

Amherst Finance Committee Minutes
January 29, 2011

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 9:05 a.m. in the Amherst Regional Middle School Library.

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Kay Moran (vice-chair), Doug Slaughter, Andy Steinberg (chair), Marylou Theilman. Absent: Phil Jackson, Bob Saul

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Maria Geryk, Interim Superintendent of Schools; Rob Detweiler, Director of Finance and Operations for the Amherst-Pelham Regional School District; John Musante, Town Manager/Finance Director; Ellen Story 3rd Hampshire District State Representative; Members of the School Committees of Amherst, Leverett, Pelham, and Shutesbury; Members of the Finance Committees of Leverett, Pelham, and Shutesbury; Members of the Select Boards of Amherst, Leverett, Pelham, and Shutesbury

AGENDA AND DISCUSSION:

1. Reports from Boston

Representative Story stated that she had no new information on State Aid. She indicated that the Governor's State Aid proposal was unlikely to get through the Legislature in its current form, but she had no sense of what the Legislature's actions would be. Story also mentioned some proposals to be discussed by the Legislature to change the State's tax structure. These proposals include ideas such as lowering the sales tax from 6.25% to 6% while increasing the personal income tax rate for some to 5.95%. This increase in income tax rate would also involve increasing the personal exemption to \$7000.

2. Fiscal Year 2012 Regional Schools Budget

Detweiler went through the Budget packet indicating his assumptions regarding revenues (State Aid, member Town assessments, use of Excess and Deficiency funds, etc.) and expenses (salaries, programming, Control Accounts, Risk and Benefits, etc.), trends in revenues over the last 12 fiscal years and the development of an explicit capital expenditure planning process. Member Towns reported the status of their reserves (Amherst - \$4.7Million, Leverett - \$700,000, Shutesbury - \$1Million, Pelham - \$154,000 in Stabilization but the Free Cash amount was not available) and the current status of their budget development. Pelham indicated that the 3.7% increase in its assessment, assumed in the budget presented, would be very difficult for them to meet. Shutesbury stated that the cost of the gas spill remediation that they are dealing with is still unknown but has the potential to be significant.

3. Calendars and Next Meeting

Detweiler stated that the Regional School Committee would receive the Regional Budget and Budget books on February 8th, there would be a public forum on the budget on February 16th and that the Regional School Committee would take its vote on the budget at its meeting on March 8th. Meeting attendees from Leverett indicated that their Town Meeting is on April 30, 2011. Pelham and Shutesbury attendees stated that their Town Meetings would be on May 7, 2011. Musante indicated that Amherst Town Meeting is scheduled to begin May 2, 2011. The next 4 Town meeting will be on March 5, 2011

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 11:04 a.m.

Douglas Slaughter, acting clerk

DOCUMENTS USED AT THE MEETING

Amherst-Pelham Regional School District Fiscal Year 2012 Level Services Budget Packet