



**Town of Amherst, NH**  
**BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES**  
**Barbara Landry Meeting Room**  
**2 Main Street**  
**Monday, November 10, 2014 at 6:00 PM**

**I. Public Session**

Chairman Dwight Brew called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Attendees: Chairman Dwight Brew, Vice Chairman Mike Akillian, Selectmen John D'Angelo and Brad Galinson. Also present: Town Administrator, Jim O'Mara, and Suzanne Beauchesne taking minutes. Selectman Tom Grella was absent.

**II. Pledge of Allegiance** – Police Chief, Mark Reams, led the pledge.

**III. Citizen Forum**

Vivian Hanlon came forward to present the Board with artist Ruth McGrath's portrayal of the Amherst Town Hall. Mrs. McGrath's father, Rae Comerford, served as an Amherst selectman in the late 1950s/early 1960s. Mrs. Hanlon thought the print would be an appropriate addition to the town hall's décor. The Board accepted the gift with appreciation.

All other citizen input was taken during the public hearings as follows.

**IV. Public Hearing**

**a. Erecting of Four (4) Traffic Signs**

Selectman D'Angelo moved to open the second of two public hearings relative to enacting proposed ordinances for the purpose of regulating traffic pursuant to RSA 41:14-b. Seconded by Vice Chairman Akillian. Vote 4-0

Police Chief Mark Reams who also serves as the Chairman of the Highway Safety Committee provided a brief history of signage throughout town. The Chief stated that no new signs have gone up since 1999. Signs that have been erected were to correct ordinances and/or for maintenance purposes. Chief Reams further stated that the Safety Committee aims to address issues brought up by citizens and proposed actions are meant to provide greater security and improve the quality of life for all Amherst residents. Chief Reams provided slides and background on the Safety Committee's recommendation to erect the following four signs.

- a) Amherst Street at Main Street – Trucks/Buses No Right Turn
- b) Manchester Road (eastbound at Mack Hill Road) – Stop Sign
- c) Main Street at Middle Street (eastbound) – Stop Sign
- d) Main Street at Middle Street (westbound) – Stop Sign.

Marti Warren of 5 Carriage Road rose to express her support for the stop signs but was concerned that drivers would turn down Knight Street if there was a "no right turn" sign at Amherst and Main Streets.

Bill Dunlap of 141 Amherst Street stated that he was in favor of the stop signs but, having lived in Amherst for 24 years, did not feel the "no right turn" sign was necessary.

Keith Berube indicated his support for the stop signs.

Vivian Hanlon expressed her support for all of the signs for safety reasons. Mrs. Hanlon also stated that because Amherst Street is such a busy street, that the “no right turn” sign should not be limited to trucks and buses but to all traffic.

Alice Handwerk, who attended the first public hearing, again expressed her support for erecting the proposed stop signs, and feels that the number one priority should be safety, especially since over 20 children walk to and from school.

Jean Ludt who lives at 3 School Street stated that she was in favor of erecting the stop signs and that safety should be paramount.

Katie Kennedy, a teacher and runner who lives in the village, spoke in favor of the stop signs.

Jim Quinlan of 6 Courthouse Road referred to a sign in front of his house and throughout town that reads “Stop Sign Ahead”. Mr. Quinlan felt that signage can sometimes go too far.

Andy Ouellette of Austin Road suggested that moving the crosswalk closer to Moulton’s Market may be a safe alternative. Tori Burke disagreed.

Vice Chairman Akillian moved to close the public hearing. Seconded by Selectman D’Angelo. Vote 4-0

Chairman Brew opened the discussion to the two stop signs at Main and Middle Streets. Vice Chairman Akillian commented that other models for dealing with safety/traffic issues will be studied within the framework of the Village Strategic Plan initiative. Selectman D’Angelo was not prepared to support the permanent placement of the signs. In response to Selectman Galinson’s question on whether scientific data was available to support the erection of stop signs, Chief Reams stated that no substantial crash data was available but that the Safety Committee’s recommendations are based on citizen input and reports of incidents. Chief Reams also stated that stop signs are intended to STOP traffic, not slow traffic down; and that the Safety Committee will continue to apply the “less is more” concept when evaluating whether signs should go up or not.

Vice Chairman Akillian moved to erect the two stop signs at Main and Middle Streets, eastbound and westbound. Seconded by Selectman D’Angelo. Vote 3-1. Selectman D’Angelo opposed.

