts Payable**

333
334 Selectman Lyon moved, second by Selectman Panasiti, to approve one (1) FY 18 Accounts Payable
335 Manifest in the amount of \$30,952.42 dated August 16, 2017, subject to review and audit. (Town
336 Clerk Transfers to the State of NH) Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

338 Selectman Lyon moved, second by Selectman Grella, to approve one (1) FY 18 Accounts Payable
339 Manifest in the amount of \$467,045.17 dated August 18, 2017, subject to review and audit. Motion
340 passed unanimously, 5-0.

341
342 **9.6 Previous Meeting Minutes – August 14, 2017 Public & Non Public**

343
344 Selectman Lyon moved, second by Selectman Grella, to approve the Board of Selectmen public
345 meeting minutes of August 14, 2017, as presented. Motion passed 4-0-1 [Selectman Akillian
346 abstained].

347
348 Selectman Lyon moved, second by Selectman Grella, to approve the Board of Selectmen non-public
349 meeting minutes of August 14, 2017, as presented. Motion passed 4-0-1 [Selectman Akillian
350 abstained].

351
352 **10. New/Old Business**


353
354 Selectman Panasiti said he attended the soft opening of the Disc Golf course at Birch Park. Several
355 people who played said it was the best layed-out course they had played on.

356
357 Board members discussed the selectman selection process and agreed that a candidate must appear in
358 person since a clear telephone connection is not always dependable. Selectman Akillian said it would
359 have been helpful to have read all four questions upfront and to have asked if there was anything else
360 the candidate wanted to tell the Board about themselves.

361
362 **11. Adjournment**

363
364 Selectman Grella moved, second by Selectman Panasiti, to adjourn the meeting at 10:24 p.m. Motion
365 passed unanimously, 5-0.

366
367 **NEXT MEETING: September 18, 2017**

368
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372
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374
375 
376 Selectman Reed Panasiti
Clerk, Board of Selectmen

9/18/2017
Date