

1 **BOARD OF SELECTMAN MINUTES**  
2 **August 15, 2011**  
3

4 Vice Chairman Bruce Bowler called the meeting to order at 6:35pm. Selectman  
5 present: James O'Mara, Tom Grella, George Infanti and Dwight Brew. Also  
6 present, Interim Town Administrator, Chris Rose and Minute Taker, Beth Penney.  
7

8 **Pledge of Allegiance**  
9

10 Mr. Rose led the Pledge of Allegiance.  
11

12 **Town Administrator Report**  
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14 Mr. Bowler reviewed the process since June to find a new Town Administrator.  
15

16 Mr. Bowler read a prepared statement:  
17

18 "At our May 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting, the Board of Selectmen accepted the resignation of  
19 our former Town Administrator. On June 1<sup>st</sup>, the Board met to interview  
20 representatives from Municipal Resources Incorporated (MRI) and the Local  
21 Government Center (LGC) to discuss the search process. After reviewing the  
22 proposed search costs provided by MRI and LGC, the board decided not to  
23 utilize the services of either vendor, and to conduct the initial search on our own,  
24 at no cost to the citizens of Amherst, as there were no funds included in the FY  
25 12 budget for this purpose.  
26

27 The Board agreed to advertise the Town Administrator's position in the Sunday  
28 Union Leader and to set a July 20<sup>th</sup> deadline for all applications. The Board  
29 received 21 applications for the Town Administrator's position. The board  
30 members each received a copy of all of the applications, and rated each  
31 candidate individually.  
32

33 The Board met on August 1<sup>st</sup> to decide on the top candidates that the Board  
34 wished to interview. At this meeting, the Board agreed on the top three  
35 candidates, and decided to invite these three candidates in for interviews on  
36 August 8<sup>th</sup>.  
37

38 Prior to August 8<sup>th</sup>, one of the candidates withdrew because they had accepted a  
39 position with another municipality.  
40

41 On August 8<sup>th</sup>, the Board interviewed the top two candidates and unanimously  
42 selected Mr. O'Mara for the Amherst Town Administrator position. At this  
43 meeting, the Board Authorized the Vice Chairman to extend an offer to Mr.  
44 O'Mara.  
45

46 We are pleased tonight to announce that Mr. O'Mara has accepted the offer to  
47 become our new Town Administrator, and will be starting in his new position at  
48 the end of September or the beginning of October.

49  
50 Mr. O'Mara will of course be resigning his position as Selectmen, and over the  
51 next few weeks, the Board will be deciding on the process to use to appoint a  
52 new Selectman that will serve until March 2012.

53  
54 I would like to point out that Mr. O'Mara was not present at any of the meetings  
55 involving the Town Administrator's search and had no access to any information  
56 about any of the applicants.

57  
58 Within a couple of days of the May 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting when the Board accepted the  
59 resignation of our prior Town Administrator, Selectmen O'Mara informed Vice  
60 Chairman Bowler that he was considering applying for the position of Amherst  
61 Town Administrator, and therefore wanted to be completely removed from the  
62 selection process.

63  
64 Selectmen O'Mara asked Vice Chairman Bowler to lead the selection process  
65 and that he (Selectmen O'Mara) would not participate in any discussions  
66 involving the Town Administrator search.

67  
68 Selectmen O'Mara asked that he be afforded the same privacy that any other  
69 applicant would receive, as he did not wish to have his current employer know  
70 that he was considering applying for another position.

71  
72 Throughout the entire selection process, Mr. O'Mara was treated the same as  
73 any other applicant and did not have access to any information that any other  
74 applicant did not have.

75  
76 At this time I would now like to invite Mr. O'Mara to address the board."

77  
78 Mr. O' Mara gave a speech resigning from the board. He expressed his  
79 appreciation to his colleagues on the board. He stated that the town is fortunate  
80 to have them as selectman. He also thanked the town's people who elected him  
81 and explained how he has served the town in the past years. Mr. O'Mara asked  
82 Mr. Bowler and the members of the board to accept his resignation.

83  
84 **Mr. Brew moved to accept Mr. O'Mara's resignation, seconded by Mr.**  
85 **Infanti with regret. Vote: Unanimous.**

86  
87 **Mr. Brew moved to nominate Mr. Bowler as the new chairman, seconded by**  
88 **Mr, Grella. Vote: Unanimous.**

89  
90 Mr. O' Mara addressed the board and the citizen's as the new Town  
91 Administrator. He explained what he hopes to accomplish in his new position.

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Mr. Bowler read a press release that will be given to the local papers after the meeting.

Mr. Brew read the minutes of August 8th, which was a Non-public session meeting discussing the hiring of Mr. O'Mara for the Town Administrator position.

