



**Town of Amherst
Special Joint Meeting of the Town Council and Finance Committee
Public Hearing on the FY21 Budget
Monday, July 13, 7:00 p.m.
Virtual Meeting**

Minutes

Complete video is available online: <https://amherstmedia.org/content/joint-public-hearing-amherst-town-councilamherst-finance-committee-july-13-2020>

1. Call to Order

Councilors Participating Remotely: Councilors Bahl-Milne, Brewer, De Angelis, DuMont, Griesemer, Hanneke, Pam, Ryan, Schoen, Schreiber, and Steinberg

Resident Members of the Finance Committee Participating Remotely: Robert Hegner

Councilors Absent: Councilors Ross and Swartz

Others Participating Remotely: Town Manager Paul Bockelman, Finance Director Sean Mangano, Comptroller Sonia Aldrich, and Clerk of the Council Athena O’Keeffe

After confirming all participants could hear and be heard, President Griesemer declared the presence of a quorum, called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. and announced audio and video recording by Amherst Media.

Councilor Steinberg declared the presence of a quorum of the Finance Committee, called the meeting of the Finance Committee to order, and confirmed Hegner could hear and be heard.

Note: Pursuant to Governor Baker’s March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, this meeting of the Town Council and Finance Committee was conducted via remote participation.

**2. Hearings – Public Hearing of the Finance Committee on the FY21 Town Budget –
Charter Sec. 5.5(a)**

Town Manager Paul Bockelman briefly spoke about the proposed budget; the full budget and associated materials are available at www.amherstma.gov/budget

P. Bockelman and Finance Director Sean Mangano spoke about the following:

- Budget highlights
- Prudent planning and strategic thinking
- Town Council budget guidelines
- Projected revenue: General Fund
- Projected revenue: Enterprise funds

- FY21 Budget Overview
- Summary of budget reductions
- Modest new investments

The following Amherst residents spoke in favor of reducing the police department budget by 52%, spoke about personal experiences with racism, police interactions, white supremacy, and urged the Town to use the \$80,000 in the budget to hire Black, Indigenous and people of color consultants for community outreach efforts to explore, plan, and implement strategies to confront systemic racism:

- Rick Last
- Peter Kent-Stoll
- Alysha Desharnais
- Lydia Sivel-Irons
- Bailey Batty
- Gio Castro
- Jared Kannel
- Maylene Rodriguez Scott
- Alexandra Monesson-Olson
- Terry Mullen
- Ashwin Ravikumar
- Curry Kautz
- Allegra Clark
- Gazit Chaya Nkosi
- Phillip Bishop
- Judge Russell
- Sean French-Byrne
- Ya-Ping Douglass
- Amanda Lugo
- Zoë Crabtree
- Achaetey Kabal
- Paula Peña
- Kacy Oen
- Two Amherst High School students
- Andrew Cunningham
- Eliza Young
- Isolda Ortega-Bustamante
- Phoebe Heinz
- Gabriel Fontes
- Anisha Pai
- Margaret Sawyer
- Talon Urdzik
- Matthew Andrews

Jose Adastra, area resident, spoke about racism in Amherst and the large minority population that works in Amherst.

Demetria Shabazz, Amherst resident, spoke in favor of a decrease in the APD budget, establishment of a community advisory board, and anti-racism training for the APD.

Alexander Blount, Amherst resident, spoke about personal involvement in civil rights movements, the need for change, and spoke in opposition to cuts to the Police department.

Jonathan Sivel, Amherst resident, spoke about structural racism.

Megan Lieff, Amherst resident, spoke about reinvesting APD budget cuts in Amherst schools.

Jessica Slattery, Amherst resident and UMass student, spoke in favor of implementing a permanent hiring freeze for APD.

Elisha Walker, Amherst resident, spoke in favor of cutting the APD budget

Lauren Mills, Amherst resident, spoke in favor of defunding the APD.

Jeff Mazur, Amherst resident, spoke in favor of defunding the APD.

Amara Donovan, Amherst resident, spoke about racism in Amherst.

Many of the public comments underscored the fact that a high proportion of police calls are for mental health, medical care and other services that could be better handled by people trained for those services than by police.

Councilor DuMont asked that written comments be sent to the clerk.

Councilor Pam thanked everyone who spoke.

Councilor Hanneke thanked those who spoke, apologized for not turning the camera on, and stated that there is a lot for the Council to think about in the next week or two.

Councilor Bahl-Milne thanked everyone who spoke and stated that there is a lot to think about and work to do.

Councilor Schoen commented that there is impressive level of energy and youthful voices from all areas of Town, stated that she hoped that those who participated continue their involvement in local issues, and commented that it was terrific to see 80 people attending the meeting.

Councilor DuMont agreed that the amount of public participation was great, and commented about not seeing commenters' faces.

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

4. Adjourn

President Griesemer thanked everyone who participated.

President Griesemer declared the meeting adjourned at 9:11 p.m. on July 13, 2020.

Respectfully submitted,



Athena O'Keeffe, Clerk of the Council

Record of Agenda Packet Materials and Documents Presented

07-13-2020 FINAL Joint Meeting of the Town Council and Finance Committee Agenda - Public Hearing
on the FY21 Budget
FY21 Elementary Request
Library FY21 Request

Town Budget FY21 Presentation Public Hearing 07-13-2020

Budget materials are available online at www.AmherstMA.Gov/Budget

Written public comment regarding the FY21 budget is available online at:

<https://www.amherstma.gov/DocumentCenter/Index/3957>