



Town of Amherst, NH

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES

Barbara Landry Meeting Room
2 Main Street
Monday, December 10, 2018

1 **1. Call to Order**

2
3 Chairman Dwight Brew called the meeting to order at 6:00 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 **2. Non-Public Session per RSA 91-A:3, II (b)**

9
10 The Board entered the non-public meeting at 6:00 p.m.

11 The Board resumed the public meeting at 6:32 p.m.

12
13 **3. Pledge of Allegiance** – Chair of the Library Trustees, Nancy Baker, led the pledge.

14
15 **4. Citizens' Forum** – none

16
17 **5. Town Administrator Search Update**

18 Chairman Brew reviewed the process for finding a new Town Administrator up to this
19 point. Municipal Resources, Inc was contracted to assist in the process. MRI reviewed
20 all applicants, asked a portion of them to respond in essay form to specific questions and
21 conducted preliminary interviews. MRI presented the Board with four final applicants
22 and on November 8th, the Board, department head representative Chief Mark Reams, and
23 the president of MRI interviewed the 4 top candidates for about an hour each. The 7
24 members unanimously identified one person as a top choice. MRI then began a reference
25 review and a comprehensive background check. As of November 27th these checks were
26 complete and all came back as favorable.

27
28 *A MOTION was made by Selectman Lyon and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo to*
29 *appoint Dean Shankle as the new Amherst Town Administrator, effective January 14,*
30 *2019.*

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

32
33 Chairman Brew introduced Dr. Shankle. Dr. Dean Shankle, Jr. has worked with local
34 governments in New Hampshire for over 30 years. This has given him a depth and
35 breadth of experience with the laws, regulations and customs of New Hampshire as well
36 as an understanding of what citizens expect from their local government. This
37 background will enable him to be productive from day one.

38

Dean is currently the Town Administrator of Hookset, New Hampshire, a role he has held since 2011. Prior to Hookset, Dean has served as the Town Administrator of Epping, Merrimack and Hinsdale.

Dean received his Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Political Science and his Master of Public Administration from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

In addition, Dean is a Fulbright Scholar: Academy of Public Administration of the President of Moldova, Lecturer. (09/2006 –06/2007) Lectured on public administration, strategic planning, leadership, organizational change management and policy analysis.

His education is an indication of his strong belief that lifelong learning is essential. He understands how important it is to keep up with changes in technology and management practices. He called out our strategic planning projects, special initiatives and various studies as one of the areas that made the Amherst position an ideal fit for him.

Dean has published a number of articles over the years, including a series of articles on technology for the New Hampshire Municipal Association's Town and City Magazine. These articles were in line with what we as a Town want to focus on and covered various facets of local government (e.g., housing, economic development, technology, training, grants).

The Amherst Board feels that Dean can help us continue on our upward trajectory. He has lived in this area since 1994 (first in Merrimack, now in Milford) and is very familiar with many attributes of Amherst. He pointed out that Amherst has been able to maintain the quaint New Hampshire small-town feel, but have been able to combine that with amenities such as golf courses and a winery. Dean looks forward to helping us continue to balance our cultural resources, natural resources and economic development.

Dr. Shankle thanked the Board and stated that he is very excited for this opportunity.

6. Budget Discussion

6.1 FY20 Budget

Chairman Brew stated that information was received on Friday from the town's medical insurance provider that the increase will no longer be a maximum of 15%, but instead only an increase of 3.6%. Along with this, the amount of interest required to be paid next year was reviewed and reduced by \$100,000. The Board agreed at the last meeting to reduce the increase in the roads budget from \$200,000 to \$100,000. Finally, the expected revenue for next year was reviewed and is presumed to increase by an additional \$100,000 from this current year.

All of these changes have made a significant impact on the budget. Now, if the budget and all warrant articles pass, there will be a 3.71% increase from the past years.

Selectman D'Angelo asked if the Board would now reconsider adding more money back into the roads budget and after other budget discussion the Board returned to this suggestion.

6.1 a. Ways & Means Committee Questions

In response to a question from the Ways & Means Committee, Library Director, Amy Lapointe, explained that the \$8,000 budget line for “office supplies” for the Library also contains money for “processing supplies.” She doesn’t believe this line item can be reduced as it has nothing extraneous in it.

