

Amherst Finance Committee Minutes
Wednesday, May 29, 2013 6:30 PM
Music Room, Amherst Pelham Regional Middle School

ATTENDANCE:

Andrew Steinberg (Chair), Janice Ratner, Bob Saul, Anurag Sharma, Douglas Slaughter, Marylou Theilman Absent: Kay Moran (Vice-Chair)

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Sandy Pooler, Finance Director; Amherst Media.

Meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m.

AGENDA AND DISCUSSION:

1. Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles – consideration of committee recommendations on Articles deferred until Town Meeting and reconsideration of recommendations on other Articles as necessary.

Article 42 Petition-Affordability Restriction Echo Hill Apartments. This article was being discussed by the Community Preservation Act Committee (CPAC) at their meeting concurrently. They might be ready to recommend funding in the future but did not currently have a proposal. Ms. Streeter from the CPAC did notify us that this committee voted to recommend up to \$400,000 in the fall.

Chris Hoffmann is expected to make a motion on the floor of Town Meeting to refer this article to the Housing and Sheltering Committee (HSC). A motion was made and seconded to support referral of this article to the HSC. Some felt that more information could be obtained regarding details of a proposal and funding options if this article was referred. Others were still concerned about the eminent domain aspects. There is a need for affordable housing especially if Rolling Green loses its affordability soon as scheduled. If referred back to HSC and this article comes back to Town Meeting, the Finance Committee will have another opportunity to make recommendations on the new article. The Finance Committee will still make its statement regarding its recommendation on Article 42 before the motion to refer comes up.

The Finance Committee **voted 4-1 with 2 absent to support referral of Article 42.** Slaughter will speak to referral.

There was no motion to reconsider the original Finance Committee position which is not to recommend Article 42.

Article 43 Petition-Purchase Conservation Restriction Parcels 84, 91& 96 of Map 5A. Larry Kelly is expected to move to dismiss this article on the floor of Town Meeting. A motion was made and seconded to recommend against dismissal. If this article is dismissed, Town Meeting will not have the opportunity to discuss this article and its financial implications for the town. The motions were ultimately withdrawn and the Finance Committee will make no recommendation on dismissal but will explain that there are financial concerns and we should let Town Meeting speak.

Article 41 Petition-Residential Parking. There were several questions regarding this Article. Is this in conflict with Article 29 or does this just broaden the parking regulations? Town Counsel will be asked. Has the Planning Board taken a position on this article? It was thought not. Financial implications would relate to fines. The Finance Committee will wait until the next meeting, June 3, to make a recommendation when more information should be available.

2. Member reports – liaisons and committees - None.
3. Minutes of previous meetings, if any - Will be taken up at next meeting.
4. Next Meeting and Agenda- Monday, June 3 at 6:30 pm, Music Room, ARMS. Agenda includes discussion of Article 41 (Petition-Residential parking) and approval of minutes.

5. Topics not reasonably anticipated by the Chair 48 hours in advance of the meeting.

Pooler distributed a document showing FY14 Cherry Sheets Local Aid Estimates for the Town of Amherst and the FY14 Cherry Sheets State Assessments for the Town of Amherst and discussed it briefly. He referred to the Unrestricted General Government Aid (UGGA) line which shows a difference of \$168,322 between the House and Senate versions of budget estimates. This amount could come back at the end of the year if there is a surplus. As it stands now, Amherst will have a \$149,264 deficit because of less state aid. If this deficit remains, we may have to take action to balance our budget in the fall.

The meeting adjourned at 7:01 p.m.

Janice Ratner, acting clerk

Handouts and Documents used at the meeting

Finance Committee Report and Recommendations to Annual Town Meeting, May, 2013

FY14 Cherry Sheets Local Aid Estimates for the Town of Amherst and the FY14 Cherry Sheets State Assessments for the Town of Amherst