

ATTENDANCE

Select Board

Present Aaron Hayden, Jim Wald, Alisa Brewer, Connie Kruger, Andrew Steinberg

Absent: None

Staff: John Musante, Town Manager; Tim Nelson, Fire Chief; Sandy Pooler, Finance Director; Deborah Radway, Human Resources Director; David Ziomek, Assistant Town Manager

Other: Dave Bodin, State Fire Marshall's Office; Tony Butterfield and Chris Hoffman, Personnel Board; Bernard Brennan; Agricultural Commission Chair; Jeremy Barker-Plotkin, Amherst Farmers Market; Jackie Wolf, League of Women Voters of Amherst; and Darin Kantarattanukul, Taste Thai Cuisine

Minutes

Meeting called to order by Mr. Hayden at 6:30 p.m.

Fire Department Hero Award Presentation

Chief Tim Nelson and Captain John Ingram saluted Clay and Cole Bowser, two young men who acted calmly and decisively in response to a medical emergency at their home. Dave Bodin from the State Fire Marshall's Office noted both students are graduates of the SAFE program and performed in exemplary fashion.

Public Comment

Bill Elsasser, an Ann Whalen Apartments resident, expressed concerns about some participants in social services programs downtown.

Parking and Street Closure Requests

VOTED unanimously to approve the reservation of forty (40) metered parking spaces on the east and west side of Boltwood Avenue between the intersections of Spring Street and College Street beginning at 8 a.m. on March 11, 2015 through 6 p.m. on March 12, 2015 for a function at the Lord Jeffery Inn for a fee of \$5.00 per meter per day, totaling \$400.00 payable to the Town of Amherst.

Special Liquor Licenses

VOTED unanimously to approve the applications of Top of the Campus, Inc. for special liquor licenses for the sale of wine and malt at receptions to be held in the Fine Arts Center Lobby on February 28, 2015 from 6:00 – 9:00 p.m., March 8, 2015 from 6:00 – 10:00 p.m., March 28, 2015 from 7:00 p.m. – 10:30 p.m., April 16, 2015 from 6:30 p.m. -10:00 p.m. and April 25, 2015 from 6:00 p.m. – 12:00 a.m.; Jennylyn Fontaine, Board Member.

Minutes

VOTED 4 in Favor, 1 Abstention (Brewer) to approve the Select Board minutes of January 26, 2015 and February 10, 2015, as presented.

Annual Town Election Warrant

VOTED unanimously to approve the Annual Town Election Warrant for Tuesday, March 31, 2015, as presented. Ms. Brewer noted the times that polls are open and the seats to be considered. Mr. Hayden noted the need for poll workers.

New Liquor License –Kantawanich LLC d/b/a The Taste Thai Cuisine

Hearing was called to order at 6:45 p.m. Co-Owner Darin Kantarattanukul summarized the application on behalf of the applicant, confirming that alcohol server training had been taken by the manager and staff. Certification of notice to abutters was presented. The public hearing was closed at 6:55 p.m.

VOTED unanimously to approve the application of Kantawanich LLC d/b/a The Taste Thai Cuisine for a new On Premise Wine and Malt Liquor License on the premises of 25 North Pleasant Street between the hours of 11:30 a.m. – 10 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 12 p.m. – 10 p.m. Sundays; Jirawat Ninsri, Manager.

League of Women Voters – Request for Program Co-Sponsor

League of Women Voters of Amherst member Jackie Wolf explained their appeal for sponsors for a program they are co-hosting with the MA Department of Mental Health. Members noted their support of the event, but hesitation in co-sponsoring absent a policy on process for consideration. Mr. Hayden agreed to draft such a policy for future consideration.

VOTED unanimously to enthusiastically support the League of Women Voters of Amherst and the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health a program “Good Mental Health: It Starts with a Conversation” by sharing an invitation with the community for an event to be held Wednesday, March 11, 2015 from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Social Hall of the Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst, 122 North Pleasant Street, Amherst.

Personnel Board – Proposed Changes to Personnel Procedures Manual

Mr. Steinberg recused himself from the meeting and left the room for discussion and vote.

