



**Town of Amherst
Special Town Council Meeting
Special Finance Committee Meeting
Public Forum on the Budget
Thursday, November 19, 2020
6:30 p.m.
Virtual Meeting
Minutes**

Complete video is available online: <https://amherstmedia.org/content/amherst-town-council-budget-forum-november-19-2020>

1. Call to Order

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

Councilors absent: DuMont

Finance Committee Members participating remotely: Robert Hegner

Finance Committee Members absent: Bernie Kubiak

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

After confirming all Councilors could hear and be heard, President Griesemer declared the presence of a quorum, called the Town Council meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. and announced audio and video recording by Amherst Media.

Councilor Steinberg declared the presence of a quorum of the Finance Committee, confirmed Hegner can hear and be heard, and called the meeting of the Finance Committee to order at 6:33 p.m.

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 was conducted via remote participation.

2. Announcements - None

3. Presentations and Discussion

**a. Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Priorities, Revenue and Expenditure
Forecasts, and Other Relevant Information –Town Manager Paul
Bockelman and Finance Director Sean Mangano**

Town Manager Paul Bockelman and Finance Director Sean Mangano gave a brief presentation on major financial challenges, important accomplishments, and the strategy for managing the Town’s financial resources for the coming fiscal year.

4. Public Comment

a. Public Forum on the Town Budget – *Charter Sec. 5.3*

Amherst residents Lydia Irons, Zoë Crabtree, Allegra Clark, Isolda Ortega-Bustamante, Maida Ives, an anonymous resident, Dr. Demetria Shabazz, and José Lugo spoke about the need for equity in the budget and about policing in Amherst, stating that \$136 per resident is spent on policing and only \$3.77 per resident is spent on public health. Residents urged the Council to consider the proposal from the Racial Equity Task force that requests funds for a BIPOC Residents Council, youth programming, a cultural center, and hiring of a Chief Diversity and Equity Officer. Residents commented on financial systems that contribute to systemic racism, stated that the Town’s financial decisions have consequences, and asked the Council to prioritize the needs of BIPOC residents. Isolda Ortega-Bustamante commented that a volunteer has been helping residents fill out paperwork to avoid eviction, and that a bilingual social worker position funded by the Town could take on this work. Zoe Crabtree, speaking on behalf of an anonymous Amherst resident, urged the Council to cut the Police Department budget by 50%, stating that Police target black, brown, and disabled people, and that Amherst does not feel safe to residents of color.

5. Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair 48 Hours in Advance of the Meeting

6. Adjourn

Councilor Steinberg declared the meeting of the Finance Committee adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

President Griesemer declared the meeting of the Town Council adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Athena O’Keeffe

Clerk of the Council

Record of Agenda Packet Materials and Documents Presented

11-19-2020 FINAL Special Town Council Agenda - Budget Forum
FY22 Public Forum - 11.18.20