The Ways & Means Committee questioned if there might be a possibility to reduce some of the staffing at the Library to part-time employees. The majority (79-80%) of the Library’s budget goes toward staffing (7 full-time, 7 part-time, and 8 pages), and the Library’s total budget is higher than the Fire or EMS budgets. Ms. Lapointe stated that she likes having a few part-time people on staff, but also believes there is additional value in her full-time employees. She does not believe this line item can be reduced.

The Ways & Means Committee questioned if a new hire for the Library, that will soon be filled, could possibly be reviewed by the new Town Administrator first. Chairman Brew explained the relationship between the Board and the Library Trustees. He doesn’t believe this request is realistic, with Dr. Shankle not starting until January 14th. Chairman Brew stated that the Library programs are very significant and thus, costly, and that that appears to be what the community wants.

The Ways & Means Committee stated that they have no problem with the Library’s programs, but hope that the staffing there could be reviewed in hopes of finding ways to optimize it while still keeping the programming the same. Staffing is an item that the Committee is asked to consider in the budget process and that’s why they are hoping to have this discussion.

Ms. Nancy Baker, Chair of the Library Trustees, stated that the group does look at staffing and takes into consideration the cost, value, and safety while reviewing it.

The other Board members returned to the subject of increasing road funding. None of the other selectmen were interested in Selectman D’Angelo’s proposal of adding \$100,000 back into the roads budget.

6.2 Warrant Articles

6.2a. Ways & Means Committee Votes

In response to a question from the Ways & Means Committee, Selectman D’Angelo stated that the undesignated fund balance sits at just over \$6 million (spreadsheet number, not audited figure).

Chairman Brew explained that the Board generally has no access to the undesignated fund balance. They can only return money from it to the taxpayers, leave it alone, or ask the voters to use some of the balance towards an item. Warrant Article 23 (the Contingency Article) requests that, if the Board deemed it necessary, the fund balance could be dipped into for an emergency item. The Board has made this type of request for the past 5-6 years but has never had a need to actually use the fund balance.

In response to a question from the Ways & Means Committee, Chairman Brew stated that the Board believes it's wise, at this time, to include Warrant Article 28 (Bike/Ped) due to the match that is being pursued for it. Selectman Lyon added that there has been an outpouring of support from the community regarding the Bike/Ped Plan and that there appears to be a real desire to get this plan going.

Chairman Brew read new Warrant Article 35 (POW exemption) and stated that this is believed to have a minimal impact to the town. The language comes from a state RSA. Towns are allowed to pursue this exemption, but are not required to.

A MOTION was made by Selectman Lyon and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo to include Warrant Article 35 (POW exemptions).

In response to a question from Selectman Grella, Executive Assistant, Mary Guild, stated that this article only effects the town fees. The state has already adopted something to deal with their fees.

In response to a question from the Ways & Means Committee, Ms. Guild stated that several other towns are adopting similar exemptions.

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

6.2 Board of Selectmen Votes

Selectman D'Angelo stated that he would not be voting in favor of Article 29 (Bridge CRF), due to the fact that he doesn't agree with asking the citizens for more money when there are excess funds in the unassigned fund balance that could be used towards these projects.

A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Lyon to move all proposed Articles, except for Article 29 (Bridge CRF), forward to the warrant.

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

A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Lyon to support all Warrant Articles, except Article 29 (Bridge CRF), in their current written form.

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

A MOTION was made by Selectman Lyon and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo to move Article 29 forward to the warrant.

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

A MOTION was made by Selectman Lyon and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo to support Warrant Article 29.

Voting: 4-1-0; motion passed. (Selectman D'Angelo opposed).

The Board and the Ways & Means Committee entered into a discussion regarding using money from the undesignated fund balance to pay for projects, in order to not raise taxes this year.

The Chairman explained that they try to not let the tax rate whiplash up and down from year-to-year, which could happen by using the fund balance in this way.

The Ways & Means Committee questioned if voters would rather have their taxes stay flat for multiple years, or not raised this year with the potential that they will go up a bit next year.

The Board took a quick two minute recess, while the Way & Means Committee went downstairs to continue their meeting.

7. Administration

7.1 Upcoming Meetings Schedule Discussion

The Board agreed to not meet next week (December 17th), but to instead meet on January 7, 2019.

7.2 Deliberative Session Presentation Assignments

The Board agreed to the following presentation assignments:

Article 22: Chairman Brew and Selectman Lyon

Articles 23, 24, 25: Selectman Panasiti

Articles 26, 27, 28: Selectman D'Angelo

Articles 29, 30, 31, 32: Selectman Lyon

Articles 33, 34, 35: Selectman Grella

Article 36: Chairman Brew

7.3 Unanticipated Revenue

The Board agreed to revisit this item at their next meeting.