**Citizen's Forum**

Marilyn Peterman congratulated Mr. O'Mara. She stated that herself and some town's people wrote to Mr. O'Mara asking for an explanation of the process to elect the town administrator. The letter described how other town positions were hired in the past using panels of people whom would be working with the person, department heads and citizen's to interview the candidates. She asked the board why in this case there were no panels of citizens or professionals used? She stated that she was not accusing the board of anything, except that the transparency of the process should have been clearer.

David Chen, brought forward an idea about how the budget and capital reserves are created. He explained that a bond is paid over time. If it is paid for in one year the taxes go up. If it were paid for by paying 10% over 10 years, then a warrant article would be proposed every year and there is risk that article would not be passed each year. Bill Belvin gave Mr. Chen a list of the capital reserves. Many of these cannot be spent because they are locked up in funds. Another alternative for this problem requires a legislative change. The idea is to create a reverse bond, which would need a super majority vote, but would be a commitment by the town to raise the money every year and have it in the budget and it would be subject to the default budget. There would be no interest drawn and it could accrue interest. Mr. Chen asked the selectman their thoughts about the idea and to get other town's pushing for it also. They may need to consider the merits or the negatives of the idea.

The board stated that they liked the idea and they discussed with Mr. Chen, putting the idea on a future agenda to discuss and how something like this is brought before the state legislature.

Mr. Grella asked Mr. Chen to write up something more formal for the selectmen to review.

**Administrative Business**

**Approval of Minutes for July 25, 2011, August 1, 2011, & August 8, 2011**

137 **Mr. Brew moved to approve the July 25<sup>th</sup> minutes, seconded by Mr. Grella.**  
138 **Vote: Unanimous, except Mr. Infanti absented.**

139  
140 **Mr. Brew moved to accept the August 1<sup>st</sup> minutes, seconded by Mr. Grella.**  
141 **Vote: Unanimous.**

142  
143 **Mr. Brew moved to accept the August 8<sup>th</sup> minutes, seconded by Mr. Infanti.**  
144 **Vote: Unanimous.**

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### **Approval of Payroll Register**

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150 **Mr. Grella moved to accept the payroll register, seconded by Mr. Infanti.**  
151 **Vote: Unanimous.**

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### **Approval of Accounts Payable Register**

155 **Mr. Infanti moved to accept the Accounts Payable Register, seconded by**  
156 **Mr. Brew. Vote: Unanimous.**

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### **Town Administrator's Report**

160 Mr. Rose stated that the CLD update operation manual needs a signature.

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162

162 Mr. Rose and the board discussed future meetings taking place on August 22<sup>nd</sup>,  
163 September 12<sup>th</sup>, and September 26<sup>th</sup>.

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### **Discussion Items**

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#### **New Town Ambulance**

169 The board will have a chance to look at the new ambulance when it comes back  
170 next week.

171  
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172 Director Brian Gleason, stated that the ambulance was delivered before the 4<sup>th</sup> of  
173 July, and was in service on July 27<sup>th</sup>. Director Gleason showed slides of the  
174 ambulance and he described some of the features the new ambulance has  
175 including: High visibility markings, LED lights that are red and white, the  
176 ambulance will always be staffed with a paramedic, 5 pt. restraint system, which  
177 holds the technician in place, but they can also provide patient care, a cardiac  
178 monitor which is quick release mounted in the ambulance, LED lighting in the  
179 cabins, a stair chair stretcher mounted in the ambulance, and a color camera for  
180 backing-up.

181

182 The board and Director Gleason discussed that this ambulance replaced the one  
183 with the highest mileage.

184  
185 **Action Items**

186  
187 **Approve**

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189 **Unanticipated Revenue – Parade and Tax Repayment**

190  
191 **Mr. Infanti moved to accept the check from Granite State Credit Union in**  
192 **the amount of \$3,500.00 and expended it, seconded by Mr. Grella with**  
193 **thanks. Vote: Unanimous.**

194  
195 **Mr. Brew moved to accept a check from Paramount Settlement Services in**  
196 **the amount of \$1,506.58, seconded by Mr. Grella. Vote: Unanimous.**

197  
198 **Buckridge Drive Stop Sign**

199  
200 Mr. Bowler read a memo to the Town Administrator from Chief Lyon to place a  
201 stop sign in the Northeast corner of Buckridge Dr. and Buckridge Dr.

202  
203 **Mr. Grella moved to approve placing a stop sign at the Northeast corner of**  
204 **Buckridge Dr. and Buckridge Dr., seconded by Mr. Infanti.**

205  
206 The board and Chief Lyon discussed that the sign will be permanent and will be  
207 put up immediately and will be effective by September 15<sup>th</sup>.

208  
209 **Vote: Unanimous.**

210  
211 **Proposed OHRV Ordinance**

212  
213 Mr. Rose stated that this is a proposal from the Conservation Commission. It has  
214 been passed through Chief Lyon and the town's lawyer. Mr. Rose stated that Mr.  
215 Harvey could not be here tonight, but he could be at the next meeting.

