



**Town Council Meeting
(Part of the Two Towns Meeting)
Saturday, April 13, 2019 – 9:00 a.m.
Amherst-Pelham Regional Middle School Library
170 Chestnut Street**

Minutes

1. Call to order and declaration of a quorum

President Griesemer declared the presence of a quorum and called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

Councilors present: Councilors Brewer, De Angelis, Griesemer, Hanneke, Pam, Ross, Ryan, Schoen

Councilors absent: Councilors Bahl-Milne, DuMont, Steinberg, Schreiber, Swartz

Councilors participating remotely: None

Others present: Town Manager Paul Bockelman, Interim Finance Director Sonia Aldrich; representatives from the Amherst-Pelham Regional School Committee, Amherst School Committee, and the Town of Pelham

2. Presentations and Discussion

- Presentation on School Finance

Peter Demling, Chair of the Regional School District Planning Board, welcomed the representatives from the two communities and presented an overview and status of the Board's progress to date, options available, and advantages/disadvantages of the various options. There was a discussion of the financial benefits, assessment method, budget approval process, composition of a new School Committee, impact on the 7-12 regional agreement, educational impact, how current buildings are handled, debt/capital ownership, and next steps.

At 10:30 a.m., the two towns separated into individual Town caucuses. Members representing the Town of Amherst discussed the presentation. Members expressed concern as to whether moving forward on regionalization would require resubmitting an application for a new school building with the MSBA. Options that were discussed included: (a) move forward; (b) halt the process; and (c) determine that the regionalization was not ripe at this point and not something we should be doing right now. Members expressed that this merger involved a lot of complicated decision-making, that it might impede progress

of the MSBA application for a new elementary school in Amherst, and some expressed concern that it would be a challenge to take it on at the same time as the School Committee is being elected in November. The members all agreed that it was wisest at this time to not move forward with discussions on this topic.

At 10:50 a.m., the two towns reunited. Representatives from the Town of Pelham believed that delaying a decision was not a good option and that the two towns should embark on crafting an actual agreement that may surface the issues at stake.

Speaking for the Town of Amherst contingent, Ms. Griesemer said the consensus of the group was to terminate discussions at this time. She identified the following concerns: (a) hesitance at causing confusion as the MSBA is considering the Town's Statement of Interest; (b) the prospect of a new State Aid formula; and (c) the timing of having the School Committee elected in November and the confusion this topic would present. She suggested that the two towns seek other ways to address the reasons for regionalization. She also expressed appreciation for the work of the Committee and ongoing support of the relationship between the Amherst and Pelham School Districts.

Mr. Demling thanked all for participating.

3. Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated by the President 48 Hours in Advance - None

4. Adjourn

MOVED: Councilor Griesemer moved, second by Councilor Hanneke to adjourn.

VOTED unanimously to adjourn at 10:59 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Bockelman

Town Manager

Attachment: Record of Agenda Packet Materials and Documents Presented