7.4 Road Race, Markers & Wreaths, Veterans' Graves

Ms. Guild explained that the 5K Road Race that was held last year to raise funds for the Moving Wall was such a success that it is hoped that the race can be an annual event, now to raise funds in order to support the purchase of the Veteran Markers and Christmas Wreaths.

A MOTION was made by Selectman Panasiti and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo to approve the request to hold a road race on June 14, 2019 for the purpose of raising money to cover the purchase cost of veterans' grave markers and Christmas wreaths for veterans' graves.

Voting: 4-0-1; motion passed (Selectman Grella abstained).

7.5 Road Race Amherst Venture Crew

A MOTION was made by Selectman Lyon and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to approve the Amherst Venture Crew's request to hold a road race in Amherst on May 4, 2019.

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

226 **8. Approvals**

227
228 **8.1 Eversource Petition and Pole License**

229 *A MOTION was made by Selectman Lyon and SECONDED by Selectman Grella to*
230 *approve EVERSOURCE Petition & Pole License 12-0728, requesting the placement of*
231 *three utility poles on County Road.*

232 *Voting: 5-0-0; motion passed unanimously.*
233

234 **8.2 Assessing**

235 *A MOTION was made by Selectman Lyon and SECONDED by Selectman Grella to*
236 *approve and sign the abatement for:*

237 *Property Map/Lot 002-146-014 in the amount of \$6,282.00 (RSA 204-C:49)*

238 *Voting: 5-0-0; motion passed unanimously.*
239

240 *A MOTION was made by Selectman Lyon and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to*
241 *approve and sign the Service Connected Total Disability Tax Credit for:*

242 *Property Map/Lot 006-024-003 in the amount of \$1,400.00.*

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

245 **8.3 Payroll**

246 *A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Grella to*
247 *approve one (1) FY19 Payroll Manifest in the amount of \$256,315.80 dated December 6,*
248 *2018, subject to review and audit.*

249 *Voting: motion passed unanimously, 5-0-0.*
250

251 **8.4 Accounts Payable**

252 *A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti,*
253 *to approve one (1) FY19 Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$26,513.33 dated*
254 *December 4, 2018, subject to review and audit (Town Clerk Transfers to the State of NH).*

255 *Voting: Motion passed unanimously, 5-0-0.*
256

257 *A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti,*
258 *to approve one (1) FY19 Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$271,713.20 dated*
259 *November 27, 2018, subject to review and audit.*

260 *Voting: Motion passed unanimously, 5-0-0.*
261

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 \$2,938,852.00*
264 *dated December 3, 2018, subject to review and audit. (Schools Disbursement).*

265 *Voting: 5-0-0; motion passed unanimously.*
266

267 **8.5 Concentration Account**

268 *A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti,*
269 *to approve one (1) FY19 Concentration Account Manifest in the amount of \$1,227.25*
270 *dated November 28, 2018, subject to review and audit.*

271 *Voting: 5-0-0; motion passed unanimously.*
272

8.6 Previous Meeting Minutes – November 26, 2018

*A MOTION was made by Selectman Panasiti and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo to approve the Board of Selectmen meeting minutes of November 26, 2018.
Voting: 5-0-0; motion passed unanimously.*

9. Action Items

The Board reviewed action items.

10. New/Old Business

The Board had no old/new business to discuss.

11. Non-Public Session, RSA 91-A:3, II (e)

A MOTION was made by Selectman Panasiti and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo to adjourn the public meeting and enter into non-public session, RSA 91-A:3, II (b) at 8:13 p.m.

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

By roll call vote: D'Angelo: yes, Panasiti: yes, Brew: yes, Grella: yes, Lyon: yes, the Board went into non-public session.

A MOTION was made by Selectman Grella and SECONDED by Selectman Lyon to exit the non-public session.

By roll call vote: D'Angelo: yes, Panasiti: yes, Brew: yes, Grella: yes, Lyon: yes, the Board exited non-public session at 8:40 p.m.

Chairman Brew announced that there were no votes and no decisions made during non-public session.

Adjournment

A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Grella to adjourn the Board of Selectmen meeting. The Board adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: January 7, 2019 - Monday

SIGNATURE ON FILE

01.07.2019

Selectman Reed Panasiti

Date