



Town of Amherst, NH
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES
Barbara Landry Meeting Room
2 Main Street
Monday, September 18, 2017

1. Call to Order

Chairman Dwight Brew called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Attendees: Chairman Dwight Brew, Selectmen Mike Akillian, Tom Grella, Peter Lyon, and Reed Panasiti. Also present: Town Administrator, Jim O'Mara and Suzanne Beauchesne taking minutes.

2. Pledge of Allegiance – Executive Assistant, Mary Guild, led the pledge.

3. Public Hearing – Town Road Acceptance – Victoria Ridge (RSA 674:40-a, III)

Pursuant to RSA 674:40-a, III, *Selectman Grella moved, second by Selectman Panasiti, to open the public hearing to accept the public roadway in the subdivision referred to as Victoria Ridge. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.*

There were no public comments. *Selectman Grella moved, second by Selectman Akillian, to close the public hearing at 6:31 p.m. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.*

Town Administrator Jim O'Mara indicated that he posted the public hearing prior to the Board's approval as is his usual practice, but the roadway meets all stipulated requirements and was inspected by the Director of Public Works, Bruce Berry. Chairman Brew said the town was requiring a maintenance bond in the amount of \$22,500 for the recently completed work done. Selectman Akillian asked if two street signs and one stop sign needed to be erected and the maintenance bond posted prior to the town accepting the road. Town Administrator Jim O'Mara said a bond would not be returned until the three signs are up; accepting Victoria Ridge as a town road could be contingent upon the erection of the three street signs.

Selectman Lyon asked if an ordinance would be necessary to erect a stop sign and whether the road needed to be accepted prior to developing an ordinance. Chairman Brew asked if the Safety Committee had concerns with the town accepting the road prior to signs being up. Director Berry said one stop sign is in place; the other is gone. Chairman Brew asked Administrator O'Mara to get feedback from the Safety Committee so the Board could take action at its next meeting.

35 **4. Citizens Forum - None**

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37 **5. Hoyle & Tanner, Horace Greeley Bridge**

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39 Director of Public Works, Bruce Berry, came forward. He introduced Sean James of Hoyle &
40 Tanner who joined him. Director Berry said that at the Board's request, the NH Department of
41 Transportation (NHDOT) added the Horace Greeley Bridge to their reimbursement program in
42 2010 which was around the same time as the Manchester Road Bridge. Director Berry said he
43 heard loud and clear how long the Manchester Road Bridge process took and understood his
44 assignment was to "have a project on the shelf ready to go without stumbling blocks". NHDOT
45 approved the Engineering Study in March 2013. The Engineering Study is a necessary piece of the
46 NH Department of Environmental Services' (NHDES) application for an approved wetland permit
47 and NHDOT's approval and reimbursement process. The study included a reduction or exception
48 to NHDES' Streamwater Crossing Rules adopted in 2009. In hindsight, Director Berry said he
49 should have brought this to the Board in 2013 for approval.

50
51 The current crossing is a Tier III stream crossing, a swamp, with three pipes that meet the
52 requirements of a ten year storm. The approval guideline that NHDES now uses covers a 100 year
53 storm. NHDES approved and issued the Wetland Permit in March 2015 and that process included
54 13 conditions of findings. NHDOT approved submitted bridge replacement plans in August 2015.
55 After a recent bridge inspection, the Board approved a six ton legal load limit restriction. As a
56 result, last month NHDOT accelerated replacement from FY20 to FY18.

57
58 Mr. James reviewed a bridge replacement project summary [attached] to include the condition of
59 the existing bridge, design criteria, regulatory constraints, and proposed replacement. He
60 responded to a number of technical questions asked by the Board stating:

- 61
- 62 • NHDES would not permit just replacing the corroded pipes
 - 63 • There will be wing walls with standard railings; nothing extra, no staining required
 - 64 • Traffic volume does not impact structural design
 - 65 • Closing the road during construction would be most cost effective
 - 66 • Construction period four to five months with road closed
 - 67 • The slip lining option is less expensive but not appropriate here and the town would not
 - 68 likely get a permit
 - 69 • Design details are due to poor soil and hydraulics
 - 70 • Road profile at bridge will be raised approximately one foot to meet hydraulic
 - 71 requirements
 - 72 • Utilities will come from above
 - 73 • There will be no load posting on the new bridge
- 74

