



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

1. Call to Order

Chairman Dwight Brew called the public meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

Attendees: Chairman Dwight Brew, Selectmen Mike Akillian, Tom Grella, Peter Lyon, and Reed Panasiti. Also present: Town Administrator, Jim O'Mara, and Executive Assistant Mary Guild.

2. Pledge of Allegiance – Craig Fraley, Director, Parks and Recreation, led the pledge.

3. Citizens Forum - None

4. FY19 Budget Discussion

4.1 Proposed FY19 Budget

Chairman Brew said there were five areas to be discussed by the Board to be followed by any questions from the Ways and Means Committee.

Police Station Renovation: Selectman Lyon stated that after receipt of a thorough, high-level presentation by the Police Chief and having reviewed the Ways and Means Committee comments, it is clear that more work needs to be done, particularly related to work plans and related costs. He proposed the establishment of a committee composed of one Selectman, one Ways & Means Committee member, the Town Administrator, the DPW Director, Police Chief, and two community members. Chairman Brew said delaying the project would mean that no funding would be available until July 1, 2019, and parts of the project could be addressed over the next 18 months. Selectman Akillian said he is in favor of forming a committee but would not be in favor of pulling the fund request from the warrant article. Selectman Lyon moved, second by Selectman Grella, to establish a Police Renovation Committee composed of seven members as described above and charge the committee to create a charter to include the needs and costs of the proposed renovation and report back to the Select Board. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

Document Management: Chairman Brew said he feels it would make sense to adopt a similar approach to deciding what documents need to be preserved and available to the public and for converting from paper documents to electronic media. Selectman Lyon suggested a committee

made up of the Town Administrator, the Community Development Director and one other. Chairman Brew asked if anyone on the Ways and Means Committee might have an interest and knowledge in the area. April Savino volunteered to serve on the three-member committee. Selectman Lyon moved, second by Selectman Panasiti, to establish the three-member committee as described above to review a long-term strategy for document management. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0. Chairman Brew said some funds are in the current year's budget that can be expended on initial steps to move the project forward.

Stormwater: Chairman Brew said there was some confusion on responsibilities for Stormwater which rests with Community Development. However, some work is done by other departmental employees but it is not desirable to move funds from one department to another. It is understood, and all Board members were comfortable with Community Development having overall responsibility for Stormwater, including capturing costs.

Chairman Brew looked to the Ways and Means Committee (W&M) for any questions. Peter M. said he liked the idea of establishing the Police Renovation Committee but asked if a "not to exceed" number could be included in the warrant article. He agreed with Selectman Akillian to include a truer cost of the project so that taxpayers are not surprised when they are asked to approve more funds in the out years, and especially since "we all know the cost will be greater than \$100,000". Chairman Brew said it is not legal for the Board to bind a future Board. Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, John D'Angelo, suggested doubling the amount requested, or ask for enough to get "something done". He also suggested the committee be charged with writing their own charter. Mr. D'Angelo also felt a Document Management Committee was good as well. Gordon Leedy, Director of Community Development, said money to start the process could be found through underruns in other account lines.

After more discussion on the Police Renovation warrant article, Selectman Lyon moved, second by Selectman Grella, to increase the amount requested in Article 32 to \$200,000. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

Selectman Lyon addressed the Conservation Commission (ACC) warrant articles stating that providing 100 percent of the LUCT funds to the Commission is wise and worthy. Use of LUCT funds on trail care and preservation and conservation of existing land is a good use of this money since it is revenue generated from the loss of open space which would in turn be used to manage open spaces under the control of ACC.. As the Chair of the Conservation Commission has stated, the cost of initiatives can be funded each year with LUCT money. Selectman Akillian agrees with the Ways and Means Committee in trying to keep taxes low and spend what we should spend. He said he was very impressed with the ongoing work of the ACC and has every faith they will use funds appropriately and feels it would make more sense to add the requested funds to the budget. He said the ACC made a strong case for funding their initiatives and "\$15,000 won't break the bank". Further, the ACC members are the experts. Why ask voters to weigh in on decisions they have no background on.

