



**Town of Amherst
Town Council Meeting
Monday, January 4, 2021
7:00 p.m.
Virtual Meeting
Minutes**

Complete video is available online: <https://youtu.be/60sdpUVA64Y>

1. Call to Order

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

Councilors Absent: None

Others Participating Remotely: Town Manager Paul Bockelman, Planning Director Christine Brestrup, Building Commissioner Rob Morra, Health Director Emma Dragon, Clerk of the Council Athena O’Keeffe, IT Director Sean Hannon

After confirming all participants could hear and be heard, President Griesemer declared the presence of a quorum, called the meeting to order at 8:49 p.m. and announced audio and video recording by Amherst Media.

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

2. Announcements

Upcoming Town Council Meetings:

- January 20, 2021 6:30 – Special Town Council Meeting with Planning Board
- January 25, 2021, 6:30 p.m. – Regular Town Council Meeting
- February 8, 2021, 6:30 p.m. – Regular Town Council Meeting

Upcoming Council Committee Meetings:

- Community Resources Committee: January 5, 2021, 2:00 p.m.; regular meeting January 12, 2021 2:00 p.m.
- Finance Committee: January 5, 2021, 2:00 p.m.
- Governance, Organization, and Legislation Committee: January 6, 2021 10:30 a.m.
- Town Services and Outreach Committee: January 7, 2021 6:30 p.m.

All meeting agendas and details are posted at www.AmherstMA.gov/Calendar

COVID-19 Call-in Number and Email:

The COVID-19 Concern Line (413) 259-2425 and email address covidconcerns@amherstma.gov are now available for residents to communicate their concerns about masks, social distancing, gatherings, etc.

3. Hearings - None
4. General Public Comment

Hilda Greenbaum, Amherst resident, commented that she is disappointed by the Council vote, and that there needs to be more public discussion before bylaw changes.

Janet Keller, Amherst resident, asked that her written comments be posted in the Council packet and asked the Council to make affordable housing a true integral part of things going forward.

Ira Bryck, Amherst resident, would like to see a moratorium on five-story buildings and a study on what has succeeded in comparable college towns in other parts of the world. Bryck spoke about the master plan and about comments made about the master plan by Councilors.

Erika Zekos, Amherst resident, appreciated Councilors' consideration of the earlier vote and that the Council is sending the changes to the planning board before a final vote takes place.

Pam Rooney, Amherst resident, spoke in praise of the substitute motion made in an earlier meeting and stated there needs to be a roadmap of the process that describes which body does what and cumulative effect of the all the changes.

Ken Rosenthal, Amherst resident, spoke about his experience with Town government, and urged the Council to seek input from knowledgeable residents.

5. Consent Agenda

Consent Agenda: 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.

MOTION: President Griesemer moved, second by Councilor Hanneke, to move the following items, and the printed motions thereunder and approve those items as a single unit:

- 6.a. To proclaim January 18, 2021 as Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, and to adopt the REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR PROCLAMATION, as presented.
- 6.b. To proclaim February 2021 as Black History Month, and to adopt the Amherst Black History Month Proclamation, as presented.

VOTED unanimously, 13-0 by roll call, to move the following items, and the printed motions thereunder and approve those items as a single unit:

- 6.a. To proclaim January 18, 2021 as Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, and to adopt the REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR PROCLAMATION, as presented.
- 6.b. To proclaim February 2021 as Black History Month, and to adopt the Amherst Black History Month Proclamation, as presented.

6. Resolutions and Proclamations

a. Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Proclamation

VOTED via consent agenda to proclaim January 18, 2021 as Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, and to adopt the REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR PROCLAMATION, as presented.

b. Black History Month Proclamation

VOTED via consent agenda to proclaim February 2021 as Black History Month, and to adopt the Amherst Black History Month Proclamation, as presented.

Agenda item 14. Topics Not Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance of the Meeting

Councilor Ryan spoke about the proclamation and explained the haste due to the impending date.

MOTION: President Griesemer moved, second by Councilor De Angelis, to waive Town Council Rules of Procedure rule 8.6 for the current agenda item.

VOTED unanimously, 13-0 by roll call, to waive Town Council Rules of Procedure rule 8.6 for the current agenda item.

MOTION: President Griesemer moved, second by Councilor De Angelis, to adopt the PROCLAMATION IN SUPPORT OF A NATIONAL DAY OF RECOLLECTION TO HONOR THOSE WHO HAVE LOST THEIR LIVES TO COVID-19, as presented.

VOTED unanimously, 13-0 by roll call, to adopt the PROCLAMATION IN SUPPORT OF A NATIONAL DAY OF RECOLLECTION TO HONOR THOSE WHO HAVE LOST THEIR LIVES TO COVID-19, as presented.