75 Mr. James said it is best to put the bid out in January; it will be competitive. Selectman Akillian
76 asked how much is being saved by taxpayers because the project is moved up. Mr. James said
77 three percent per year would be saved. The estimated construction cost is \$1,570,210 in 2018
78 dollars with the town share being \$314,000. Administrator O'Mara pointed out that funds are
79 available now given passage of the Warrant Article in 2011 relative to Bridge No. 60-158.

6. No Parking Ordinance Approval

Chairman Brew said two public hearings have been held on this proposed ordinance. *Selectman Panasiti moved, second by Selectman Grella, to approve the "No Parking" ordinance on Broadway commencing at 185 feet from Lake Front Street and ending at 410 feet from Lake Front Street on the lake side of the street. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.*

7. Strategic Plan Presentations

7.1 Tax and Assessing

Tax Collector, Gail Stout, presented her September 2017 Strategic Plan Update [attached]. Information contained in her report included:

- Current valuation data with a net valuation of \$1,699,517,100; the figure used to calculate the 2017 tax rate set by the Department of Revenue Administration (DRA) in late October.
- The town used MRI through 2011; started with KRT in 2012
- The annual tax warrant for town, school, and county budgets is approximately 41 million dollars. Collection rates in Amherst historically range from 94 to 96 percent at calendar year end.
- The number of properties in a tax lien status continues to decline each year as collections increase.

Ms. Stout would like to expand service through technology by expanding payment options, electronic billing, and providing tax information online. Residents will be able to pay their bills via credit card soon. She said her office is currently using the Vision software 6.5 that was last upgraded in 2011. Version 6.5 is being upgraded to version 8 at a cost of \$25,000. Ms. Stout reports that Oracle and Microsoft will no longer support Vision beyond 2020. Board members asked a number of questions regarding the data presented and praised Tax Collector Stout for her exceptional service to the taxpayers of Amherst. Chairman Brew turned to the Ways and Means Committee. Chairman, John D'Angelo introduced himself as did other members in attendance: Peter Moustakis, David Sullivan, April Savino, Maggie Paul, Dan Ferris, Elaina Bedio. Ways and Means Committee members' questions focused on the Vision Software.

April Savino asked Ms. Stout what was included as part of the software enhancement and questioned whether it was the best platform since \$25,000 was a lot. Ms. Stout will provide more information. Maggie Paul said she recalled Gail Stout giving up her department's budget last year so that other departments could be fully funded. She said she will push for her to be funded. She said that the department staff does great work and should be funded. Chairman D'Angelo said he suspected the \$25,000 fee would like go to Oracle and Microsoft but if there is a desire to keep Vision than there is no option and the upgrade done sooner rather than later.

7.2 Police Department

Police Chief Mark Reams came forward to provide his department's Annual Strategic Plan Review [attached]. The Chief went through the department's four goals as identified originally four years ago:

- Goal 1: Provide improved communication and community services to our citizens.
Goal 2: Increase officer training to maintain professional standards and address community concerns.
Goal 3: Improve efficiency and patrol area coverage.
Goal 4: Improve department facilities and equipment.

Chief Reams listed a number of accomplishments made since 2013 and desired outcomes. Much data was provided in his report regarding crime rate, traffic enforcement, citations issued, drug arrests, and more. The Chief also provided an update on activities of the Safety Communications Center, and projected budget comparisons for both the department and center. In response to questions from the Board and Ways and Means Committee members, the following information was provided by Chief Reams.

