

**AMHERST FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES
November 2, 2009**

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m. in the Band Room of Amherst Regional Middle School.

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Marilyn Blaustein, Philip Jackson, Kay Moran (vice chair), Andrew Steinberg (chair), Marylou Theilman

STAFF AND OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

John Musante, Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director

AGENDA

1. News affecting budget
2. Preliminary budget guidelines for development of FY 2011 budget
3. Special Town Meeting 11/2/09, Article 2
4. Special Town Meeting 11/2/09, Article 3, Motion C
5. Special Town Meeting 11/2/09, Article 11
6. Special Town Meeting 11/2/09, Article 12
7. Member reports
8. Next Meeting and Agenda
9. Miscellaneous

ACTIONS

Voted 5-0-2 members absent to adopt the preliminary budget guidelines as drafted with edits from the 11/2/09 meeting.

Voted 5-0-2 members absent to recommend dismissal of special Town Meeting 11/2/09 Article 2

Voted 5-0-2 members absent to make a motion on the floor of Town Meeting to transfer \$81,159 from free cash (Special town Meeting 11/2/09, Article 3, Motion C)

Voted 5-0-2 members absent to take no position on special Town Meeting 11/2/09 Article 11

Voted 5-0-2 members absent to recommend approval of special Town Meeting 11/2/09 Article 12

Voted 5-0-2 members absent to recommend dismissal of special Town Meeting 11/2/09 Article 12 if Article 11 is defeated.

DISCUSSION

1. News affecting budget. Musante reported that the Town will continue to be considered a mini-entitlement community and will continue to receive Community Development Block Grant funds through the State. This will support human services and affordable housing needs for the next couple of years.

2. Preliminary budget guidelines. The committee discussed the guidelines and recommended some minor revisions. The FC voted 5-0 with 2 members absent to adopt the preliminary guidelines as drafted with edits from the meeting. It was also noted that the two members who were absent—Saul and Slaughter—had input into the draft at earlier meetings.

3. Article 2. There were no unpaid bills from the prior year. The Select Board will move to dismiss this article. The FC voted 5-0 with 2 members absent to recommend dismissal of this article.

4. Article 3, Motion C. Musante described the motion for Article 3, Part C which includes \$81,159 from Free Cash to balance the FY 10 Budget. This is needed to offset cuts by the Governor to state aid. The Quinn Bill was cut by \$16,674, and PILOT for state-owned land was reduced by \$64,485. Musante recommended that the Town appropriate the funds from free cash under Article 3, Part C to cover this shortfall. This would bring the budget into balance prior to setting the tax rate in early December so that energy could focus on FY11 budget issues. The FC voted 5-0, 2 absent, to make a motion on the floor of Town Meeting to transfer \$81,159 from free cash.

5. Article 11. Neighborhood Business (B-N) District. This article creates a new zoning district, Neighborhood Business. The FC discussed whether it should take a position on this article and decided the financial consequences were not clear. The committee voted 5-0, 2 absent, to take no position.

6. Article 12. Depot Center Rezoning. This article would bring the zoning in this area into conformance with existing uses. One of the criteria used by the FC is to support Planning Board articles that eliminate irregularities and brings zoning into conformity with existing uses. The FC voted 5-0, 2 absent, to support this article. They also voted 5-0, 2 absent, to refer Article 12 to the Planning Board if Article 11 were defeated.

7. Member Reports. Theilman reported that the Regional Schools Budget Subcommittee met earlier that evening and discussed the budget shortfall. It is beginning work on the FY11 Regional School budget.

8. Next Meeting and Agenda. Musante noted that the next FC meeting on November 9 is posted but will likely be cancelled.

Theilman distributed a request for data which contained examples of the kinds of data to be included in budget presentations to the Finance Committee. The committee will discuss at a later meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:25.

Submitted by Marilyn Blaustein,
Acting Clerk

