

## More Letters

### COMMENTARY: Frequently Asked Questions

## The Road Bond - Article #22

#### Why is reconstruction of some roads necessary?

Reconstruction of sections of fifty-four roads in Amherst, totaling almost 23 miles, is necessary because those roads do not have proper base materials and proper drainage, and will not respond to normal maintenance.

Water infiltrates into the poor road base though the cracks and potholes on the surface, and is not carried away because of improper drainage (water even gets pushed up into the bad road base!). Then the water freezes, causing frost heaves, which further breaks up the road surface, allowing more water to run into the base.

Putting a topcoat of asphalt or sealing the cracks will not solve the problem, since the uncorrected base and drainage will soon allow the cycle to repeat. Reconstruction is the only solution that works.

#### What does “reconstruction” mean?

A good road is ‘good’ three feet down. There are two types of reconstruction, depending on the severity of the conditions.

The first is reclaiming. This is done where the bottom foot or so of the three feet of material is basically good, consisting of gravel and stone, which will drain well. The top 18-24 inches of roadway, including asphalt and some gravel, are ground up in place and left then as the roadbed, creating a homogeneous layer that will drain well.

The second type of reconstruction is rebuilding, and that is done when all three feet under the road surface is unsuitable for a modern road. Many of our roads are old, having first been used in the horse and buggy days. Logs or wood planks were often placed over the wet areas so the wagons would not sink. Paving was done on whatever was already there - in low-lying wet areas in particular it was lots of organic materials (great for topsoils, but not for roads). All such material must be trucked out and replaced with stone and gravel that drains well.

In both cases the roads will be graded and paved, and all the required ditches and drainage structures will be done.

#### When will the work be started?

Once the warrant article passes and money is available through the bond, the project plans can proceed. The engineering results will help dictate which roads will be done first.

How will the work be done?

Since most of the reconstruction will be in relatively short sections of a whole road, two things will happen at the same time.

The reconstruction will be done by a contractor and paid for through the bond. Maintenance on the rest of the road will be done by the Department of Public Works (DPW) with town budget money. When all the work is done, the whole road will have been blacktopped.

#### Why is the work to take place over several years?

During reconstruction roads will be closed, except to local traffic, for some period of time. It is important that alternate routes be available during that time.

Additionally, the operating budget money and DPW’s available manpower, will not allow for more work to be done in any given year.

Does the cost of the bond include regular road maintenance?

No. Maintenance money comes from the DPW’s budget - funded by money from the state as our share of the state gasoline tax, and from property taxes.

The costs of outside engineering and supervision, and the reconstruction itself are what are included in the bond.

#### What does reconstruction cost?

The cost for reclaiming a two-lane road varies from \$250,000 to \$400,000 per mile. The cost for rebuilding can be up to \$800,000.

How long will the reconstructed roads last?

Given proper maintenance, roads that are built correctly should last indefinitely.

#### What is the cost of the bond to the taxpayer?

It is difficult to pin down an exact number, since the cost of bonding will vary depending on the interest rate, length of the bond, and pay-back structure.

The warrant as written allows the selectmen to borrow \$15 million with no more than \$4 million each year. If the selectmen decide on a 15 year, \$4M bond, and the interest rate is 4%, then the cost to a home owner living in a \$400,000 house would be about \$36 the first year (interest payment only), and \$92 the second. Then the cost of that bond decreases by about \$2.50 per year. As more bonds are taken out in the ensuing years, up to the 15 million, the cost to the taxpayer will go up accordingly.

It is incumbent on us to take care of our infrastructure. Properly constructed roads are safer, cause less wear and tear on vehicles, are easier to plow, and are more pleasant to drive on - and they are much less expensive to maintain.

A super majority or 60% is required to pass this bond. Unanimously Supported by Amherst Board of Selectmen, Amherst Ways & Means Committee, Road Commission, Road Funding Analysis Committee.

For more information - Contact Town Administrator Gary McGuire at gmcguire@amherstnh.gov or 673-6041, ext. 209

*Submitted by Bill Overholt, Chairman Roads Committee*

## More Homework and Negotiating Needed Before Making Land Purchase For Fields

#### To the editor:

On Tuesday, March 9th, Amherst will be voting on many items regarding the financing of the running of our community. There are 22 Articles on the ballot. One article is for the Operating Budget at \$9,760,645. The majority of the remaining 21 articles ask for funding for various projects and purchases, which if all pass, add approximately another \$20,000,000 of spending over the next few years.

