

More Letters

Vote No on Warrant Article #24

To the editor:

We are pro-playing fields, pro-Rec department and recognize the need for the kids of Amherst to get outdoors and have active lifestyles.

We also appreciate the many volunteer hours that the members of the Rec Department Commission put into that organization, and believe them to be well-intentioned.

For several reasons, however, we do not agree with it or its position on Warrant Article #24 which will appear on the March 9th ballot. Our concerns are as follows:

First and foremost, the warrant article should clearly state and identify what land is to be purchased if the bond passes, which will in fact be the land known as Brewster Fields located on Stearns Road.

Second, would be the \$625,000 price tag on this land, when the town's own appraisal is for this property values it at \$342,500. This figure is a matter of public record and is from the town's last assessment which was in 2006, when the real estate market was much stronger than it is in today's economy.

Third, would be the fact that the majority of the playing fields would be located within the Flood Plain of Brewster Fields. Our back acreage abuts this property and is on the same flood plain level as these fields, and therefore, we can confidently tell the taxpayers via our first-hand knowledge, that this flood plain is in

fact prone to substantial flooding from the Souhegan River all four-seasons. Moreover, when the river rises, great amounts of debris are also brought downstream which may pose an additional problem for the proposed baseball backstop or playground equipment. The speed of the current during a serious flood would also pose a problem to these proposed fields.

Lastly, would be the haste with which this placing this warrant article on the ballot has been undertaken, despite the fact the town will not lose any of its current playing fields until the year 2014. In other words, there is no urgency to buy this land right now. The purchase of Brewster Fields to be used as playing fields is not a new concept and has been talked about as far back as the 1990's.

In short, we would urge the taxpayers of Amherst to VOTE "NO" on Warrant Article #24. More due diligence needs to be done regarding the value of this land, what other non-Flood Plain lands would be available for purchase; what would the actual dollar cost be to the taxpayers of Amherst to convert this land into level playing fields; what is the true usage plan for the future use this property, and what in actuality are the flooding issues and concerns in regards to field usage and parking issues.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Randy and Wendy Hunt  
Amherst

Your Amherst Officers Are Requesting HELP!!!

On Tuesday, March 9, Amherst voters will be asked to consider ARTICLE 28, which represents stalled contract negotiations between the Town of Amherst, (Represented during the process by Selectmen Chairperson; George Infanti and Town Administrator; Gary MacGuire), and your local police department officers.

**Please support Article 28 by VOTING YES on March 09 in our local town elections.**

The Problem is Two Fold...

1. During contract negotiations, officers requested that a contractual item be added specific to fund the replacement of ballistic vests with expired manufacturer warranties.
2. Also during negotiations, officers requested the acceptance of a fair and equitable system of providing pay increases as police officers gain more experience and a 4.95% increase over TWO years, based on a formula introduced by the Town and approved by Selectmen Infanti as well as other members of the Board of Selectmen several years ago.

Union Position

1. Several years ago members of the Amherst Police Department discovered that some of the provided soft body armor was outside any warranty period provided by the body armor manufacturers. The soft body armor panels or "vests" are the last line of defense for officers in the event they are shot. The National Institute of Justice through the U.S. Department of Justice has adopted minimum standards for ballistic resistance of body armor. Manufacturers of body armor now comply with these standards and have imposed warranty periods under which they will warranty their products against defect/failure. This period is generally five years. Principal providers of ballistic armor extend specific monetary damage amounts to the body armor wearer or his surviving family in the event the panel fails. This can amount to over a million dollars. No damages may be sought with panels outside the warranty period.

Town Position

Chairperson Infanti and Town Administrator MacGuire have reported through their attorney, that the safety of officers is a high priority but the issuance of equipment and its use is a "management prerogative" and therefore not a subject upon which the Town is compelled to negotiate. Further, the Town has taken the position that simply because the warranty period had expired does not mean the garments were ineffective. The union's proposal was therefore rejected.

