

Amherst Finance Committee Minutes January 16, 2014

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m. in the Town Room at Town Hall.

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Kay Moran, Janice Ratner, Doug Slaughter, Andy Steinberg, Sarah Swartz, Marylou Theilman.

SELECT BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Alisa Brewer, Aaron Hayden, Stephanie O’Keeffe, Jim Wald.

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: John Musante, Town Manager; Sanford Pooler, Finance Director; David Ziomek, Assistant Town Manager / Director of Conservation & Development; Amherst Media.

AGENDA AND DISCUSSION

-
1. Joint Meeting of the Select Board, Finance Committee -- Town Manager and Finance Director to provide overview of the FY 15 Municipal Budget Proposal, with Questions and Answers
-

1. Presentation, questions and discussion of Town Manager’s budget
Musante presented a broad overview of the FY15 municipal budget emphasizing the points made in his transmittal letter. O’Keeffe stated that the budget is responsive to the priorities that the Select Board set and that having health care costs not change again this fiscal year is extraordinary. O’Keeffe asked if the funding identified for the targeted additions to the budget do not materialize will the additions still occur. Musante responded that the sources identified were the preferred ones however others would be considered if necessary. Wald asked if the Manager was trying to regularize funding for social services. Musante replied that we would apply for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds since we were no longer a Mini-Entitlement Community, which guaranteed a certain level of funding, but we would have a special article on the Town Warrant to serve as a backup if our application failed. Moran asked about the location and amount of Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) funds in the budget. Pooler replied that in FY15, for the first time, OPEB would be shown as a regular budget line under the Miscellaneous Expenditures and that it would be handled as a separate

article in the Town Warrant similarly to the article for the Retirement Assessment. Steinberg noted that the amount is small relative to the overall liability that the Town faces and that if additional revenues materialize, funding our OPEB liability should be considered in addition to those items listed in the Manager's transmittal letter. Brewer asked about the progress of the realignment and changes to LSSE. Musante responded that it is an ongoing project with many component pieces and that there is a lot more work to do. Wald commented that it was good to see we are looking at and working on Affordable Housing issues and projects.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:08 p.m.

Douglas Slaughter, acting clerk

DOCUMENTS USED AT THE MEETING

Town of Amherst FY15 Proposed Budget

Amherst Finance Committee Draft Meeting Schedule FY15 Budget Hearings