Article 24 – Recreation Land Purchase Bond requests approval for the selectmen to purchase the 57 acres of land referred to as the “Brewster Land” located off Stearns Road for the purposes of recreation at a cost of \$625,000. Following are the reasons I recommend a no vote on Article 24:

1. In 2006 the Assessor for the Town appraised this land at a fair market value of under \$350,000.
2. There are no obvious purchasers for this land at above-market prices.
3. This land floods and would require extensive engineering to figure out how to maximize usage for sports that require equipment and fixtures on the field unless the plan is to replace them whenever we have floods.
4. There is no projection or source of funds identified for the cost to maintain these fields. Will the current recreation budget be adequate to do this if the article passes?
5. There is no projection or source of funds identified for the cost to further develop these fields. Potentially the development of baseball fields, irrigation, etc.
6. Portions of this land are in the Regulated Floodway subject to Federal Laws. We would need professional engineering work to determine how those regulations affect how we can use this land.
7. Recreation is requesting another \$250,000 for the Recreational Facilities Capital Reserve Fund in Article 32.

Our Town does need to have recreational facilities and in the past the taxpayers of Amherst have supported aggressive projects to provide recreation sites including playing fields for our residents.

I think there is much more homework and negotiating to be done before this is brought to the voters for approval. Once the voters are presented with a package that identifies a negotiated cost and a budget that will support the project they will be in a position to know what they are voting on in total.

*Jan Bunker Amherst*

## “Write-in-Candidate” Lucienne Foulks

#### To the editor:

Occasionally, a person will decide to run for office who evokes enthusiasm on the part of the voters. One such person is Lucienne Foulks who is running as a “write in candidate” for the Amherst School Board. I’ve known Lucienne for a long time and can testify to her intelligence, energy, patience, open-mindedness and willingness to approach an issue from a three dimensional perspective. She reaches a decision only after she has listened to all opinions on a matter. Lucienne is a person of impeccable integrity who inspires confidence in her ability. I’m asking you to write in Lucienne Foulks name for the Amherst School Board, to ensure a well-qualified advocate for our school children and for our Town.

*Mary Lefebvre Amherst*

## Experience Amherst Needs

#### To the editor:

Marilyn Peterman will bring much needed experience to the Amherst Board of Selectmen - She previously served for 10 years on the BOS and has been serving on the Amherst Planning Board in various capacities since 1979. Marilyn is currently the chair of the finance advisory committee of Souhegan High School. In addition Marilyn has served on numerous regional and state steering committees including being appointed to NH’s Best Schools Council by then Gov. Jeanne Shaheen. Obviously Marilyn cares about Amherst and is dedicated to keeping our best interest in the forefront of everything she does.

Managing the affairs of the town has become increasing complex over the last decade. As a selectperson, Marilyn will bring experience and knowledge of the inner workings of our town. In Marilyn we will have someone who will be effective from day one – and that is the experience we need.

Please join us in supporting Marilyn Peterman for Board of Selectman.

*Steve and Liz Morgan Amherst  
Jan and Jerry Giddings Amherst*


## Vote “Yes” on Article 24

#### To the editor:

On March 9th, I urge you to vote “Yes” on Article 24, the athletic field initiative, which will supply our town with much needed land to be used for athletic fields. The initiative has broad impact across the Amherst community. The investment in our community is warranted on many levels. First, this land is ready to be used by the community on day 1. The fields have been used in the past for athletics and will be available for Amherst soon after the purchase is finalized. The infrastructure is in place to use these fields immediately. Second, Amherst needs to replace the Cemetery field space. This space is currently essential to the recreation groups in the town. We need to take advantage of this opportunity of getting these 57 flat acres by acting NOW. The Cemetery Trustees have given notice that they will need to start the conversion of cemetery field to a cemetery in the near future. Finding this much needed land for sale now is a great coincidence and one that the people of Amherst must take advantage. Third, Amherst must keep pace with the surrounding communities. It is important to all of us to maintain our property values and attract young families into the Amherst community. Without a good sports program families will go elsewhere. Young families are the life-blood of a community like Amherst. Finally, the athletic success that Souhegan High School and Amherst Middle School has demonstrated over the last several years has been nothing short of amazing. Several state championships for both the girls and the boys sports, and student-athletes going off to college and continuing their athletics. These results are a source of pride for our community. In order to continue this tradition the community must have the recreational facilities that allows for enough practice time for our young citizens to gain the necessary fundamentals to excel later in their athletic lives.



The community needs to stand together and vote yes for the future of Amherst. Please support the town and vote yes on March 9th.

*Sincerely,  
Chris VanLokeren  
President – Amherst Patriots Amherst*



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