

## **Amherst Finance Committee Meeting**

**April 11, 2013**

**1<sup>st</sup> Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall**

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

Members present: Kay Moran (vice chair), Janice Ratner, Bob Saul, Anurag Sharma, Andy Steinberg (chair), Doug Slaughter, Marylou Theilman.

Others present: Finance Director Sandy Pooler; Town Manager John Musante; Assistant Town Manager/Director of Conservation and Development Dave Ziomek; Building Commissioner Rob Morra; Maurianne Adams; Hwei-Ling Greeney.

### **Agenda, discussion, votes**

1. New information affecting budget, review financial projections: None.
2. Consideration of Town Meeting Articles affecting Fiscal Year 2014 budget, including approval of motions required for annual town meeting. (Almost all of these had been discussed at earlier meetings.)

Article 25, Social Services funding: This would appropriate \$90,000 from Free Cash to fund Craig's Doors and perhaps other agencies, in case the Community Development Block Grant coming to the town is not enough. Spending choices would be up to the Town Manager. Steinberg said this would fund operating expenses out of reserves, which we do not like, but is OK because it would be a one-year bridge to figure out an alternate funding method. The committee **VOTED 7-0 to RECOMMEND Article 25** as a one-year bridge to a strategy for future funding.

Article 26, Town-Gown strategic planning: The town would pay half the cost, \$30,000, with UMass paying the rest. Musante wants the study to develop specific action steps for both the town and UMass. The committee **VOTED 7-0 to RECOMMEND Article 26**.

Article 29, Rental Registration: Morra estimated there are 1,500 rental properties in town but only one code enforcement officer. A second will be needed to enforce this bylaw, to be paid largely from rental registration fees. If this article fails in Town Meeting, the Finance Committee will have to move to reconsider the Conservation and Development budget to remove the additional personnel. The committee **VOTED 7-0 to RECOMMEND Article 29**.

Article 45, petition for equitable distribution of social services funding. The committee **VOTED 7-0 to OPPOSE any motion to amend Article 25** to specify which agencies are funded. If Article 25 is approved, the committee **VOTED 6-1 to OPPOSE Article 45.**

Article 18, Revolving Fund reauthorization of \$400,000: This is for the after-school program, paid for from fees. Town Meeting must reauthorize this in order that benefits for after-school employees can be paid from the fund. The committee **VOTED 7-0 to RECOMMEND Article 18.**

Article 16, Operating Budget: All of these expenditures were discussed at earlier meetings. The committee **VOTED 7-0 to RECOMMEND the following:**

Libraries: Town appropriation of \$1,741,512 to support a budget of \$2,339,757.

General Government: \$6,400,243

Public Safety: \$9,099,025

Public Works: \$2,020,127

Conservation & Development: \$1,010,848

Community Services: \$1,708,238

General Fund Indebtedness: \$1,959,603

Water Fund: \$4,262,887

Sewer Fund: \$4,101,353

Solid Waste Fund: \$535,895

Transportation Fund: \$1,004,434

Article 16, Operating Budget:

The committee **VOTED 6-0, 1 (Slaughter) abstaining, to RECOMMEND**

Elementary Schools: \$21,989,199

Regional Schools: \$14,158,830 assessment as Amherst's share of \$29,130,815 budget

Article 4, Acceptance of optional tax work-off exemption for veterans. The committee **VOTED 7-0 to RECOMMEND Article 4.**

Article 5, Authorization for compensating balances. **VOTED 7-0 to RECOMMEND Article 5.**

Article 6, Street acceptance – Olympia Drive. **VOTED 7-0 to RECOMMEND Article 6.**

Article 8, Acquisition of easements for South East Street sidewalk project. **VOTED 7-0 to RECOMMEND Article 8.**

Article 12, FY 2013 budget amendments. The committee, which had discussed these at earlier meetings, **VOTED 7-0 to RECOMMEND Article 12, sections**

A. Transfer \$43,730 from Debt Service to Community Services accounts.

- B. Transfer \$238,115 from the General Fund General Government, \$16,372 from the Sewer Fund, \$13,370, \$5,308 from the Solid Waste Fund, \$3,088 from the Transportation Fund, and \$100,000 from the Amherst Elementary School Department accounts to the Town of Amherst OPEB Trust Fund.
- C. Transfer \$78,270 from Free Cash received as Medicare Part D reimbursements in this way: \$57,055 to the OPEB Trust Fund of the Town of Amherst; \$3,618 to the Town of Pelham; and \$17,597 to the Amherst-Pelham Regional School District.
- D. Transfer \$20,071 from the Insurance Recovery Fund to the FY13 IT operating budget for water-damaged AV equipment in the Town Room.
- E. Appropriate and transfer \$41,814 from Overlay Surplus to the 2009 Overlay account to eliminate a deficit.

Article 14, Regional lockup assessment: **VOTED 7-0 to RECOMMEND appropriating \$31,323** as Amherst's assessment for the regional lockup facility.

Article 17, Reserve fund: **VOTED 7-0 to RECOMMEND** \$100,000 for the Reserve Fund.

Article 19, Capital program – equipment: **VOTED 6-0, 1 absent, to RECOMMEND** \$1,118,955 for equipment.

Article 20, Capital program – buildings and facilities: **VOTED 6-0, 1 absent, to RECOMMEND** \$464,500 for buildings and facilities.

Article 21, Capital program, Bond authorization: **VOTED 6-0, 1 absent, to RECOMMEND** the following bond authorizations:

- A. \$400,000 for a Fire Department pumper truck.
- B. \$425,000 for two large dump trucks.
- C. \$400,000 to replace boilers at Wildwood Elementary School.

Article 22, Capital program – Debt rescission: **VOTED 7-0 to RECOMMEND** rescinding \$80,000 in borrowing authorized June 18, 2007, for handicapped access improvements at East Street School.

3. Non-Financial and Petition Articles expected at 2013 Annual Town Meeting

Votes on Articles 27-28 were deferred to Town Meeting.

Article 38, petition on rental registration: The committee **VOTED 7-0 to defer** a vote until Town Meeting.

Article 39, petition to amend Nuisance House bylaw: The committee **VOTED 7-0 to MAKE NO RECOMMENDATION.**

4. Member reports – liaisons and committees: None.

5. Minutes of previous meetings

The minutes of 3/28/13 were **APPROVED 5-0, 2 abstaining.**

The minutes of 4/4/13 were **APPROVED 6-0, 1 abstaining.**

6. Next Meeting and Agenda

There is no meeting April 18, 2013. We meet April 25 with the actuary.

7. Topics not reasonably anticipated by the Chair 48 hours in advance of the meeting: None.

The meeting adjourned at 10:40 p.m.

Kay Moran, acting clerk

DOCUMENTS USED AT THE MEETING

Warrant for May 6, 2013, Annual Town Meeting

Rental Permitting and Regulations Overview, dated 3/18/13

Housing for All draft 2-page document arguing in favor of Article 45

Amherst After-School Program budget, updates dated 3/13/13