

Amherst Finance Committee Meeting Minutes Approved 4/5/2018
Thursday, March 22, 2018
First Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall

Attendance: Joseph Jayne, Bernie Kubiak, Tim Neale, Sharon Povinelli, Janice Ratner (Vice Chair), Anurag Sharma, Marylou Theilman (Chair).

Others in Attendance: Sonia Aldrich, Finance department; Jim Brissette, co-chair, CPAC; Rob Crowner, Chair, Zoning Subcommittee of the Planning Board; Christine Brestrup, Director of Planning; Gerry Weiss, petitioner; Van Kaynor, petitioner.

The meeting was called to order by the chair at 7:02 pm.

Community Preservation Act budget discussion

Brissette summarized the items proposed by the Community Preservation Act Committee for FY19. Reference is made to the March 22, 2018 CPAC Report, a summary of which will be part of the Town Meeting Warrant. Brissette mentioned that there were fewer proposals submitted than last year, and thirteen were approved for funding and one denied (a funding request for improvements to the North Amherst Library).

As required, the approvals were distributed across four major areas (Community Housing, Historical Preservation, Open Space, and Recreation), with a small amount approved for administration. Summaries of the approvals are contained in the Report, but Brissette noted that as related to Community Housing, CPAC felt more attention should be paid to “bricks and mortar,” as opposed to programming.

Finally, allocations presented to Town Meeting include funds expected to be expended immediately, as well as funds reserved for future use.

Petition Articles

First discussed was an Article to amend Section 15.10 of the Zoning Bylaws. Petitioner Weiss summarized. Noted was that this Article will be withdrawn should Town Meeting approve the amendments to Article 15 relative to Inclusionary Zoning, as will be proposed by the Planning Board. Says Weiss, essentially his petition attempts to increase the chances of inclusionary zoning applicable to downtown Amherst.

The second petition was presented by Kaynor. This petition amends the official Zoning Map for the Town in a certain part of Town so as to limit development of properties in that area. Petitioner posits that approval will better protect sensitive wells and septic systems in the area, possibly eliminate or delay Town expense should water and sewer need to be extended to these properties, and that the amendments would bring Zoning bylaws more into harmony with the goals of the Master Plan. Kubiak had concerns that this request was not brought through the normal Zoning Bylaw amendment process, with possible unintended consequences for other property owners in the area. Neale wondered about the trade-off of the loss of increased property tax revenue versus the potential cost of future sewer and water improvements. Responding to a query, Brestrup indicated that the Planning Board had not formally been approached by the petitioner; rather, she and the Planning Department had just become aware of the petition and had not yet been able to offer its opinion.

Finance Committee Votes on Budgetary Requests as part of the Town Warrant

Regional Schools budget request of \$31,815,351: Approved 7-0.

Regional Schools Town assessment appropriation of \$16,045,304: Approved 7-0.

Elementary Schools budget of \$23,277,365: Approved 7-0.

Library total budget of \$2,683,069: Approved 7-0.

Library budget, Town appropriation, of \$1,993,466: Approved 7-0.

News affecting the Budget

None

Committee and Liaison Reports

None

Minutes of previous meetings

Minutes of March 15, 2018 were approved 7-0.

Topics not reasonably anticipated by chair 48 hours in advance of Meeting

None

Next Meeting

Thursday, March 29, 2018.

The meeting adjourned at 9:18 pm.

Timothy A. Neale, acting clerk

Pertinent Documents:

Report of the Community Preservation Act Committee, March 22, 2018.

Draft Spring 2018 Town Warrant.

Finance Committee Positions and Budget Recommendations – grid handout.

Handouts by petitioner Kaynor.