

**Amherst Budget Coordinating Group
Summary Points – February 10, 2010**

At our February 10th meeting, the members of the Budget Coordinating Group agreed that the following points would be conveyed to our home boards and committees:

- That BCG's recommendation to the Select Board is to put a lump sum override question on the March 23, 2010 Annual Town Election Ballot, allocating dollars to the different budgets as per the following proposed language:

Shall the Town of Amherst be allowed to assess an additional \$1,765,441 in real estate and personal property taxes for the purposes of funding the following expenses: Town Operating Budget (\$537,252), Elementary Schools Operating Budget (\$400,000), Regional School District Assessment (\$739,195), and Libraries Operating Budget (\$88,994) for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2010?

- That this recommendation represents our best estimate of the cost to make key restorations to FY10 programs and services that will otherwise not be funded in FY11, and that this recommendation leaves unfunded about \$2.5 million in reductions from FY10 level services. The total budget shortfall for FY11 is \$4.3 million; the override recommendation is to fill \$1.76 million of that gap, while \$2.5 million will be absorbed through cuts.
- That consideration was again given to the questions of potentially delaying an override and the format of the ballot question. After much discussion, our recommendations for the question to proceed on March 23rd as a lump sum amount with allocations were reaffirmed by general but not unanimous consensus on both points.
- That to ensure mutual understanding, we restated and reaffirmed our recommendation that should any of the significant remaining uncertainties (COLA negotiations, State aid, recommended restorations totaling less than current estimates) swing positive, we would not tax to the levy limit allowed by a successful override in those amounts.
- That there is commitment from the professional budget officials to not seek restorations in excess of the current recommended dollar amounts (or such amounts adjusted downward, per the point above,) though the specifics and prioritization of those restorations by the Schools will continue to be determined. The prioritized lists have been a tool to help us determine the size and scope of needed restorations; we recognize the necessity of flexibility to allow for responsible management of Town, School and Library programs and budgets.
- That we need to come up with clear language to explain the two points above.
- That use of Town reserves is not part of the override recommendation, and that this is an issue that remains open to further discussion as necessary.