



Town of Amherst, NH

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES

Barbara Landry Meeting Room
2 Main Street
Tuesday, November 12, 2019

1 **1. Call to Order**

2
3 Chairman Peter Lyon called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

4
5 Attendees: Chairman Peter Lyon, Selectman Dwight Brew, Selectman Reed Panasiti,
6 Selectman John D'Angelo, and Selectman Tom Grella. Also, present: Town Administrator
7 Dean Shankle.

8
9 Chairman Lyon explained that Board of Selectmen meetings are usually televised and
10 recorded, but, unfortunately, the videographer was not available for this evening. The
11 Board agreed to proceed with the meeting as scheduled.

12
13 **2. Pledge of Allegiance** – Mike Dell Orfano, Chairman of the Planning Board, led the
14 pledge.

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16 **3. Citizen Forum** – none.

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18 **4. Planning Board Request for Funds**

19 Mike Dell Orfano, Chair of the Planning Board, addressed the Board regarding funding
20 for the Master Plan. He explained that the original plan was to wait until the 2020 census
21 data became available, but discussions have led to an understanding that the American
22 Community Survey data could be adequate to begin the process with. Instead of focusing
23 on silos of information, this time the process will focus on themes and an outreach
24 program directly to the constituents. The Planning Board is hoping to work with NRPC
25 throughout this process.

26
27 Mike Dell Orfano stated that, under the previous silo approach that wasn't supposed to
28 start until 2022, only \$1 has been put into the budget for the Master Plan process for
29 FY20. With the change in process, there is now a request to appropriate approximately
30 \$15,000 from this year's budget to begin the process. It is hoped that the whole process
31 will take approximately one year, and the bulk cost should come in FY21.

32
33 Executive Director, Jay Minkarah, and Assistant Director, Sara Siskavich also addressed
34 the Board. Director Minkarah explained that NRPC is interested in helping the Planning
35 Board to pursue the thematic approach. He explained that the current themes being
36 explored are Community Character, Lifetime Community, Business Development,
37 Infrastructure, and Sustainability & Resilience. He stated that maps and data will help to
38 inform these sections.

39 Mike Dell Orfano stated that the Planning Board is ready to start the public process
40 officially on January 1, 2020. The Marketing Outreach program has already gotten
41 started. There will be an over effort to get volunteers to work on each of the working
42 groups. The \$15,000 requested will be put towards public engagement. The budget for
43 the next fiscal year will be used for consolidating and validating data, continued outreach,
44 and bringing that information back to the public. The Planning Board is looking for this
45 Master Plan to be a benchmark of land use planning for the next 10 years. The Planning
46 Board will also include money in their budget each year to reevaluate the Master Plan
47 goals and make sure the document is still valid for where the town is at that time.

48
49 In response to a question from Chairman Lyon, Mike Dell Orfano explained that the
50 process should cost about \$40,000 in total, but the Planning Board is requesting an
51 additional \$20,000 in next year's budget for contingencies.

52
53 In response to a question from Selectman Panasiti, Mike Dell Orfano explained that the
54 last plan lacked steps to take to accommodate what was heard from the public. This plan
55 will include actionable steps and deliverables.

56
57 In response to a question from Selectman Brew, Director Minkarah stated that he can
58 point the Board towards some good Master Plans that do include tradeoffs and action
59 plans. The key things needed for a good Master Plan are: measurable, actionable
60 outcomes, a large amount of civic engagement, and a way to identify the parties
61 responsible for the outcomes. Scenario planning will involve looking at items of
62 importance, outcomes, and understanding the tradeoffs towards other goals. There will be
63 balance achieved through this process.

64
65 Mike Dell Orfano explained that the Planning Board will work to drive the cost
66 efficiency of this process in order to meet the statutory requirements. The primary
67 requirement is land use planning.

68
69 Selectman Brew stated that he would like to see specifically what the \$15,000 is going to
70 be used for. He would then propose including \$25,000 in next year's budget, with
71 additional money towards the process if needed.

72
73 Selectman Grella stated that the Planning Board should have about two months' worth of
74 work completed before the deliberative session in March in case the budget amount needs
75 to be increased at that time.

76
77 *A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman Panasiti to*
78 *request a more detailed estimate as to how this year's funds will be spent, to ask the*
79 *Town Administrator to identify those funds (\$15,000) in this year's budget, and to*
80 *allocate \$25,000 in next year's budget for the Master Plan process.*

81
82 **Discussion:**

83 Selectman Brew explained that this motion doesn't mean that the Planning Board can't
84 request more money for the process, but it will need to come back to the Board of
85 Selectmen to discuss it first.

86 In response to a question from Town Administrator Shankle, Director Minkarah
87 explained that the proposed budget for the process is aggressive but that is why the
88 contingency amount is being requested.

89
90 Town Administrator Shankle requested that the upper limit for this process be stated, so
91 that the Planning Board doesn't have to come back next year to ask for more money. He
92 believes it will cost about \$60,000-75,000 to do this process correctly.

93
94 Director Minkarah agreed that the process could cost closer to \$55,000-60,000 to get all
95 of the things the Planning Board is looking for along with accounting for any unknowns.
96 There will be a high level of community involvement expected and the NRPC will work
97 within whatever budget it is given. The Planning Board has stated that it's not interested
98 in data and analysis that won't inform the Plan, which should reduce the cost of chasing
99 data that is not necessary. The contingency amount could be reduced by building some of
100 the possible cost items back into the budget amount.

101
102 Town Administrator Shankle suggested that the Selectmen sit down with the Planning
103 Board to get the real budget number before making a decision. Selectman Brew stated
104 that he would like for the Board to act tonight on the motion and then act to increase the
105 budget, if needed, at the next meeting.

106
107 *Voting: 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*

108 **5. FY21 Budget**

109 **5.1 Draft Presentation/Review**

110 The Board discussed proposed changes to the budget that are not currently included in the
111 draft version.

112
113
114 Town Administrator Shankle stated that four years ago the Deputy Town Clerk was
115 moved from a part-time to full-time position. At that time the employee should have been
116 moved up from grade 5, but never was. He is requesting that this position be moved to an
117 Executive Assistant position at grade 12, step 4. This is to correct what should have
118 happened in the past. This change should occur on July 1, 2020. In order to make this
119 accommodation, \$3,300 is being requested to be added to the Town Clerk's budget line.
120 In conjunction with this, there will be a change to the agreement that the Deputy Clerk
121 will receive the Town Clerk's salary when she is out for more than two days. That
122 agreement will disappear.

123
124 Town Administrator Shankle stated that there is also a non-union employee cost of living
125 increase of 2% being requested. Finance Director, Cheryl Eastman, stated that this
126 increase will be close to \$150,000.

127
128 Town Administrator Shankle explained that he spoke to Bruce Mayberry regarding
129 updating impact fees and it will probably cost about \$25,000 to complete the studies and
130 calculations needed. It is hoped that this money might be able to be found in this year's
131 budget. There is also approximately \$78,000 that will be coming to the town from the
132 state that could be used for this project.