Fact Finder Position

The Fact Finder, agreed upon by both parties to resolve the disputed items, reviewed current contractual language and applicable state laws and regulations and determined this article was subject to negotiation and further recommended that contract language/funds be included so officers would never again be required to wear an expired vest.

Union Position

2. Several years ago, the Town of Amherst Selectmen, including George Infanti, proposed using the average of two cost of living index's to determine a fair cost of living increase to Amherst police officers. September results from the Nashua CPI-U and the Northeast Urban CPI-U would be averaged and the resulting cost of living adjustment, (COLA), would be realized 9 months later or July 01 of the following year.

The average was completed and a 4.95% COLA was supposed to be realized on July 01, 2009.

Town Position

In negotiations with the police union, George Infanti and Gary MacGuire offered a 2.95% COLA and the deletion of the bottom step on the pay scale and the creation of a 2% step to be placed at the top of the existing pay scale. This would have resulted in a combined increase of 4.95% to senior officers or ½ of the union employees. This was rejected by the union body as not being fair to all members.

Fact Finder Position

Fact Finder reviewed both positions and reported that the fact based COLA formula originally introduced by the Town, which reported a value of 4.95%, was appropriate beginning 07/01/09. Further, the fact finder also reported that with the approved formula in place, the COLA would be 0% or zero for all Officers beginning 07/01/10.

Two experienced officers have left our department in recent months to take officer positions in departments which will ultimately result in higher pay. This is significant with a body of only 15 members. While police officers in our town do not consider themselves a "breed above", they also recognize that the dangers associated with this particular profession are unique. Few other Town employee's are asked to work 2nd shift and virtually none of them are asked to work the overnight shift when most humans are sleeping. Amherst officers generally respond to every medical call and every fire call in addition to all other calls for service. They are usually among the first to arrive at any request for help anywhere in Amherst. Over the past years, Amherst officers have been asked to place themselves in harms way on behalf of the community for which they serve. While not often published in local papers and unfortunately occurring with greater frequency, Amherst officers have been punched, kicked, spit on by arrestee's and struck by vehicles while "just doing their job." Officers are required to conduct themselves with the highest principles all while being assaulted, threatened, or verbally berated. This too will continue for the community that we serve, because it is "part of the job".

The request from your officers at the Amherst Police Department is a YES VOTE on ARTICLE 28. Please send a message that you value the members of the PD and you wish to support them by approving this VERY REASONABLE warrant article.

A projected cost to the taxpayer, (using other warrant articles as a reference), will likely be in the range of .04 cents or \$12.00 dollars on a \$300,000.00 thousand dollar house assuming no residual monies from the departed officers is used.

On behalf of the men and women of your local police department and specifically AFSCME Local 3657 members, I want to thank you for taking the time to review this information. Regardless of your position on this warrant article, we look forward to continuing to serve this community with the professionalism you expect.

Sincerely;

Officer Michael Knox  
On behalf of Local 3657 –  
Your Local Amherst Officers.

Why Our Old Roads Are in Bad Shape ...What To Do About Them

To the editor:

A number of roads in Amherst, about 23 miles worth, are in need of reconstruction. They are almost all old roads that were not built to take the weight and volume of today's traffic.

Before the advent of the automobile, and for some-time after it appeared on the scene, all the roads in Amherst were dirt roads. They were built of whatever material existed on site. In the higher elevations, it was gravel. In some of the lower areas, where the roads passed by swamps and bogs, the road material was a bit more organic. It was a common practice to lay logs across the roads to keep the wagons from sinking into the mud, particularly in the spring. That is how Corduroy Road got its name, but many roads in town were built the same way (it must have been a bone-jarring ride). In the winter, the snow was rolled, or packed down, and people switched from horse-drawn wagons to sleds.

By the 1930s and 1940s, when it became apparent that the automobile was not quite as intrepid as a horse-drawn wagon in the mud (and could not compete with a sled), we began to pave our roads. In those days, automobiles were a bit lighter than they are today, and trucks were much smaller and lighter. Traffic in this farming community was nearly all local, and Boston Post Road, for instance, was probably used by as many as fifty or one hundred cars per day. We don't know for certain, because there were no traffic counters in those days.

