



Town of Amherst, NH

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES

Barbara Landry Meeting Room
2 Main Street
Monday, October 22, 2018

1 **1. Call to Order**

2
3 Chairman Dwight Brew called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

4
5 Attendees: Chairman Dwight Brew, Selectmen John D'Angelo, Tom Grella, Peter Lyon,
6 and Reed Panasiti. Also present: Executive Assistant Mary Guild.

7
8 Ways & Means members present: Peter Moustakis, Elaina Bedio, Scott Tuthill, and
9 Michael Facques.

10
11 **2. Pledge of Allegiance** – Rachel O'Sullivan, Amherst's new Recreation Program
12 Coordinator, led the pledge.

13
14 **3. Citizens' Forum** – none.

15
16 **4. Recreation Program Coordinator, Intro**

17
18 Craig Fraley, Director of Recreation Department, introduced Rachel O'Sullivan to the
19 Board. Ms. O'Sullivan is the town's new Recreation Program Coordinator. She is a
20 graduate of UNH and most recently spent time in Park City, Utah, working at Olympic
21 Park.

22
23 The Board happily welcomed Ms. O'Sullivan.

24
25 **5. Budget Discussion**

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27 **5.1 1st Draft FY20 Warrant Articles**

28
29 Chairman Brew explained that the warrant articles and budget are still a work in progress,
30 but that the intention is to share information with everyone as early as possible.

31
32 Chairman Brew reviewed the draft warrant articles.

33 *Warrant Article 21* is the election of officers.

34 *Warrant Article 22* is the operating budget.

35 *Warrant Article 23* is for the contingency fund. Chairman Brew explained that the
36 contingency fund has been included in the budget in past years for line items not
37 anticipated but needed during the budget year. Unlike other warrant articles, if these funds
38 are needed, this will not draw down from the fund balance, and thus not be taxable.

39 *Warrant Article 24* is regarding the police station renovation capital reserve fund. Last
40 year was year 1 of a 3 year plan to raise approximately \$600,000 for the police station
41 renovation. This article will be to add funds to the existing capital reserve.

42 *Warrant Article 25* deals with the required revaluation of all properties in Amherst, which
43 occurs every 5 years. The cost of the next revaluation, scheduled for 2021, is
44 approximately \$125,000. The plan is to raise \$25,000 each year until then instead of
45 asking the town for one lump sum.

46 *Warrant Article 26* is to fund equipment for the Communication Center Capital Reserve
47 Fund.

48 *Warrant Article 27* is to fund the Town Computer System Capital Reserve Fund. This is
49 not for computers, per say, but more for larger infrastructure items.

50 *Warrant Article 28* is regarding a detailed schedule put together a few years ago for all of
51 the Fire Rescue Vehicles and Equipment. This fund is used when these items reach their
52 end of life and need to be replaced.

53 *Warrant Article 29* is for the Bridge Repair and Replacement Capital Reserve Fund. The
54 DPW will need to replace 3 bridges over the next 6 years. 2 of these bridges will have a
55 rough cost of 1 million dollars, and the other will have a rough cost of 2 million dollars.
56 The town is reimbursed for 20% of these costs, so all 3 bridges will cost approximately
57 \$800,000.

58 *Warrant Article 30* is to fund a new DPW Mechanic Shed. This will be further discussed
59 by DPW Director, Eric Hahn, later in the meeting.

60 *Warrant Article 31* is regarding the Bicycle and Pedestrian Network Capital Reserve
61 Fund, so which the Community Development Office has applied for a 20% matching
62 grant. If awarded, the town will need to raise \$125,000, and the plan would be to raise half
63 this year and half next year.

64
65 Mr. Eric Hahn addressed the Board regarding the proposed DPW Mechanic Shed. He
66 stated that the mechanic needs adequate space to maintain the town's vehicles. Currently,
67 the mechanic usually ends up outside of the vehicle bays on the ground in order to fix any
68 issues. The proposed shed is a 40x50 structure with 3 bays, 1 of which will be able to
69 allow a fully-dressed vehicle to drive into for maintenance. The building will also have a
70 peaked ceiling to allow the dump trucks to raise their beds in. The mechanic currently
71 shares his office with the building's fuel oil tank, which is unprofessional and inadequate.
72 The town's original "salt shed" will be taken down, as it is currently decaying, and the
73 proposed new shed will be built on that footprint.

74
75 In response to a question from Chairman Brew, Mr. Hahn stated that this new shed will be
76 a long-term solution and will help separate the mechanic from the rest of the area.

77
78 In response to a question from Selectman Lyon, Mr. Hahn stated that the proposed shed
79 will have the space to eventually put in a lift.

80
81 In response to a question from Selectman Grella, Mr. Hahn stated that the proposed shed
82 will not have a wash bay, but that this would be a future item of interest for the DPW.
83

84 In response to a question from Selectman Panasiti, Mr. Hahn explained that he believes
85 the proposed cost (\$140,000) will also cover heat, electricity and plumbing for the new
86 building.

87
88 Selectman D'Angelo explained that he would like to see a complete plan from the DPW
89 for their vision for this structure in order for it to be approved.