Personnel Board Chair Tony Butterfield summarized the recommendation from the Personnel Board, outlining how the State referendum question approved by voters in November 2014 differed from the Personnel Board’s recommendation, which makes no distinction on the nature of part-time employees. Human Resources Director Deborah Radway spoke about the cost and administrative oversight involved. Mr. Musante noted a petition article had been received for Annual Town Meeting related to the State referendum.

VOTED 4-0, 1 Absent (Steinberg) to approve proposed changes to the Town of Amherst Personnel Procedures Manual, as recommended by the Personnel Board and presented in a document dated February 23, 2015 titled “Proposed Changes to Personnel Procedures Manual - To provide a sick and personal leave benefit for eligible part-time employees.”

FY 2015 2nd Quarter Budget Update

Mr. Steinberg rejoined the meeting.

Finance Director Sandy Pooler provided an explanation and summary of the report of revenues and expenditures for General and Enterprise funds as of December 31, the halfway point for the fiscal year. There is an expectation that snow and ice expenditures will be higher than budgeted as a result of the extreme winter.

Town-Gown Study: Next Steps

Mr. Musante recognized Assistant Town Manager Dave Ziomek for the tremendous job he has done as Co-Chair of the Committee. A brief update on the consultant’s recommendations and discussions with UMass Chancellor Subbaswamy on next steps was provided. A University-Town of Amherst Collaborative (UTAC) involving various stakeholders from each entity is expected to be formed with subcommittees focused on Housing, Economic Development and Arts, Culture and Entertainment. Mr. Musante added that the recommendation of the consultant for the Town to create and fund an Economic Development Director position was included in his recommended budget for the upcoming fiscal year.

Progress Report – Update on Town Manager’s Performance Goals

Mr. Musante provided highlights from his lengthy progress report provided to the Select Board hard copy and online meeting packet regarding the substantive progress he believes has been made in areas such as fiscal management, affordable housing, economic development, Town-Gown relations, and infrastructure and long range planning. He agreed with Ms. Brewer’s suggestion to complete work on a concise summary of Town facilities.

Agricultural Commission Recommendation for Amherst Farmers Market

Chair of the Agricultural Commission Bernard Brennan noted their firm support of the Amherst Farmers Market as well as the desire to ensure the continued use of space, but recommending that such approval from the Select Board comes with a greater participation from Amherst farmers. Mr. Brennan provided a summary of the history and attempts by the Agricultural Commission to broaden competition and selection. It was suggested the request for use of the Spring Street parking lot be submitted in the fall to allow farmers time to plan their growing season, in addition to a drawing for assignment within the market. Jeremy Barker-Plotkin spoke on behalf of the Amherst Farmers Market, noting their attempt to respond to concerns. Tammy Ryan, their new Market Manager, was introduced.

The Select Board noted their appreciation on the work of both groups and urged continued engagement in an attempt to reach agreement prior to presentation of the request for the 2015 season. The Select Board requested the matter be put on the agenda of March 23, 2015, prior to presentation of a request for reservation.

FY 16 Budget Discussion

Mr. Hayden reminded members to present questions to the Town Manager in advance of each meeting to allow a prepared response. Mr. Musante reported that Governor Baker will be presenting his proposed State budget, his first, on March 4, 2015. The Governor's early release of the Chapter 90 funds allows the paving plan schedule to move forward.

Town Manager Report

Mr. Musante reported that the Planning Board is actively working on an Inclusionary Zoning Bylaw to incentivize creation of affordable housing and will hold further public hearings on their work. He indicated his focus is on the potential for non-zoning incentives to spur creation of affordable units. Staff is looking at many options, speaking with MA Department of Housing & Community development (DHCD), Department of Revenue, and others regarding an existing tool which provides relief similar to a Tax Increment Financing Agreement (TIF) for residential development in commercial centers. Relief is provided through delay of collection of taxes for property value created through development, not affecting the base amount of taxes levied. It would require creation of a zone in the downtown area and a plan to submit to DHCD. A Town Meeting vote would authorize a particular zone and submittal of a plan to DHCD by the Select Board. DHCD requirements specifying a 25% minimum number of affordable units at 80% of area median income (AMI) may prove to be challenging to bring forth for Town Meeting consideration.

