



Joint Meeting

The Finance Committee and Community Resources Committee (CRC)

Tuesday, June 2, 2020 at 2:00 p.m.

Meeting took place via Zoom:

Video of this meeting: <https://amherstmedia.org/content/amherst-finance-committee>

Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting

Finance Committee members present: Andy Steinberg (Chair), Lynn Griesemer (Council President), Pat DeAngelis, Dorothy Pam, Cathy Schoen; Non-Voting Members of the Finance Committee present: Robert Hegner, Sharon Povinelli, Marylou Thielman

Committee members absent: None

Community Resources Committee Members present: Mandi Jo Hanneke (Chair), Shalini Bahl-Milne, Evan Ross, Stephen Schreiber

Absent from CRC: Sarah Swartz

Others: Dave Ziomek, Assistant Town Manager and Director of Conservation and Development; Sonia Aldrich, Comptroller and Staff Liaison to Finance Committee; Nate Budington, Chair of the Community Preservation Act Committee (CPAC); Sean Mangano, Town of Amherst Finance Director; Athena O’Keeffe, Clerk of the Council; Anthony Delaney, Staff liaison to CPAC; Sarah Marshall, CPAC member; Angela Mills, minute taker

- 1. Chair Steinberg recognized that a quorum existed and called the Finance Committee meeting to order at 2:06 p.m. and Chair Hanneke called CRC to order at 2:07 p.m.**

Co-Chaired portion of meeting by Steinberg and Hanneke and review of the agenda continued.

2. Action Items

- a. Community Preservation Act Commission Recommendations CPAC Presentation – Recommendations for FY21
 - i. CPAC Presentation – Nate Budington (Chair of CPAC)

Steinberg introduced Budington and outlined the items on the agenda. Steinberg projected the draft financial order from CPAC that will come before the Council on June 15, 2020. Steinberg mentioned the minority report submitted by CPAC re: Jones library renovations.

Nate Budington reviewed the listed proposals. Budington gave kudos to Anthony Delaney (Staff Liaison to CPAC) for his work and support of CPAC.

Review of Community Housing funding as listed on the transfer sheet submitted to the Town Council. Budington invited Committee members to ask questions. Griesemer asked about use of funds to help with COVID 19 rental emergency funds. Ross asked if CPAC has reconsidered increasing the amount given to Amherst Affordable Housing Trust. Budington responded that CPAC has been unable to meet due to COVID 19 shut down of Town Hall. Steinberg suggested that the Council could make an additional order to add funding to the AMAHT amount. Aldrich suggested that there were two additional amounts that could be appropriated later to AMAHT.

Hanneke asked a question about affordable housing and first-time homebuyer program and how funds are tracked by CPAC. Budington explained the wording in the award agreements. Schoen asked what is available in total to CPA for FY21. State match for FY20 has already been received with a surcharge of 11%. Griesemer asked about East Street School project and how that money is being spent or held. Pam asked about how the CPAC monies are held by the town.

Budington noted that CPAC may create a system where if, after three years, dedicated funds are not spent, they would be returned to CPAC.

Budington reviewed the Historic Preservation funds allocation. Steinberg noted that they would return to the Library before the meeting splits into two separate meetings (CRC and Finance Committee).

Pam asked about the Civil War Stones. Ziomek explained that stones have been restored and have been professionally crated after the restoration. Stones weigh 500-800 lbs. each. Ziomek explained that they are fragile despite their girth. The search continues for a safe place to display these Civil War Stones. They are priceless artifacts and need to be treated as such.

Councilors asked questions about the percentage of the total sum that have to be used each year. Budington spoke to open space proposals. Hanneke asked questions regarding the high school track. Specifically if the other three Towns involved in regional school system have also donated funds to renovation of the track. Ziomek answered questions about deed restrictions on the track renovation project. Sean Mangano reported that the schools have submitted requests to all of the area regional schools for an appropriation. Councilors asked for the label on the track renovation to be clarified in the document. Further questioning focused on the scope of the project and how many years off the complete renovation may take and how much it would cost. Discussion continued regarding the design cost and how it is approximately 10% of the overall project cost.

Steinberg asked Budington to speak to the Jones library proposal. Budington mentioned the minority opinion authored by CPAC members (Stein, Birtwistle and Budington from PAC). Budington explained the change of opinion on the library project. Budington mentioned that the minority report was the result of an inability of CPAC to meet. CPAC asked for insights from Department of Revenue (DOR) on the Jones project. Budington further explained how CPAC reached out to the coalition. The Town of Amherst reached out to the Town Attorney after reading the determination made by the coalition.

Steinberg asked Hanneke to recess CRC and give instructions on how CRC will continue with their meeting.