The town's road agent did what was perfectly proper for the times – he smoothed out the dirt road and applied a couple of inches of asphalt. Much of the time, it was a cold-mix asphalt, which was fairly unstable. That treatment served the people of the town well for a number of years. Amherst was, after all, a small, town with only a couple of thousand people, and most traffic was, indeed, local. If someone had predicted that Boston Post Road would someday carry 7000 trips per day, he

would have been laughed out of town.

Fast forward to 2010. The town has experienced a great deal of growth since about 1970. Today, most people in town commute to other places for work, and the towns around us have grown, and more people drive through Amherst to and from work. Boston Post Road is used by 7000 vehicles per day. The volume of today's traffic, coupled with additional weight, especially of trucks, has taken its toll on those old roads, which were never built to handle it.

Over the years, we have applied stopgap measures in an attempt to stem the deterioration of the old roads, but simply paving over roads that were not constructed for today's traffic proves to be futile. A year or so after paving, cracks reappear through the new layer of asphalt. Today's cars and trucks continue to beat away at the inadequate pavement, and water continues to seep through the cracks into the base, causing more frost heaves in the winter, which makes the cracking of the road even worse, and so it goes. The problems are most apparent in the low-lying areas, where the road base, instead of being gravel, is made of organic material you'd be happy to use in your garden, plus logs. Just putting a layer of asphalt on such a road is analogous to painting rotten wood siding – the paint will soon crack and blister, it will no longer do its job, and the siding will continue to rot, only faster.

The only solution is to reconstruct those roads so that they can handle today's traffic. Doing less is neither prudent nor economical.

Please vote yes on March 9 on Warrant Article #22 which will approve the \$15 million bonding authority needed to do the reconstruction of the nearly 23 miles of bad roads. A 60% majority is needed for this article to pass.

Bill Overholt  
Chairman Road Commission

Childhood Obesity, Michelle Obama, the White House Garden, and Brewster Fields

To the editor:

The statistics for childhood obesity are staggering. Michelle Obama unveiled her "Let's Move" childhood obesity plan last week. The White House now has an organic garden in the tradition of Alice Water's "Edible Garden" program for local schools. The President, his family, and the entire staff eat from their own organic garden. It won't help the federal deficit, but it's a good teaching opportunity.

The residents of Amherst have an opportunity to supply the exercise/recreation, nutritious food, and an excellent agricultural education to their families with the purchase of the Brewster Fields. (Also know as the Souhegan Soccer Farm, CSA.)

My husband and I recently relocated from Santa Monica, CA to Amherst, and we chose this town for the schools, people, and open land. I want our three year old to grow up learning how to grow her own food. Her life will be different from ours, and I need to prepare her for that life. We purchased a CSA share at Brewster Fields, I bought a pressure canner, and we'll can a lot of the food we pick this summer.

The Brewster Fields has huge organic gardens, and they don't use commercial fertilizer and pesticides. We have an opportunity to give our children a beautiful park to play in while they are toddlers, as well as soccer, fishing, snow shoeing, cross country skiing, kayaking, hiking, bird watching, picnicking, berry picking, and learning how to grow their own LOCAL food. All of these activities are LOCAL.

Brewster Fields is down the street from the Amherst Middle School and Souhegan High School, creating a fantastic opportunity to create their own "Edible Garden" for their schools.

The opportunities for this community are endless. It's an amazing piece of land.

Go to the meeting March 8th at Souhegan High school to get the facts surrounding the purchase of this land. Both meetings will be at 7:00.