Vice Chairman Akillian moved to table action on the Manchester Road (westbound at Mack Hill Road) stop sign until the bridge re-opens. Selectman D’Angelo seconded. Vote 4-0

The Board discussed whether the “No Right Turn” sign was necessary at Amherst and Main Streets. Selectman Galinson felt that the recommendation would not be made without evidence that the sign is necessary. Chief Reams acknowledged that engineering expertise was beyond his team’s scope.

Selectman D’Angelo moved to erect a “Trucks/Buses No Right Turn” sign at Amherst and Main Streets. Seconded by Vice Chairman Akillian. Vote 1-3. Selectman Galinson in favor; all others opposed. Motion failed.

#### **(IV. b & c - issues taken up later in the meeting)**

#### **V. How New Traffic Signs are Created - Discussion**

Director of Public Works (DPW), Bruce Berry, joined Chief Reams in addressing the Board. Director Berry brought forward a five inch binder that included all of the signs throughout town. Director Berry indicated that in 2010 an evaluation of signage was conducted that was supported by a federal grant. At that time, some signs were added and some removed. The annual DPW budget of \$10,000 is spent on replacement and maintenance because signs disappear and get damaged. DPW generally follows state and federal guidelines on signage and striping. In response to a question posed by Vice Chairman Akillian, both Chief Reams and Director Berry felt that the town could do with 25 to 30 percent fewer signs. Selectman D'Angelo opined that if a "stop sign ahead" sign is required, it must mean that the sign is not visible and perhaps in the wrong place.

The process for approving signage -- motor vehicle and non-motor vehicle -- has been haphazard. Going forward, even when an ordinance is not required, all proposed signage will come before the Board for approval.

#### **IV. Public Hearings**

##### **b. Accept the Gift of a Wal-Mart Police Substation**

Selectman Galinson moved to re-open the public hearing. Selectman D'Angelo seconded. Vote 4-0

Police Chief Reams mentioned that the concept of a Police Substation was rooted in increasing police visibility at Wal-Mart and improving overall police operational efficiency. In addition, the police department was able to realize a core value within its mission statement -- achieving goals through partnership with the community. The police department recognizes the generosity put forth by Wal-Mart and JBR Associates valued at \$600 for furnishings; \$2200 for labor/construction; and \$4200 per year for a 300 foot area of office space. In response to a question by Andy Ouellette, Chief Reams indicated that police action will not be restricted to Wal-Mart issues. There were no other comments from the public.

Vice Chairman Akillian moved to close the public hearing. Seconded by Selectman D'Angelo. Vote 4-0

Selectman D'Angelo wanted to ensure that there would be no further obligations going forward. Chief Reams assured the Board there were no obligations on the part of the town of Amherst. The partnership was entered into to expand services and deter criminal activity in the area, not just within Wal-Mart. The police substation will open next week. Chairman Brew commented that the services provided to Wal-Mart are no more or no less than those provided to all other businesses in the community.

Selectman D'Angelo moved that the Board accept, with appreciation, the gift of a police field office. Seconded by Vice Chairman Akillian. Vote 4-0

##### **c. Accept Unanticipated Revenue of \$20,527.37 from Primex**

Selectman D'Angelo moved to re-open the public hearing to accept unanticipated revenue pursuant to RSA 31:95-b: III (a). Seconded by Vice Chairman Akillian. Vote 4-0

Town Administrator Jim O'Mara referenced a letter received by Primex with a check in the amount of \$20,527.37 representing the second phase of a net surplus from the Employee Benefits Coverage program. The Phase I return was issued in December 2013. Nate Jensen asked about the rebate. There were no further comments from the public.

Selectman D'Angelo moved to close the public hearing. Seconded by Vice Chairman Akillian. Vote 4-0

Vice Chairman Akillian moved to accept \$20,527.37 from Primex which represents a breakdown of employee benefit coverage return as follows: 2006 = \$4,723.18; 2008 = \$9922.75; and 2011 = \$5,881.44. Seconded by Selectman D'Angelo. Vote 4-0

#### **VI. Board of Health – Waiver Request**

Because Dr. Mary Katherine Lockwood, Health Officer, was unavailable, this agenda item was postponed to the November 13, 2014 Board of Selectmen meeting.

#### **VII. FY16 Budget & Strategic Plan Discussions**

The Board discussed a process and timeline for going forward allowing for input from department heads and members of the Ways and Means Committee. Administrator O'Mara will schedule department heads to meet with the Board on November 13<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, and November 18<sup>th</sup> if necessary. Staff will be asked to come prepared with a list of prioritized goals.