- The increase in drug arrests is largely due to efforts in concert with the Task Force
- Level of service and overall impression of the Amherst PD continues to increase
- Replacing the antenna tower is still part of the long term plan; grant money may be available in 2020 or 2022
- Initial building renovation pricing estimates and construction schedule options will be available for discussion in early 2018
- Current agency top command structure consists of police chief and two lieutenants; one in charge of each of two divisions, Operations and Support
- Commander rank designations in Amherst are not in accordance with best practices of professional police organizations where division commanders are customarily assigned rank of Captain
- New titles from lieutenant to captain doesn't add responsibilities to each position but rather is more reflective of current responsibilities and eliminates the wage disparity among other community counterparts
- Chief Reams does not foresee more staffing changes going forward; perhaps way down the road there may be a need for a sergeant detective
- Elevation from lieutenant to captain would benefit the community by retaining experienced staff which cannot be replaced easily and increases motivation among other things
- Amherst PD is not authorized to issue amnesty to drug users seeking help. That remains the purview of the County Attorney

Committee Chair, John D'Angelo, thanked the Chief for a "data rich" report, and suggested some thinking about setting standards for promotion beyond the two individuals being promoted currently. He also encouraged continued work in attacking the drug crisis at the user level and providing options for supervised assistance.

7.3 Recreation

Craig Fraley, Recreation Department Director, provided his department's FY18-FY20 Strategic Plan [attached]. Director Fraley reviewed his department's goals and provided an update on the status of each.

- Goal 1: Increase citizen participation in programs
Goal 2: Continue to enhance the use of Baboosic Lake Town Beach

Goal 3: Increase park and recreation facilities
Goal 4: Diversity program offerings to serve citizens of all ages

His FY18-20 initiatives include:

- Update Wilkins Fields and facilities to increase a better playing surface and increase usage to existing fields
- Create a working group to examine the needs of a community center for the town and research funding
- Upgrade staffing to assist with growing demands of the department
- Continue with vehicle/equipment replacement plan
- Collaborate with Amherst Office of Community Development to create safer access for both bicycle and pedestrian usage around Amherst

Director Fraley's report includes details of the initiatives and a budget impact summary. Comments and responses to questions posed by Board members and Ways and Means Committee members include the following:

1. Stairs between upper and lower Wilkins Field need to be replaced and access enhanced with an embankment slide; and work can be done in stages
2. Upper Wilkins and Lower Wilkins has different soil; hence, one being greener than the other
3. Flat field space is still a big deal. Recreation is trying to make fields usable before purchasing new property; department can start projecting and well as reporting on actual figures.
4. The slide has to be about 35 feet. It's use, as with all town activities, is done at the user's own risk.
5. Mission statement 8 to 80 is good
6. Senior Barbecue has been moved to Thursday
7. Community Center will require a fair amount of discussion; be mindful of services already being offered in town

8. Budget Discussion

Town Administrator, Jim O'Mara, included in the Board packet a list of departmental issues to be discussed during the budgeting process, and to be provided to the Ways and Means Committee. Chairman Brew asked the Ways and Means Committee to provide input to the Town Administrator soon so that further discussion can be had at next week's Board meeting.

9. Town Administrator

9.1 AFR Surplus Equipment

Selectman Grella moved, second by Selectman Akillian, to declare the 2001 F350 Type I ambulance obsolete [attached]. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

Selectman Grella moved, second by Selectman Akillian, to declare the 2005 Ford Explorer Paramedic Response Vehicle as surplus. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0. Town Administrator

O'Mara noted that the vehicle has over 100,000 miles and the frame and body are in poor condition and no longer road worthy and will be hauled away.

9.2 Town Common Use Request – Amherst Jr. Women's Club

Selectman Lyon moved, second by Selectman Panasiti, to approve the use of the Town Common by the Amherst Junior Women's Club on November 24th, 2017 for the Annual Trot Off Your Turkey event. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

10. Approvals

10.1 Eversource Petition and Pole License

Selectman Lyon moved, second by Selectman Grella, to approve a pole license forand to authorize the Board of Selectmen to sign the petition presented. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

Veteran Tax Credits

Selectman Lyon moved, second by Selectman Grella, to approve the Veterans Tax Credit in the amount of \$500 for each of the nine properties listed as follows: Map/Lot 2-2-77, 2-4-1, 3-87-35, 5-16-27, 5-91, 5-103-6, 6-28-63, 6-28-88, and 10-67-22. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

All Service Veterans' Tax Credit

Selectman Lyon moved, second by Selectman Grella, to approve the All Service Tax Credit in the amount of \$500 for each of the five properties listed as follows: Map/Lot 2-2-58, 5-1-8, 6-28-60, 6-91, 8-2-2. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

Timber Tax Levy/Yield Tax

Selectman Lyon moved, second by Selectman Panasiti, to approve and sign the Timber Tax Levy/Yield Tax for property located at 177 Hollis Road, Map/Lot 2-4-1, in the amount of \$70.72. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

10.2 Assessing

Administrator O'Mara said the abatement request will be rescheduled to the Board meeting of September 25, 2017 and will be moved up on the agenda.