90
91 In response to a question from Ways & Means Chairman Peter Moustakis, Mr. Hahn
92 stated that he came to the proposed amount for this new structure by looking at numbers
93 from similar projects nearby and a previous estimate from a couple of years ago.

94
95 In response to a question from the Ways & Means Committee, Chief of Police Mark
96 Reams explained that the fund in Article 26 were discussed during his strategic plan.
97 These funds will mainly be used for new radio consoles, and a new communications
98 tower.

99 100 **5.2 1st Draft FY20 Budget**

101 The Board reviewed a rough draft of the FY20 Budget.

102
103 In response to a question from Selectman Lyon, Chairman Brew stated that line 15
104 (Overlay) marks the amount of money to make up for the total tax anticipated but not
105 received by the town due to abatements.

106
107 In response to a question from Selectman Lyon, Chairman Brew explained that the Global
108 Adjustments noted in this draft reflect those discussed at the previous meeting.

109
110 Selectman Lyon stated that this draft is the current status of the budget, as submitted by
111 the Department Heads, including Warrant Articles, Global Assumptions, and Initiatives all
112 as draft items, and to be expanded upon and edited as needed.

113 114 **5.3 Departmental Meetings Schedule**

115 The Board reviewed with the Ways & Means Committee the Departmental Meetings
116 schedule. The two groups will work together to determine which representatives from
117 each will attend each meeting.

118
119 *The Board took up item 8.1 at this time.*

120 **8.1 Police Station Renovation Design Bid**

121 Chief of Police, Mark Reams, stated that the architectural firm of Dennis Mires, P.A.,
122 completed conceptual drawings of the police station renovation in 2017. In June 2018, the
123 firm submitted a bid for design services and the Board suggested seeking out bids from
124 other vendors for comparison. Three additional firms were asked for bids, two of which
125 submitted similarly priced bids. Stone River Architects submitted a similar bid, but it did
126 not include MEP fees (mechanical, electrical, and plumbing), which Dennis Mires' bid
127 did. The Police Station Renovation Committee recommended staying with Dennis Mires
128 for the final design services as this give a better continuation of services and leave less
129 room for error, as the firm already has an intimate understanding of the building.

In response to a question from Selectman Lyon, Chief Reams stated that the Police Station Renovation Committee is made up of himself, a DPW Representative, Selectman Panasiti, 2 at large members from the public, the previous Town Administrator, and a Ways & Means Representative.

In response to a question from Selectman D'Angelo, Chief Reams explained that the Committee will be briefing the Board on what will need to be done to the building after the final design services are obtained.

In response to a question from Selectman Grella, Chief Reams stated that the architectural firm will now be available for support throughout the construction phase. The project is currently on track to maintain a cost of around \$600,000. In the early spring, bids will be sought from 6-7 builders. The plan is to break ground in the summer of 2021.

A MOTION was made by Selectman Panasiti and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo to award the bid for the Amherst Police Station final design services to Dennis Mires, P.A. who provides the best value to the town at the amount of \$39,000 and to authorize the Board of Selectman Chair or his designee to sign all related documents.

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

Chief Reams explained that there is \$15,000 in funds earmarked on the outside hire line, leaving only \$24,000 needed from the police station renovation capital reserve fund for this item.

A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Lyon to request that the Trustees of the Trust Fund disperse \$24,000 from the Police Station Renovation Capital Reserve Fund to pay the necessary architectural services, and that the minutes from this meeting serve as the justification for the Trustees to disperse that money; in the meantime, if the bill for services comes due, it will be paid for out of Town Funds and this will then be reimbursed by the Trustees of the Trust Fund.

The Board discussed their comfortability with this motion.

A MOTION was made by Selectman Lyon and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo to table the previous motion until the Board's next meeting (November 13, 2018).

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

6. Property Tax Rate Setting

Chairman Brew explained to the Board that, due to timing, this item will need to be decided on tonight in order to not jeopardize missing the required dates.

The Board discussed the 2018 Fund Balance Retention numbers. Chairman Brew explained that the Fund Balance Growth numbers jumped from approximately 5.7 million dollars in 2017 to approximately 6.5 million dollars in 2018. These numbers seemed off, knowing that the town was very close to spending its total budget in FY2018. The auditors

discovered there was about \$319,000 that should have been paid in 2017, raising that total fund number a bit, but was actually paid in 2018.

Selectman D'Angelo stated that, after looking at these numbers and knowing that the town spent about 99 cents out of every dollar of the budget, he doesn't trust these numbers and would like for a professional to verify the actual balances. He stated that he is uncomfortable picking a number to disperse back to the town to reduce taxes by, without knowing the true fund amounts.

Selectman Lyon stated that, if the Board decided to use the current number \$656,047 to reduce the tax rate by, it would be about a \$138 return per \$350,000 house in town. He stated that he appreciated Selectman D'Angelo's concern, but that there is no evidence that there are insufficient funds to return this money.

Chairman Brew stated that in FY17 the Board voted to return about \$760,000.

A MOTION was made by Selectman Lyon and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to return half of that which is over the 10% policy, amounting to \$656,047.