7. Presentations and Discussion

a. COVID-19 Update

Town Manager Paul Bockelman and Health Director Emma Dragon spoke about the following:

- Total cases and deaths in Massachusetts and in Amherst
- Total tests in Amherst
- Approximately 6,000 tests/week in Amherst
- Positivity rate
- Age distribution of cases
- Public health indicators
- Average daily incidence rate per 100,000: 19.7
- 2.22% positivity
- Town COVID-19 testing results for symptomatic or exposed individuals
- Vaccine distribution timeline
- Open vaccination site at UMass for first responders
- De-densification of Town offices
- Pandemic fatigue
- Holiday gatherings
- Increased numbers of cases, trends are up nationwide
- Returning students and staff to higher education institutions

Councilor Schreiber was briefly disconnected and reconnected.

Councilor Pam asked about phases 2 and 3.

Dragon responded that primary care physicians should be eventually receiving vaccines.

Councilor Brewer commented that she has seen unfortunate press from first responders that they will not take a vaccine, and asked if the Town is requiring flu vaccines and what is our local public safety response to the vaccine.

Bockelman responded that the Town is not requiring vaccines. The vaccine will be available to all first responders.

Councilor Schoen asked about when and how distribution starts.

b. MassWorks Pomeroy Village Grant

Town Manager Paul Bockelman spoke briefly about the process, noting that the grant requires expenditure of funds by June 30, 2023 and that no Council action is required tonight.

Councilor Bahl-Milne asked about the scope of the project.

Councilor Schoen asked about collecting ideas to consider for the project.

Councilor Pam asked about outreach and feedback.

Councilor Brewer commented that the Town cannot send Town staff door-to-door during a pandemic, and that outreach should be hosted by a Council committee.

Councilor DuMont spoke about a district 5 meeting where the project was discussed.

Councilor Bahl-Milne suggested posting a timeline on the Town website and show when meetings will take place or create a project newsletter or utilize Bang the Table as an option. Councilor Bahl-Milne suggested outreach for this project be used as a prototype for community engagement.

8. Action Items

a. Capital Inventory

MOTION: President Griesemer moved, second by Councilor Hanneke, to suspend Town Council Rules of Procedure rule 8.4 for the current item.

VOTED 12-0-1 by roll call (Councilors Bahl-Milne, Brewer, De Angelis, Griesemer, Hanneke, Pam, 1Ross, Ryan, Schoen, Schreiber, Steinberg, and Swartz voted Yes; Councilor DuMont Abstained) to suspend Town Council Rules of Procedure rule 8.4 for the current item.

MOTION: Steinberg moved, second by Councilor Schoen, in accordance with Charter Sec. 5.7(a), and as recommended by the December 7, 2020 Finance Committee 2021 Inventory Recommendations, to establish the following requirements for the 2021 capital inventory:

Buildings (including strategic infrastructure from enterprise funds)

- Age
- Condition
- Maintenance and repair history (renovation or major repair history)
- Amount for which it is insured
- Comment field to note plans for building (note empty buildings)

- Options for future use of buildings not currently in use
- Vehicles/Moveable equipment

- Age
- Condition
- Remaining useful life
- Mileage (will include two years in the second year)
- Purpose of Vehicle
- Frequency of Use (weekly, monthly, seasonally)
- Type of Fuel (include MPG if known)
- Budgeted Replacement Price

Councilor Steinberg briefly spoke about the Finance Committee process, outlined in the December 21, 2020 Finance Committee report.

Councilor Brewer spoke about her experience as a Select Board member with the capital inventory, and suggested that the zoning district and any finance-related requirements be added to the inventory for buildings.

Councilor Schoen suggested adding a column called “comments” that could include the financial info Councilor Brewer spoke about.

Councilor Steinberg spoke about the information Energy and Climate Action Committee uses for their inventory, and adding to that inventory rather than recreating a document.

Steinberg and Griesemer spoke about instructing Sean Mangano to add notes to the comment field.

VOTED unanimously, 13-0 by roll call, in accordance with Charter Sec. 5.7(a), and as recommended by the December 7, 2020 Finance Committee 2021 Inventory Recommendations, to establish the following requirements for the 2021 capital inventory:

Buildings (including strategic infrastructure from enterprise funds)

- Age
- Condition
- Maintenance and repair history (renovation or major repair history)
- Amount for which it is insured
- Comment field to note plans for building (note empty buildings)
- Options for future use of buildings not currently in use

Vehicles/Moveable equipment

- Age
- Condition
- Remaining useful life
- Mileage (will include two years in the second year)
- Purpose of Vehicle
- Frequency of Use (weekly, monthly, seasonally)
- Type of Fuel (include MPG if known)
- Budgeted Replacement Price

b. Memo to Library Trustees re: Repair, Renovation, and Addition

MOTION: President Griesemer moved, second by Councilor Ryan, to authorize the Town Council President to send the revised Memo dated January 3, 2021, “Request for Financial Information Regarding the Proposed Library Expansion Project” to the Jones Library Trustees on behalf of the Town Council, as amended.

Councilors discussed the timing of the vote on the item considering the letter was not available to the Council until today.