The Town Manager reported working collaboratively with the Chancellor's leadership team and municipal leaders relative to March 7th, preplanning to minimize the potential for large-scale disturbances on the Saturday prior to spring break. The University is taking a number of initiatives, as recommended in the Davis Report, including residence hall guest restrictions, on campus programs, coordination between Amherst, UMass, State Police, and police mutual aid partners, and the presence of MA Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission (ABCC) investigators to ensure compliance at local bars and liquor stores.

Building Commissioner Rob Morra provided an outline on various considerations taken stemming from the recent project on Mill Street where rock removal blasting upset neighbors. In addition to a review of public notice requirements for rock removal, the ZBA is also considering changes to their rules and regulations that will require specific construction details to allow for mitigation of construction management. Planning staff has also been looking at similar issues for larger projects requiring special permits, requiring greater details related to site safety and management.

Mr. Musante reports that staff is working on Select Board compensation surveys for peer communities as requested by the Select Board. Board members requested the item be kept on the forefront and completed before Town Meeting.

Staff recognitions included acknowledgement of the tremendous job Public Works staff have done over the past weeks with storm and post storm cleanup and water main breaks due to freezing temperatures. The Select Board noted their appreciation to maintenance staff on the continuous cleaning of floors made necessary by the recent storms and salt tracked into buildings.

Assistant to the Town Manager Debra Puppel and Parks and Tree Supervisor Division Adam Feltman recently completed the Fall UMass Supervisory Leadership Development Program, joining a growing list of Town staff.

Member Reports

Mr. Steinberg noted a recommendation to the Regional School Committee issued January 13, 2015 for creation of a hybrid district allowing but not requiring member towns to join an expanded Pre-K thru 12 regional district from its current configuration of Grades 7-12. The process was extraordinarily complex with various structures for elementary schools in the region towns, seven school committees and multiple superintendents. The report has been given to the Regional School Committee and any change to the District will require Town Meeting approval in each of the Towns. Forums will be held in each of the four Towns, including in Amherst on March 3, 2015 in the Town Room at 6:00 p.m.

Massachusetts Municipal Association Legislative alerts were mentioned, noting assistance of Amherst Sen. Rosenberg and Rep. Story. Representative Steve Kulik was also applauded for his legislative work.

Mr. Steinberg alerted members to the Kanegasaki Sister City Committee reception for the middle school student exchange on March 18, 2015.

Ms. Kruger reported a recommendation from the Public Works Committee related to a citizen request for a three-way stop in North Amherst is forthcoming. The Transportation Plan Task Force has set a date for public presentation of the Transportation Plan.

Ms. Brewer reminded the need for community members to complete a survey for Amherst Together and remarked on events for Black History Month and the need for assistance in planning next year. Housing and Sheltering Committee working on its understanding of inclusionary zoning. The newly created Affordable Housing Trust is surveying members for initial meeting date.

Ms. Brewer noted the Hampshire Council of Governments is seeking input from public officials for an upcoming session on Open Meeting Law at Senator Rosenberg's Municipal Conference on March 21.

Mr. Hayden reviewed the upcoming calendar of events. Vacancies on Town Committee and Board openings were noted.

ADJOURN - The meeting adjourned at 10:04 p.m.

Submitted by John P. Musante, Town Manager

List of Documents Presented at the Meeting – Available in the Online Packet for the Meeting Date

Agenda

Draft Motions

League of Women Voters Request

Personnel Board Memo Recommending Part-time Benefits

FY 15 2nd Quarter YTD Report

Town Manager Performance Goals Progress Report
Agricultural Commission Farmers Market Advisory
Agricultural Commission Charge
Farmers Market Rules and Vendor Application
Bulletin Letter to the Editor from Farmers Market
MassLive Article on Amherst Farmers Market
Ag Commission Proclamation on Farmers Market
Urban Center Housing Tax Increment Financing (TIF)
Blasting Permitting Process Update from Building Commissioner
Regional Agreement Working Group Report to the Regional School Committee
MMA Legislative Alert
Open Meeting Law Opportunity
Vacancies of Boards and Committees
Annual Town Election Warrant March 31, 2015
Lord Jeffery Parking Meter Reservation Request and Map
Special Wine and Malt Applications UMass Fine Arts Center 2-28-15, 3-8-15, 3-28-15, 4-16-15 and 4-25-15
Draft Minutes 01-26-2015 and 2-10-2015