

## **Amherst Finance Committee Minutes July 10, 2014**

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. in the First Floor meeting room at Town Hall.

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Steve Braun, Bernie Kubiak, Kay Moran, Janice Ratner, Anurag Sharma, Doug Slaughter.

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Sanford Pooler, Finance Director; Amherst Media.

### AGENDA AND DISCUSSION

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1. Introductions
  2. News affecting budget.
  3. FY14 Reserve Fund Transfers.
  4. Review of budget process for FY16
  5. Regional school assessment issues
  6. Next meeting and agenda.
  7. Minutes of previous meetings.
  8. Topics not reasonably anticipated by chair 48 hours in advance of meeting.
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1. Introductions  
New members Braun and Kubiak were introduced to the current members.
2. News affecting budget  
Pooler reported on the changes to the Cherry Sheet based on the House and Senate Budget conference committee. He noted that the School Choice Assessment increase of \$13,163 from our original budgeted estimates would need to be resolved with greater revenue. He stated that when we set the tax rate we should be able to cover the shortfall since we used a conservative estimate of new growth. Kubiak and Sharma asked when the property values are set for the tax rate. Pooler replied that they are set on January 1<sup>st</sup>, for example, the assessed values on 1/1/2014 sets the property values for the FY15 tax rate. He also noted that while annually the property values are set every 3 years the state requires a fuller reappraisal of all property in the Town utilizing a more rigorous methodology.
3. FY14 Reserve Fund

Pooler reported that the overall budget will result in a surplus of approximately \$436,446 when it is certified by the state. This surplus is in keeping with recent history of the Town of having a 1% to 2% surplus at the end of the fiscal year. However, due to the way in which we vote our budget, excess in one budget area is not allowed to be transferred to a shortfall in another budget area without the action of Town Meeting. Each year the Town budgets \$100,000 to the Reserve Fund which is available for the Finance Committee to appropriate to those budget areas which have a shortfall. At the time of the Annual Town Meeting it was known that there would be a shortfall in the Public Works budget area due to overruns in the Snow and Ice budget line. However, the exact amount of the overrun was not known at the time but it was anticipated to be greater than the \$100,000 that had been placed in the FY14 Reserve Fund. Town Meeting appropriated \$160,028 to the Reserve Fund to raise the balance of the Reserve Fund to \$260,028 to cover the anticipated shortfall. Pooler reported that the shortfall in the Snow and Ice budget line would be \$110,000.

The Committee voted 6-0 with 1 member absent to transfer \$110,000 from the Reserve Fund to the Public Works functional area to cover the FY14 shortfall in the Snow and Ice budget line.

4. Review of budget process for FY16

Pooler outlined the broad, fiscal year month by month activities related to the budget and the Town's financial management. Moran asked the committee members to volunteer for the various liaison roles that the committee has. The following assignments we agreed upon:

- Moran and Sharma will work on the Budget Coordinating Group
- Slaughter and Braun will serve on the joint Capital Planning Committee
- Ratner will serve on the Audit Committee and be the liaison to the Library Trustees
- Theilman will serve as liaison to the Regional and Elementary School Committees

5. Regional school assessment issues

Moran reported that the Regional Schools, with approval of all 4 Towns, have been using a five year rolling average of enrollment as an alternate method for calculating each Town's assessment to the Regional Schools instead of the statutory method. A new regional assessment method working group will have its first meeting on July 15<sup>th</sup> at 2 p.m. in the Middle School to review the currently used alternative assessment as well as others. Theilman agreed to be on this working group but cannot attend the first meeting. Kubiak volunteered to attend in her place.

6. Next meeting and agenda

The next meeting will be September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2014. The agenda will include items related to the Fall Town Meeting, committee liaisons to other boards and committees, and the FY16 budget calendar.

7. Minutes of previous meetings

The Committee voted 4-0, 2 abstentions, 1 absent to approve the minutes of 4/11/13 as amended.

8. Topics not reasonably anticipated by the chair 48 hours in advance of meeting

None.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Douglas Slaughter, acting clerk

DOCUMENTS USED AT THE MEETING

Town of Amherst FY15 Cherry Sheet Local Aid Estimates

Fiscal Year Calendar

FY14 Reserve Fund Transfers