



### Resolution in Support of the CRESS Program

Council Sponsors: Councilors De Angelis and Hanneke

**WHEREAS**, the murder of George Floyd on May 25, 2020 was one incident in a long line of incidents that exposed serious, structural racism in policing throughout the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, shortly thereafter, the Amherst Town Council adopted a Resolution in the Aftermath of the Death of Mr. George Floyd that stated: “it is our duty to foster a community free of fear, intimidation and violence – a community in which people are not targeted or hurt unnecessarily by law enforcement – and provide equal protection under the law” and committed to focusing on “how we can deliver on the promise of good and fair public safety protection”; and

**WHEREAS**, in response to this Resolution and the community’s demands, the Town Manager created the Community Safety Working Group to “study alternatives to (a) make recommendations on alternative ways of providing public safety services to the community and (b) make recommendations on reforms to the current organizational and oversight structures of the Amherst Police Department”; and

**WHEREAS**, the Community Safety Working Group has recommended, among other things, that the Town create a Community Responders for Equity, Safety, and Service (CRESS) program to be a civilian, unarmed alternative to the Amherst Police Department, providing community safety services in situations that don’t involve violence or serious crime; and

**WHEREAS**, the Community Safety Working Group provided a draft budget for the CRESS program of \$2,824,300, which included 1 Program Director, 15 CRESS responders, 9 CRESS dispatchers, and 1 administrative assistant; and

**WHEREAS**, in response to that recommendation, the Town Manager has proposed a FY2022 operating budget that includes \$170,000 in operating funds, as well as funds from grants and other sources, for total funding in FY2022 of \$475,000 in order to begin a CRESS program with 1 Program Director, 4 CRESS responders, and 1 administrative assistant, all to begin between 5 and 7 months into the fiscal year; and

**WHEREAS**, the Amherst Town Council believes that an initial CRESS program that includes only 4 CRESS responders will be insufficient to evaluate the impact the program has on the safety of the community; and

**WHEREAS**, in response to the Council’s concerns that 4 CRESS responders will be insufficient to adequately staff the CRESS program at a level that will permit the evaluation of its effectiveness, the Town Manager has stated that he is awaiting reports from LEAP’s call evaluation to determine appropriate staffing levels that would ensure coverage of a significant portion of the calls intended for CRESS response so that sufficient data can be obtained in order to assess the next phase of implementation.



**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Amherst Town Council affirms its commitment to providing the residents of Amherst a community safety model that includes non-police responses to emergency calls, including mental health and non-criminal, non-violent incidents and concerns.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Amherst Town Council expects the Town Manager to staff the CRESS program at a level that is sufficient to ensure that a significant portion of the calls intended for CRESS response and identified by the LEAP program are indeed responded to by CRESS responders in the initial 12 months of the CRESS program beginning to respond to calls.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Amherst Town Council commits to a FY2023 operating budget that provides full-year funding for the CRESS Program at the same or greater level of staffing that is anticipated to be funded for a partial year in FY2022, thereby requiring a significant increase in the funding of the Program between FY2022 and FY2023.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Amherst Town Council commits to an initial timeline that includes 12 full months of data on responses by CRESS responders to emergency calls prior to evaluation of the effectiveness of the program.

Voted this 21st day of June, 2021.

  
J Lynn Griesemer (Jun 23, 2021 08:02 EDT)

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Lynn Griesemer, Town Council President






# CRESS Budget Resolution - as voted by Town Council

Final Audit Report

2021-06-23

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