Chairman Brew said he still feels comfortable with the 2.5 percent COLA especially since the New England CPI is a more than 2.5 percent. He said it demonstrates to staff their value and "we are in a period of low unemployment". W&M Chairman D'Angelo asked what data supported the 2.5 percent increase since prior to December the New England CPI was almost 2.5 percent and Social Security COLA for next year is at two percent. He would like measurable data compared to other towns. It was mentioned that 54 percent of employees are eligible for a step increase and

there are no step increases after the 11th year of employment. Selectman Lyon said longer term employees can be the most valuable employees, and the current CPI for the Boston, Brockton and Nashua area is 2.9 percent.

Mr. D'Angelo said he agrees with Selectman Akillian that invasive species control needs to be a budget line item. He said, since the Board has already decided it is necessary, why task the voters who haven't heard the rationale on the matter.

The Board reviewed the changed figures having added \$100,000 to the police renovation warrant.

4.2 Warrant Articles

Chairman Brew noted that the Ways and Means had yet to vote on five warrant articles. Board members then discussed the structure of the budget presentation at the public hearing and made assignments. The Board discussed whether Selectman Lyon should present the police renovation article given his history with the police department and that his advocacy could be viewed as partial. Board members were comfortable that Selectman Lyon would not be advocating one position over another but just stating the facts.

Chairman Brew said a new item came up having received a letter from DOT proposing the discontinuance of nine street lights along 101A and 122 in Amherst. Town Administrator O'Mara noted that the letter is dated November 27th but was not received until today (December 18th). The letter suggests a meeting with DOT and town officials regarding the matter on January 11th. Administrator O'Mara will be in touch to seek an alternative, later date for this meeting. He said if the town and DOT cannot agree, the lights can remain operational at the town's expense, rather than at the state's expense. Selectman Lyon moved, second by Selectman Akillian to forward to the Safety Committee for review and authorize the committee to communicate with DOT on the matter on behalf of the town. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

Selectman Akillian asked what the approximate costs of the lights were. Administrator O'Mara will follow-up and report back to the Board.

5. Approvals

5.1 Assessing

Selectman Lyon moved, second by Selectman Grella, to approve an abatement for property Map/Lot 002-162-002 (valued at Map/Lot 005-162-002) in the amount of \$36.00 for years 2016 and 2017 (\$18.00 per year). Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

5.2 Accounts Payable

Selectman Panasiti moved, second by Selectman Lyon, to approve one (1) FY18 Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$672,685.58 dated December 12, 2017, subject to review and audit. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

134 **5.3 Concentration Account**

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136 Selectman Panasiti moved, second by Selectman Akillian, to approve one (1) FY18 Concentration
137 Account Manifest in the amount of \$1,239.85 dated December 12, 2017, subject to review and
138 audit. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

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140 **6. New/Old Business**

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142 Selectman Akillian said the two School Board public hearings scheduled for tonight and tomorrow
143 dealing with consolidating several school districts into one were cancelled. The Souhegan School
144 Board is meeting tomorrow at 6:30 p.m.; not 7:30 as originally announced.

145
146 Selectman Grella said the Heritage and Historic District Commissions are conducting a review of
147 Charters and Rules and Regulations on January 7th.

148
149 Selectman Lyon attended a Conservation Commission meeting last Wednesday. LaBelle Winery
150 has asked the Commission to consider allowing the use of conservation land for 65 parking spaces
151 near Sledding Hill. Sledders park in LaBelle's lot and they experience a crunch in parking spaces
152 especially when hosting private functions. The ACC has not made a decision on the request.

153
154 Ways and Means Committee Chairman, John D'Angelo, reported on the Committee's warrant
155 article votes as follows:

156
157 Article 22: Vote in Favor 7-0-0

158 Article 24: Vote in Favor 7-0-0

159 Article 27: Vote in Favor 7-0-0

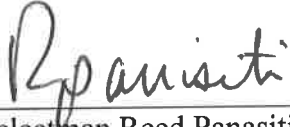
160 Article 30: Vote in Favor 7-0-0 (with good explanatory note)

161 Article 32: Vote in Favor 7-0-0

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163 **7. Non Public Session**

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165 At 8:06 p.m., Selectman Panasiti moved, second by Selectman Grella, to enter into non-public
166 session. Roll Call:

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168 **NEXT MEETINGS: January 8, 2018**

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173 Selectman Reed Panasiti
174 Clerk, Board of Selectmen
175

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172 _____
173 Date