

Amherst Finance Committee Minutes
Thursday, January 21, 2016
First Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall

PRESENT: Kay Moran (Chair), Marylou Theilman (Vice-Chair), Bernie Kubiak, Janice Ratner, Anurag Sharma, Sonia Aldrich. ABSENT: Steve Braun, Tim Neale.

OTHERS ATTENDING: Sonia Aldrich, Comptroller and Liaison to Finance; Larry Kelly, Reporter; Amherst Media

Meeting called to order at 7:04 pm.

News affecting the budget

1. Shutesbury Select Board to go along with a modified 10 percent adjusted statutory and 90 percent version of 5-year rolling average for school assessments. Amherst share unchanged.
2. FY16 second quarter budget results (See Handout). General Fund 53.4 percent of budget revenue collected through December 31, 2015, matched by a total 51.7 percent of budgeted expenditures over the same period. Miscellaneous non-recurring revenue expected from UMass Hotel tax, which is not included in above numbers.

Manager's FY17 Budget—summarized in the Town Manager's letter. Sustains town core services. Key points: level services, modest program improvements, OPEB contributions increase, increases to Select Board and Moderator stipends (FY 17).

Member reports

Schools (Theilman): Theilman distributed data for funded school building projects she got from Massachusetts School Building Authority website January 1, 2014. School Committee voted last Tuesday to have grades 2-6 in the proposed new building plus pre-K-1 consolidation at Crocker Farm School. The specifics of which configuration will finally be adopted will be decided later. School Building Committee will meet February 2 to vote on one of the building options. More discussion about the costs of this project, considered in its entirety—including demolitions, if necessary, repurposing of Crocker Farm for pre-K-1 programming, and potential uses for the Fort River School if it were to be “abandoned.” Kubiak and Braun on JCPC will continue engagement with the economics of this project.

Also discussion among Regional School Committee for consolidating the high school with the middle school students in the high school building, although a decision about this has been postponed for at least a year. The middle school building would be used for a variety of purposes.

Library (Ratner): Selected the Design firm and already hired an Owner's Project Manager (OPM).

Major Capital Needs

School building projects, as above.

Minutes

January 7, 2016 minutes. No discussion
January 14, 2016 minutes. No discussion

Vote 4 to approve, 1 abstain, 2 absent.
Vote 4 to approve, 1 abstain, 2 absent.

Handouts:

- FY16 Municipal Budget/Actual Reports for Quarter Ending December 31, 2015
- MSBA School Construction Costs; for actual costs contact individual school districts. (M. Theilman)

Next meeting January 28, 2016

Adjourned 8:36

Acting Clerk: Anurag Sharma