



**Town of Amherst  
Special Town Council Meeting  
Monday, April 13, 2020  
6:30 p.m.  
Virtual Meeting  
Minutes**

Complete video is available online: <https://amherstmedia.org/content/amherst-town-council-april-13-2020>

**1. Call to Order**

President Griesemer declared the virtual presence of a quorum, called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m., and announced audio and video recording by Amherst Media.

Councilors Participating Remotely: Councilors Bahl-Milne, Brewer, De Angelis, DuMont, Griesemer, Hanneke, Pam, Ross, Ryan, Schoen, Schreiber, Steinberg, and Swartz

Councilors Absent: None

Others participating remotely: Town Manager Paul Bockelman, Fire Chief and Emergency Management Director Tim Nelson, Health Director Julie Federman, Clerk of the Council Athena O’Keeffe

Note: Pursuant to Governor Baker’s March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, the meeting was conducted via remote participation.

President Griesemer confirmed that all Councilors could hear and be heard by all participants.

**2. Announcements**

President Griesemer made the following announcements:

Upcoming Town Council Meetings:

Tuesday, April 14, 2020 6:00 p.m. – Joint Special Council and School Committee Meeting

Thursday, April 16, 2020 6:00 p.m. – Joint Special Council and School Committee Meeting – held only in the event that the April 14 meeting cannot be completed due to technical difficulties

Upcoming Council Committee Meetings:

Thursday, April 16, 2020 7:30 p.m. – Outreach, Communications and Appointments Committee Meeting to Interview Zoning Board of Appeals applicants

Tuesday, April 21 4:30 p.m. – Town Services and Outreach Committee Meeting to consider any appointments filed by the Town Manager with the Town Clerk

Volunteers are needed for the Senior Center, to volunteer call (413) 259-3060 or email Director of Senior Services Mary Beth Ogulewicz at [oglewiczm@amherstma.gov](mailto:oglewiczm@amherstma.gov)

To request or offer help visit the Senior Center webpage at <https://www.amherstma.gov/269/Senior-Center> and click “[Click here to Request Support or Offer Support](#)”

3. **Hearings** - *None*
4. **General Public Comment** - *None*
5. **Proclamations and Commemorations**
  - a. **Arbor Month Proclamation** – Consent Agenda

President Griesemer introduced the Arbor Month Proclamation, and noted that it is on the consent agenda.

6. **Presentations and Discussion**
  - a. **Town of Amherst COVID-19 Update**

Town Manager Paul Bockelman spoke about:

- Cases, deaths, and tests in the State, County, and Town of Amherst
- Occupancy limits for grocery stores, guidance for construction sites and restaurants
- Continuity of operations
- Health of core team
- Wastewater treatment plant – break on Redgate Lane, avoid the area if possible
- Virtual Cuppa Joe with the Town Manager
- Tuesday and Thursday Zoom meeting for the public to join and ask questions – 12 noon
- Focus on next four weeks, western Massachusetts may experience peak later than eastern Massachusetts
- Upcoming focus on finances – teleconference on revenue projections at the state level at 10 am Tuesday

Health Director Julie Federman spoke about:

- Inspection services reviewing guidance with businesses and construction sites
- Restaurants encouraged to have curbside pickup and delivery only
- Other retail guidance for pharmacies, convenience stores, liquor stores for safe continued operation

Councilor Hanneke asked about a request from the Survival Center for a shelter for curbside pick-up of food. P. Bockelman responded that the building commissioner visited the site and determined that a tent would be the best option. The Town is working to find a tent.

Councilor Pam asked if a pavilion at Mill River could be used as a food pick up location, and about grocery store employees wearing masks. J. Federman responded that the CDC recommends the public wear face coverings; a problem with using face coverings is that they are not disposable, grocery stores can use plastic shields. Paper masks are still reserved for health care workers. P. Bockelman added that if the Center were interested in using the structure at Mill River, the Town would work with them.

Fire Chief and Emergency Management Director Tim Nelson spoke about:

- Experienced team
- Incident Command: Fire Health Police and DPW working together
- Regional and State Partners: mutual aid partners, Western Massachusetts Health & Medical Coordinating Coalition, Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency
- Communications with the elder community to maintain safety and welfare of residents at nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and senior housing

- Community Emergency Response Team
- Continuity of Operations; restricted access to buildings, screening personnel when they begin shifts and off-duty personnel if they need to enter the building, holding inspections until state of emergency is lifted, added temporary staff from student force
- Supply chain; ordered personal protective equipment early so that inventory will last 5 weeks
- Added personal protective equipment protocols to call response

Councilor Schoen asked if any nursing homes or assisted living facilities have any cases. T. Nelson responded that there are no cases currently, the Town is working on scenarios, facilities are set up to isolate residents as long as the condition does not require hospitalization. P. Bockelman added that the Fire Department routinely checks in with senior facilities. J. Federman added that Public Health Nurse Jennifer Brown works closely with the Fire Department, and there are backup systems in place to handle those scenarios if they occur.

## 7. Action Items

### a. Consent Agenda

President Griesemer stated the following items were selected because they were considered to be routine and it was reasonable to expect they would pass with no controversy. To remove an item from the consent agenda for discussion later in the meeting, ask that it be removed when the President lists the consent agenda items. The request to remove an item from the consent agenda does not require a second.