Sarah Skinner  
Amherst

Peterman Will Serve Only the Common Good

To the editor:

I am writing to encourage you to vote for Marilyn Peterman for Selectman next week. I have known Marilyn for twenty-five years, and she is one of those rare politicians who genuinely serve not out of any desire for personal gain but only out of passion for what we used to call the Common Good. (I would hope those of you who know me would say the same about me.) Marilyn's long hours on the Planning Board, Nashua Regional Planning Commission, and the Board of Selectmen are only the most obvious of her efforts to im-

prove and protect the lives of people in Amherst. She is also a person who stays in touch with the community, actively listening to the concerns and questions of others. She educates herself about issues, not reacting simply on "instinct" or political ideology. In short, she is hard-working, dedicated and devoted to the Town of Amherst. I hope you will join me in supporting her on March 9.

Sally Wilkins  
Amherst

Selectman Galinson Thanks the Community

To The Amherst Community:

After very thoughtful consideration, I decided earlier this year that personal and professional commitments would make it unwise for me to re-run for the Amherst Board of Selectman. I felt strongly that I only wanted to continue my work in town if I could tackle it with full dedication and resolve.

When I announced my candidacy in 2007, I wrote in The Citizen that "I [stood] ready to work hard serving my community." It is my sincere hope that my fellow townspeople approve of the job I have done these last 3 years.

I thank you for electing me as a member of the Board of Selectman. During my time in office, my appreciation for this town and the many who work hard to serve it has only deepened. I look forward to a time in the future when I might have the opportunity to meaningfully contribute to Amherst once more.

Submitted in gratitude,  
Brad Galinson  
Amherst

POLITICAL ADVERTISEMENT

**Dwight Brew**  
Amherst Selectman

- Dedicated
- Knowledgeable
- Ethical
- Financially Responsible

Carrie Brew, Fiscal Agent

POLITICAL ADVERTISEMENT




**JOHN S. RUBERY**  
for  
**Amherst Selectman**

POLITICAL ADVERTISEMENT

POLITICAL ADVERTISEMENT

★ ReElect ★  
**George Infanti**  
for  
**Amherst Selectman**  
Community Service – Over 35 Years



Current Amherst Selectman – Chairman 2009-2010  
Amherst Planning Board  
Amherst Town Police Union Negotiator & Rep.  
Youth Sports Coach & Advisor – 10 Years  
Milford Rotary Club – 29 Years  
Milford Economic Development Advisory Committee  
Milford Tax Increment Finance Board  
Souhegan Nursing Association\*  
Milford Board of Selectmen\*  
Wilton Board of Selectmen\*  
Milford Planning Board\*  
Wilton Planning Board\*  
Wilton ZBA\*  
Member Numerous Civic Groups  
\*Former board member

**VOTE**  
Tuesday,  
March 9  
6am-8pm  
Souhegan High School

*"Experience Matters"* Local Businessman – 40 Years

**We the undersigned, as area residents, support George Infanti in his bid for re-election to the Amherst Board of Selectman.**

Dave Albert	Shannon & Brad Gallinson	Bob Moulton
Ann & Peter Bergin	Dan Gravel	Colleen Moynihan
Lynn & Bruce Bowler	Paul Grummett	Liz & Bill Overholt
Alec Buchanan	David Hammer	Carolyn & Jim Quinn
Marc Chareth	Ryan Hanson	Melvin Reeve
Mike Ciardelli	Cliff Harris	Susan Robert
Dick D'Amato	Jim Hendrix	Chris Rogers
Allise de Smet	James Infanti	Walter Schneck
Steve Desmaris	Christine Janson	Stephen B. Stepanek
Jay Dinkel	Stan Kankowski	Cyrille Thibault
Cynthia & Lew Dokmo	Cynthia Kilmen	Phil Toumala
Judith Dunbar	Janet A. Langdell	Frank J. Weber
Susan & William Durling	Joanne Laychak	Alice Wheeler
Richard Fitzgerald	Gene Madigan	Betsy White
Angela Flaherty	Doug McAllister	Seth Zeigler
Franz Fritsch	Bill McNamara	
Rick Gagliuso	Carl Miller	

Ruth Infanti, Fiscal Agent