Voting: 4-1-0; motion passes. (D'Angelo nay).

The Board discussed having the current auditors look into the issue addressed by Selectman D'Angelo.

A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Lyon to obtain a proposal from the new auditors for reviewing the unassigned fund balance going back to 2011 and verify that the fund balances are accurate; also to give the Board sources of fund feedback (sources of fund inflow and outflow) for those years, and to allow the Chairman to sign and authorize that proposal if it comes in under \$2,500.

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

7. Public Hearing Petition

The Board and Tax Assessor, Gail Stout, discussed RSA 231, regarding utility lines and poles in the town's rights-of-way and outlines the process for changing agreements and leases in regards to these. Ms. Stout explained that the rights-of-way became taxable in 2011, which led to the need for this RSA. The Board now needs to decide to hold a public hearing before making the town's rights-of-way taxable. Notices will be sent to any effected parties (such as Eversource, Fairpoint, the water companies, etc).

A MOTION was made by Selectman Lyon and SECONDED by Selectman Grella to schedule a public hearing on November 13, 2018 at 7pm to amend the language of all currently issued and future pole licenses, issued pursuant to RSA 231:161.

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

8. Town Administrator

8.1 Police Station Renovation Design Bid

This was discussed earlier in the meeting.

224
225 **8.2 New Hire - AFR**

226 *A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Lyon to*
227 *appoint Miranda Mulcahy to the Amherst Fire Rescue as an EMT – Paramedic, effective*
228 *October 11, 2018.*

229 *Voting: 5-0-0; motion passed unanimously.*
230

231 **9. Approvals**
232

233 **9.1 Petition & Pole License**

234 *A MOTION was made by Selectman Lyon and SECONDED by Selectman Grella to*
235 *approve the Eversource Petition & Pole License #12-0716 for placement of one pole on*
236 *Pond Parish Road.*

237 *Voting: 5-0-0; motion passed unanimously.*
238

239 **9.2 Assessing**

240 *A MOTION was made by Selectman Lyon and SECONDED by Selectman Grella to*
241 *approve and sign the Tax Credit for Service-Connected Total Disability RSA 72:35 for:*
242 *Property Map/Lot 004-201-010 in the amount of \$1,400.*

243 *Voting: 5-0-0; motion passed unanimously.*
244

245 *A MOTION was made by Selectman Lyon and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to*
246 *approve and sign the Veteran's Tax Credit RSA 72:28 for:*

247 *Property Map/Lot 004-005-001-011 in the amount of \$500.00*

248 *Voting: 5-0-0; motion passed unanimously.*
249

250 *A MOTION was made by Selectman Lyon and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to*
251 *approve and sign the Timber Tax Levy/Certification of Yield Tax for:*

252 *Property Map/Lot 004-152, 153, 154-000 in the amount of \$3,810.78*

253 *Voting: 5-0-0; motion passed unanimously.*
254

255 **9.3 Payroll**

256 *A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to*
257 *approve one (1) FY19 Payroll Manifest in the amount of \$224,866.62 dated October 11,*
258 *2018, subject to review and audit.*

259 *Voting: motion passed unanimously, 5-0-0.*
260

261 **9.4 Accounts Payable**

262 *A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti,*
263 *to approve one (1) FY19 Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$30,119.02 dated*
264 *October 16, 2018, subject to review and audit (Town Clerk Transfers to the State of NH).*

265 *Voting: Motion passed unanimously, 5-0-0.*
266

267 *A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti,*
268 *to approve one (1) FY19 Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$1,088,395.19*
269 *dated October 16, 2018, subject to review and audit.*
270

Executive Assistant, Mary Guild explained that this manifest included bridge payments and roadwork.

Voting: Motion passed unanimously, 5-0-0.

9.5 Concentration Account

A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti, to approve one (1) FY19 Concentration Account Manifest in the amount of \$1,747.12 dated October 16, 2018, subject to review and audit.

Voting: Motion passed unanimously, 5-0-0.

9.6 Previous Meeting Minutes – October 9, 2018

A MOTION was made by Selectman Panasiti and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo, to approve the Board of Selectmen public meeting minutes of August 13, 2018, as submitted.

Voting: Motion passed unanimously, 5-0-0.

10. Action Items – none.

11. New/Old Business

Selectman Panasiti stated that November 6th is election day and urged everyone to get out and vote.

Selectman Grella explained that he was alerted to some leaf dumping that's been occurring down the cliff next to Town Hall. These leaves are drifting down onto someone's property and may cause issues with the drainage if this becomes blocked up. He is going to meet with Mr. Hahn and see about putting up some signage and possible road blocks to deter this.

In response to a question from Chairman Brew, Selectman Lyon stated that he would like to see Mr. Gordon Leedy present the plan for the trail match grant at the next meeting. He would also like to see the bridge capital reserve plan laid out. Selectman D'Angelo stated that he would like to see a report out from the Police Station Renovation Committee once available.

A MOTION was made by Selectman Grella and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to adjourn the meeting at 8:33 p.m.

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

NEXT MEETING: November 13, 2018 - Tuesday

SIGNATURE ON FILE

Selectman Reed Panasiti

2018.11.13

Date