Steinberg stated that Finance Committee was in recess until CRC members left.

CRC recessed for five minutes at 3:23p.m. Hanneke mentioned the link to the continuation of CRC meeting with a separate link on the printed agenda on the website. Part II link. Finance Committee resumed at 3:25 p.m. with a review of the agenda.

Committee Discussion

Steinberg asked Finance Committee members if they felt ready to vote in support of the financial outlay as delineated by the CPAC proposals. Steinberg asked if there were criteria that should be applied to all grants and how they should be applied to CPA proposals.

There was a brief discussion about the Regional School request for further study/planning for community fields. Schoen observed that when this was presented to CPAC that Doug Slaughter said the total would only partially pay for the plan but would start the process for specific plans. Sara Marshall, member of CPAC, noted that Amherst voting yes for this would be a strong signal to other towns in the District.

Discussion continued regarding open space CPAC monies and whether previous funds had been spent or not. Schoen asked if no plans to purchase additional open space, survey funding might not be used. Aldrich noted that amount unspent is in the report – almost \$20,000 or the previous \$25,000. Steinberg explained why the \$25,000 was set aside for surveys, appraisals and studies for future land purchases. Finance Committee members discussed the amount of land owned by the Town versus land owned by the two colleges and the University.

Finance Committee members noted that a method for additional requests for Affordable Housing to deal with rental subsidies was available.

3. Review one-month budget, first month of Fiscal Year 2021

Steinberg reviewed the calendar plan for the FY21 budget approval. He highlighted the regional school budget calendar and how it intersects with the Finance Committee revised plan. Steinberg explained the plan for how the one-month budget informs the FY21 budget decision making. The calendar includes multiple summer meetings for the Finance Committee. Griesemer pointed out to members that all of the suggested meetings would be virtual. Councilors asked about the schedule.

Discussion on whether members of the Finance Committee would like to write an explanation of certain sections of the budget as part of a comprehensive report. At times it was useful to have an individual with in-depth knowledge of certain Town departments. In previous years, the Town of Amherst department heads gave full in-depth explanations of their department activities and needs.

Griesemer asked if the FY21 proposal would be part of a budget booklet with previous years for comparison. Schoen noted that there may be a written introduction from the Town Manager explaining the changes due to COVID 19. Griesemer added that there would be a section covering the one-month budget from July 2020.

Steinberg reviewed the school system budget system and how they are collaborating with DESE to create FY21 budgets. Superintendent and School Finance Director would present the budget to the Town Council and the Finance Committee in the coming weeks. That meeting has been posted as a public hearing.

Steinberg came back to the \$25,000 set aside for land surveys, appraisals and studies. The question was whether it had been spent last year. The response was, yes, it had been spent.

2. Possible Committee Vote on CPAC Recommendations (taken out of order)

Griesemer moved to recommend the CPAC proposal for spending in FY21. Schoen seconded. Further discussion included revolving balances and reports on previous funding and how it was spent. Steinberg suggested they mention the three year spending term on committed funds in their Finance Committee report. **Amended motion: Finance Committee recommends the spending of**

CPAC for FY21 and recommend that CPAC review balances on projects and ask for funds to be returned if not spent within three years of the grand being awarded.

Schoen and Griesemer asked to separate the three-year limit and the FY21 order separately.

FY21-07 accept this order as presented and all projects as listed in that order supported by the Finance Committee for vote to the entire Town Council. Motion made by Steinberg. Seconded by Schoen. Roll call vote: DeAngelis voted yes. Griesemer voted yes. Pam was absent (left meeting). Steinberg voted yes. (4-0-1) Motion passed.

Second motion. Schoen moved that the Finance Committee recommend that CPAC review the three-year spending limit on monetary awards and ensure that money is spent or returned to CPAC after three years. If the project is not realized, the funds should be returned to CPAC. Seconded by Griesemer.

Further discussion: Aldrich explained that the funds are not sent to the awardee, the money stays in the Town treasury until it is spent. Discussion revolved around Valley CDC funding of first-time homebuyers and where the funds go if they are not spent according to the award.

Roll call vote: DeAngelis voted yes. Griesemer voted yes. Pam absent. Schoen voted yes. (4-0-1).

Schoen recommended funneling Finance Committee questions during the FY21 budget process through Steinberg.

Steinberg moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:30 p.m.

Documents made available online at the time of the meeting:

1. 2020-06-02 CRC Finance Agenda
Budget – FY 21 One-Month Budget 05-29-2020
CPAC Annual Report FY21 – Final Draft w Appendices
CPAC Annual Report FY21 – Minority Report
DRAFT CO 21-07A Appropriation and Transfer Order for FY2021 Community Preservation Act Budget
FY21 Budget Process calendar Updated 05-29-2020