**MOTON:** President Griesemer moved, second by Councilor De Angelis to move the following items, and the printed motions thereunder and approve those items as a single unit:

- 5.a. Waive Town Council Rules of Procedure rule 8.6 for agenda item 5.a. - Arbor Month Proclamation
- 5.a. Adoption of Arbor Month Proclamation
- 7.d. Amendment to Town Council Rules of Procedure rule 10.8k
- 10.a. Approval of March 30, 2020 Special Town Council Meeting minutes, as presented

**VOTED:** Unanimously by roll call to move the following items, and the printed motions thereunder and approve those items as a single unit:

- 5.a. Waive Town Council Rules of Procedure rule 8.6 for agenda item 5.a. - Arbor Month Proclamation
- 5.a. Adoption of Arbor Month Proclamation
- 7.d. Amendment to Town Council Rules of Procedure rule 10.8k
- 10.a. Approval of March 30, 2020 Special Town Council Meeting minutes, as presented

## 8. Appointments

### a. Town Manager Appointments - *None*

### b. Town Council Appointments

#### (1) Budget Coordinating Group – *Charter Sec. 5.2*

President Griesemer spoke about the need for increased membership in the Budget Coordinating Group (BCG).

Councilor Schoen asked about the rationale for adding Councilors to the group.

Town Manager Paul Bockelman spoke about the role of the BCG. President Griesemer added that last time the BCG met, it was a committee of the whole of the Council, School Committee, Library Trustees, Regional School Committee and Town Manager.

Councilor Steinberg spoke about the conception and history of the BCG. Due to the current extraordinary circumstances, it is important that all components of government are part of a consensus discussion. The BCG serves the purpose of providing a forum to ensure everyone is heard and part of the process.

Councilor De Angelis spoke in favor of adding members to the group, and spoke in support of appointing Councilors Hanneke and Steinberg.

**MOTION:** President Griesemer moved, second by Councilor Ryan, to appoint Councilor Hanneke and Councilor Steinberg to the Budget Coordinating Group, in addition to Councilors Griesemer and Schoen who were appointed on March 9, 2020, under Town Council Rules of Procedure rule 10.6 Councilors Appointed to Committees Named in the Charter, effective immediately, for a term to expire January 6, 2021.

Councilor Pam asked about the role of the Finance Committee in relation to the BCG.

Councilor Steinberg spoke about the role of the Finance Committee and BCG.

Councilor DuMont expressed discomfort with adding Councilors to the BCG, and asked if the other groups will add members.

President Griesemer stated there is no limit on the number of members; other groups may add another member to the BCG.

Councilor Schoen stated she is unsure if other groups officially designated members last year, but the group will need members now. President Griesemer noted that groups have now officially designated members.

Councilor Brewer noted that the group is different now than it was in its first iteration when Town Meeting. Need for conduits of information is very important and understanding across elected bodies.

**VOTED:** 12-1 by roll call (Councilors Bahl-Milne, Brewer, De Angelis, Griesemer, Hanneke, Pam, Ross, Ryan, Schoen, Schreiber, Steinberg, and Swartz voted Yes; Councilor DuMont voted No) to appoint Councilor Hanneke and Councilor Steinberg to the Budget Coordinating Group, in addition to Councilors Griesemer and Schoen who were appointed on March 9, 2020, under Town Council Rules of Procedure rule 10.6 Councilors Appointed to Committees Named in the Charter, effective immediately, for a term to expire January 6, 2021.

## **9. Committee Reports**

- a. Community Resources Committee** – Councilor Hanneke, elected chair and vice chair, next meeting 2/21 at 2:00 pm
- b. Finance Committee** – Councilor Steinberg said that the Town Manager will schedule a Budget Coordinating Group meeting, and the next Finance Committee meeting will be scheduled afterwards. Referring to the written report, action will be required at a future Council meeting regarding the audit. The committee expects to receive information about the current budget and third quarter report in the next few weeks.
- c. Governance, Organization and Legislation Committee** – Next meeting 4/22 at 10:30 to elect offices
- d. Joint Capital Planning Committee** – Waiting for Finance to meet first
- e. Outreach, Communications, and Appointments Ad Hoc Committee** – Met this morning, reminder that interviews for ZBA; two associate members up for reappointment at the end of June who will also be interviewed Thursday to consider potential reappointment for associates. 7:30 interviews and 8:30 deliberation for recommendation for Council 4/27 action. Then move on to Planning Board terms.

- f. Town Services and Outreach Committee** – Meeting postponed to Tuesday 4/21 for Finance Director and BLC and Cons Com appointments.

Councilor Schoen asked if associates would be considered for full membership, or only reappointed as associates. Councilor Ross responded that one associate is willing to be a full member, one asked to remain associate.

**10. Approval of Minutes**

- a. April 6, 2020 Regular Town Council Minutes** – Consent Agenda

**11. Town Manager Report** – *None*

**12. Town Council Comments**

President Griesemer spoke about the process at the meeting on April 14 to select a candidate to fill the vacancy on the School committee.

Councilors discussed using video during meetings.

Councilor Brewer spoke in favor of Councilors commenting during the joint meeting about selection criteria rather than individual candidates.

**13. Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair 48 Hours in Advance of the Meeting**

**14. Executive Session** – *None*

**15. Adjourn**

President Griesemer declared the meeting adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Athena O'Keefe

Clerk of the Council

**Record of Agenda Packet Materials and Documents Presented**

00. 04-13-2020 Draft Motions for Town Council  
04-13-2020 FINAL Special Town Council Agenda  
10.a. 04-06-2020 DRAFT Town Council Minutes  
5.a. Arbor Month Proclamation 2020  
5.a. Revised Arbor Month Proclamation 2020  
7.b. Proposed Revision to ROP 10.8(k)  
BCG Charge - Revised by Town Council 2-10-2020  
COVID-19 Town Council Presentation 04-13-2020 FINAL  
Email From Senator Jo Comerford  
Finance Committee report  
Memorandum on Budget Coordinating Group appointed by Council 4-11-2020