10.3 Payroll

Selectman Panasiti moved, second by Selectman Akillian, to approve one (1) FY18 Payroll Manifest in the amount of \$222,415.64 dated August 31, 2017, subject to review and audit. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

Selectman Panasiti moved, second by Selectman Akillian, to approve one (1) FY18 Payroll Manifest in the amount of \$217,123.24 dated September 14, 2017, subject to review and audit. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

277 **10.4 Accounts Payable**

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279 *Selectman Panasiti moved, second by Selectman Akillian, to approve one (1) FY18 Accounts*
280 *Payable Manifest in the amount of \$35,120.55 dated August 31, 2017, subject to review and audit.*
281 *(Town Clerk Transfers to the State of NH). Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.*

282
283 *Selectman Panasiti moved, second by Selectman Akillian, to approve one (1) FY18 Accounts*
284 *Payable Manifest in the amount of \$141,705.52 dated August 29, 2017, subject to review and*
285 *audit. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.*

286
287 *Selectman Panasiti moved, second by Selectman Akillian, to approve one (1) FY18 Accounts*
288 *Payable Manifest in the amount of \$248,249.02 dated September 7, 2017, subject to review and*
289 *audit. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.*

290
291 *Selectman Panasiti moved, second by Selectman Akillian, to approve one (1) FY18 Accounts*
292 *Payable Manifest in the amount of \$2,788,070.00 dated September 1, 2017, subject to review and*
293 *audit. (School Disbursements). Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.*

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295 **10.5 Concentration Account**

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297 *Selectman Panasiti moved, second by Selectman Akillian, to approve one (1) FY18 Concentration*
298 *Accounts Manifest in the amount of \$4,582.83 dated September 9, 2017, subject to review and*
299 *audit. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.*

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301 **10.6 Previous Meeting Minutes – August 28, 2017 Public/Non-Public**

302
303 *Selectman Panasiti moved, second by Selectman Lyon, to approve the Board of Selectmen meeting*
304 *minutes of August 28, 2017, as presented. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.*

305
306 *Selectman Panasiti moved, second by Selectman Lyon, to approve the Board of Selectmen non-*
307 *public meeting minutes of August 28, 2017. Motion passed, 4-0-1 [Selectman Akillian abstained].*

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309 **11. New/Old Business**

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311 Selectman Panasiti asked if there was a better way to get information to people in town; perhaps
312 through a bulletin similar to that put out by the Recreation Department. Administrator O'Mara
313 said a good source of information is the town's website. Selectman Akillian said a column in the
314 Amherst Citizen might be worthwhile and agreed to work on putting such a column, or bulletin,
315 together.

316
317 Selectman Lyon said the Planning Board considered a 32 unit housing development proposal on
318 Route 102 toward Hollis. A site walk has been scheduled.

319
320 Administrator O'Mara announced that the Department of Motor Vehicles will be shut down on
321 Friday, October 6, through Tuesday, October 10, due to computer upgrades.

322
323 Chairman Brew said he and Selectman Lyon met with Scott Cote, VP of Facilities and Emergency
324 Management of the Southern NH Medical Center who had requested an exemption that the Board
325 denied. The medical center asked for an opportunity to discuss with the Board the option of a

PILOT program rather than their proceeding with an appeal. The Board now awaits further information from Mr. Cote.

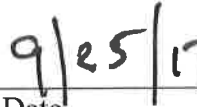
12. Adjournment

Selectman Panasiti moved, second by Selectman Grella, to adjourn the meeting at 10:15 p.m. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

NEXT MEETING: September 25, 2017



Selectman Reed Panasiti
Clerk, Board of Selectmen



Date