216  
217 The board and Chief Lyon discussed the ordinance and on what lands it applied  
218 too. They determined that it would not apply to the school's fields. They also  
219 discussed why the ordinance was being brought forward. Chief Lyon stated that  
220 the ordinance would work for his department.

221  
222 **Mr. Infanti moved to table this ordinance till the September meeting,**  
223 **seconded by Mr. Brew. Vote: Unanimous.**

224  
225  
226 **PSNH Pole Permit**

228 **Mr. Infanti moved to install and replace the pole on Stearns Rd. off of**  
229 **Boston Post Rd., seconded by Mr. Brew. Vote: Unanimous.**

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### **Employee Policy Handbook – Vacation Benefits Proposal**

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233 Mr. Brew stated that at the May or June meeting the former town administrator  
234 brought a proposal before the board about the employee's who have vacation  
235 over the vacation cap. The proposal discussed increasing the cap of total  
236 vacation time employees could accrue and a payout when they reach the cap.  
237 The previous policy had no exceptions and no procedure for exceeding the cap.

238

239 Mr. Brew read part of the original policy.

240

241 Mr. Brew suggested adding the line that "Special circumstances for carry over or  
242 buy back must be brought before the board for their approval."

243

244 Mr. Infanti stated that this makes sense and asked how department heads feel  
245 about this change.

246

247 Mr. Rose stated that he would send the policy and the proposed changes to the  
248 department heads. He suggested tabling this issue until the department heads  
249 take a look at it.

250

251 Mr. Bowler read a letter received from a citizen discussing how other companies  
252 have a use it or lose it vacation policy, and they do not get additional  
253 compensation for unused vacation. The citizen felt that if town employees  
254 cannot take vacation than the management should be held accountable.

255

256 **Mr. Brew moved to table this policy change proposal, seconded by Mr.**  
257 **Infanti. Vote: Unanimous.**

258

### **Town Health Insurance Plan**

259

261 Mr. Rose explained to the board that Primex is no longer offering group health  
262 insurance plans as of July of next year. He discussed other insurance plan  
263 possibilities. He stated that they need to start the process now of finding new  
264 insurance.

265

266 Mr. Bowler asked Mr. Rose to start looking into this sooner than later and to have  
267 numbers to help finalize the budget. He asked to have a write up of requests and  
268 to look at all insurance not just health care.

269

270 Mr. Infanti agreed and asked to get the new town administrator involved. He  
271 stated that is would be good to put the insurance out to bid to get tentative  
272 numbers.

273

274 Mr. Brew suggested sharing the information with the school system, avoid  
275 duplicating work, and to get the most cost effective plan.

276

277

### Abatements

278

279 **Mr. Infanti moved to accept the abatement for Map 004 Lot 045-018-002 in**  
280 **the amount of \$135.17, seconded by Mr. Brew. Vote: Unanimous.**

281

282 **Mr. Infanti moved to accept the abatement for Map 001 Lot 001-009 in the**  
283 **amount of \$882.69, seconded by Mr. Brew. Vote: Unanimous.**

284

285 **Mr. Infanti moved to accept the abatement for Map 004 Lot 091-002 in the**  
286 **amount of \$1349.63, seconded by Mr. Grella. Vote: Unanimous.**

287

288 **Mr. Infanti moved to accept the abatement for Map 010 Lot 064-016 in the**  
289 **amount of \$26.62, seconded by Mr. Brew. Vote: Unanimous.**

290

291 **Mr. Infanti moved to accept the MS-1 extension request, seconded by Mr.**  
292 **Brew.**

293

294 The board and Mr. Rose discussed that they cannot set the tax rate till this form  
295 is in and the form is used as an input for the tax rate. Early October is when the  
296 tax rate is set and this extension will not delay the December tax bill.

297

298 **Vote: Unanimous.**

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301

### Old Business

302

303 Mr. Rose stated that the last of the three estimates came in today for the Asphalt  
304 re-claimer and that they need approval to go forward.

305

306 **Mr. Infanti moved to approve the 4-year lease/ purchase with Baystone**  
307 **Financial Group, seconded by Mr. Grella.**

308

309 The board discussed why the bids were not the usual players that lend to the  
310 town. Merri Howe stated that the usual players were not interested in supporting  
311 such a low amount or a lease/ purchase of equipment.

312

313 **Vote: Unanimous.**

314

315 Mr. Infanti stated that there was a cemetery trustee meeting and they will be  
316 giving the selectman an update about the new cemetery.

317

318 Mr. Bolwer asked for an update on assessing.

319

320 Mr. Rose stated that they were planning on meeting soon, and he would send  
321 Mr. Bowler information.

322

323

**Non-Public Session Under RSA 91-a:3 II(a) Personnel**

324

325 **Mr. Infanti moved to go into Non-Public Session under RSA 91-a:3 II(a)**  
326 **Personnel at 7:53pm, seconded by Mr. Grella . Role call: Grella (yes),**  
327 **Bowler (yes), Infanti (yes), Brew (yes).**

328