#### **VIII. Town Administrator**

##### **2014 Tax Rate Calculation**

Chairman Brew moved up this agenda item while members of the Ways and Means Committee were in attendance. Town Administrator O'Mara reported on receipt of the 2014 tax rate calculation from the Department of Revenue Administration. The tax rate totals \$26.66 (town rate \$5.20; local school rate \$17.74; state school rate \$2.49; county rate \$1.23). Tax bills were mailed to residents on October 31, 2014.

##### **a. Communications Center CRF Expenditure Request**

Town Administrator, Jim O'Mara, asked that the Board approve funds to cover a three year extension of the Horizon Compact Global Advanced Replacement Warranty. Selectman Galinson move to authorize the expenditure of \$4,252.80 from the Communication Fund to cover said warranty for Amherst's radio tower microwave equipment. Seconded by Selectman D'Angelo. Vote 4-0

##### **b. Guardrail Bid**

Selectman Galinson motioned to award the guardrail bid to the lowest bidder, B.I.I. Fence and Guardrail, Inc., for a total of \$11,334 for the removal and replacement of 450 lf of guardrail. Seconded by Selectman D'Angelo. Vote 4-0

##### **c. 2014 Tax Rate Calculation – (taken up earlier in the meeting)**

##### **d. Amherst Ambulance Service – Billing and Collection Policy**

Town Administrator O'Mara presented a proposed Ambulance Service Billing and Collection Policy. After a brief discussion, the Board suggested replacing No. 5 on Page 2 with verbiage that the Town Administrator be authorized to approve waivers for expenses up to \$75.

Selectman D'Angelo moved to adopt, with amendment, the Amherst Ambulance Service Billing and Collection Policy. Seconded by Vice Chairman Akillian. Vote 4-0

##### **e. Merrimack Regional Water District**

Administrator O'Mara provided a current revenue/expense report for the Merrimack Valley Regional Water District, a group of towns that came together to oversee the interests of the water resources prior to the takeover of Pennichuck Water Corporation. The organization was formed to oversee the purchase of the water company by Pennichuck Water Corporation which was purchased by the City of Nashua in November 2010 rendering the Regional Water District without purpose. Amherst was reimbursed \$10,000 of its original outlay of \$20,000. The Board discussed withdrawing from participation in the group. Chairman Brew will talk with Marilyn Peterman, Amherst's representative, prior to further action.

## **IX. Old and New Business**

a. Selectman Galinson reported on having attended four meetings in the last two weeks regarding the draft Memorandum of Understanding between the Board and Cemetery Trustees. More information is forthcoming.

b. Town Administrator O'Mara provided an update on the Horace Greeley Bridge and Mack Hill Bridge work.

## **X. Right-to-Know Request – None at this time.**

## **XI. Approvals**

### **a. Levy of 2014 Tax Warrant**

Selectman Galinson moved to approve the Levy of the 2014 Tax Warrant for the second issue due December 1, 2014 and direct the town's tax collector to collect the taxes in the amount of \$20,939,981.00. Seconded by Vice Chairman Akillian. Vote 4-0

### **b. Accounts Payable**

Selectman D'Angelo moved to approve one (1) FY15 Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$615,505.66 dated November 5, 2014, subject to review and audit. Seconded by Vice Chairman Akillian. Vote 4-0

Selectman D'Angelo moved to approve one (1) FY15 Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$32,074.31 dated November 6, 2014, subject to review and audit (Town Clerk Transfers to the State of NH). Seconded by Vice Chairman Akillian. Vote 4-0

### **c. Payroll**

Vice Chairman Akillian moved to approve one (1) FY15 Payroll Manifest in the amount of \$77,784.17 dated November 3, 2014, subject to review and audit. Seconded by Selectman D'Angelo. Vote 4-0

Vice Chairman Akillian moved to approve one (1) FY15 Payroll Manifest in the amount of \$8,377.23 dated October 29, 2014, subject to review and audit. Seconded by Selectman D'Angelo. Vote 4-0

Vice Chairman Akillian moved to approve one (1) FY15 Payroll Manifest in the amount of \$166,753.08 dated November 13, 2014, subject to review and audit. Seconded by Selectman D'Angelo. Vote 4-0

### **d. Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes**

255 Selectman D'Angelo moved to approve the Board of Selectmen meeting minutes of October 27, 2014 with  
256 amendment to attach an article entitled "Traffic & Stop Signs in Amherst" (**attached**). Seconded by Vice  
257 Chairman Akillian. Vote 4-0  
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259 **XII. Non-Public Session (if necessary)**  
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261 **XIII. Adjourn**  
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263 Selectman D'Angelo moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Vice Chairman Akillian. Vote 4-0  
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265 The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.  
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