VOTED 12-0-1 by roll call (Councilors Bahl-Milne, Brewer, De Angelis, Griesemer, Hanneke, Pam, Ross, Ryan, Schoen, Schreiber, Steinberg, and Swartz voted Yes; Councilor DuMont Abstained), to authorize the Town Council President to send the revised Memo dated January 3, 2021, “Request for Financial Information Regarding the Proposed Library Expansion Project” to the Jones Library Trustees on behalf of the Town Council, as amended.

c. Memo Regarding Required and Possible Agenda Items 2021

President Griesemer stated that Council committees will work with the document to make sure that everything they foresee is listed and it will come back to the full Council by January 15 for review.

9. Appointments

- a. **Town Manager Appointments** – *None*
- b. **Town Council Appointments** – *None*

10. Committee and Liaison Reports

- a. **Community Resources Committee** - *None*
- b. **Finance Committee** – *None*
- c. **Governance, Organization, and Legislation Committee** - *None*
- d. **Joint Capital Planning Committee** - *None*
- e. **Town Services and Outreach Committee** – Councilor DuMont reported that the committee will meet Thursday to talk about water and sewer bylaws, and North Common questions are due by Friday.
- f. **Liaison Reports: Affordable Housing Trust, Board of Health, Board of License Commissioners, Community Preservation Act Committee, Council on Aging, Disability Access Advisory Committee, LSSE Commission, and Transportation Advisory Committee:** Councilor Brewer commented that the Board of License Commissioners came up with rules for public comments and guidance for licenses.

11. Approval of Minutes - *None*

12. Town Manager Report – Town Manager Paul Bockelman spoke about the work of the Community Safety Working Group, and the redesign of the Town of Amherst website.

13. Town Council Comments

- a. **President Report**
- b. **Future Agenda Items**
- c. **Councilor Comments** – Councilor De Angelis spoke about the ongoing need to address structural racism and that the Council should participate in anti-racism training.

14. Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated by the President 48 Hours in Advance of the Meeting - *None*

15. Election of Officers – *Charter Sec. 2.2(b)*

a. President – For a term to expire January 3, 2022

Councilor Hanneke was nominated by Councilor Steinberg, Councilor Hanneke accepted the nomination.

President Griesemer was nominated by Councilor Pam, President Griesemer accepted the nomination.

Each nominee made a brief statement.

Councilors made brief statements.

VOTED: 12 votes for Griesemer, 1 vote for Hanneke. (Councilors Bahl-Milne, Brewer, De Angelis, DuMont, Griesemer, Pam, Ross, Ryan, Schoen, Schreiber, Steinberg, and Swartz voted for Griesemer; Hanneke voted for Hanneke).

The Clerk of the Council administered the oath of office for President Griesemer.

b. Vice President – For a term to expire January 3, 2022

Councilor Ross was nominated by Councilor Brewer, Councilor Ross accepted the nomination.

Councilor Schoen was nominated by Councilor Schreiber, Councilor Schoen accepted the nomination.

Each nominee made a brief statement.

Councilors made brief statements.

VOTED: 8 votes for Ross, 4 votes for Schoen, 1 abstention. (Councilors Bahl-Milne, Brewer, De Angelis, Hanneke, Ross, Ryan, Steinberg, and Swartz voted for Ross; Councilors DuMont, Pam, Schoen, and Schreiber voted for Schoen; President Griesemer Abstained).

The Clerk of the Council administered the oath of office for Vice President Ross.

16. Executive Session - None

17. Adjourn

President Griesemer declared the special meeting of the Town Council adjourned at 11:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Athena O’Keeffe

Clerk of the Council

Record of Agenda Packet Materials and Documents Presented

00. 01-04-2021 Draft Motions for Town Council as of 01-04-21

00. 01-04-2021 Draft Motions for Town Council as of 12-23-20

00. 01-04-2021 FINAL Special Town Council Agenda

00. 01-04-2021 FINAL Special Town Council Agenda - Public Forum Appropriation Belchertown Rd Acquisition

01-04-2021 FINAL Town Council Agenda

- 12. Town Manager Report 01-04-2021
- 14. Proclamation in Support of a National Day of Recollection_FINAL DRAFT
- 15. Election of officers script
- 2.a. Belchertown Road Acquisition Presentation 12-21-20 TC
- 6.a. 2021 MLK Jr. Proclamation Corrected - as voted at GOL
- 6.a. Black History Month Proclamation 2021 - as voted at GOL
- 7.a. COVID-19 Town Council Presentation 01-04-2021
- 7.b. Pomeroy Village MassWorks Grant Process Memo - 01-04-2021
- 8.a. Capital Inventory memo
- 8.b. DRAFT Memo to Jones Library re Ren Expan vs. Repair amended as of 01-03-2021(a1)
- 8.c. Memo re Required and Possible Agenda Items in 2021 as of 12-27-2020 _Composite as of 01-03-2021
- Zoning Priorities Motion - Motion to Subsitute a Revised Amended Motion. 1.4.2021 CS
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