

Amherst Ways & Means Meeting

November 8, 2021

Final

Attendees:

Mike Parisi, Chair (MP)  
Wendy Rannenberg (WR)  
Bill Loscocco (BL)

Lisa Eastland (LE)  
Diane Layton, Alternate (DL)  
Michael Patterson (MP2)

Lori Mix and Jim Kuhnert were absent

1. **Ways & Means Meeting Call to Order at 7:32pm**
2. **Citizens comments:** None
3. **Approve Minutes from October 25, 2021 Meeting:**
  - LE made a motion to approve, WR seconded the motion. All voted in favor.
4. **Appointment of Acting Secretary:**
  - WR volunteered to be the acting Secretary.
5. **Discuss Budget & COLA Updates from BOS Meeting:**
  - Minimal budget updates were provided in the BOS meeting. The discussion on this specific topic was limited.
    - i. A revised budget was not included in the BOS packet. Dean Shankle provided a verbal update during the BOS meeting and confirmed that he would forward an updated budget and preliminary look at pending Warrant Articles in the coming days for the W&M to review.
  - Most in attendance commented that the COLA discussion from the BOS meeting, including the proposal from Selectman Dwight Brew requesting that COLA be aligned with reduced health insurance costs, needed to be discussed more thoughtfully.
    - i. There was general agreement that the thoughtfulness of looking to reduce insurance costs was encouraging, but aligning the COLA increases of all town employees to the efforts of one or two individuals in negotiating down insurance costs could have negative impacts to the operations of the town.
    - ii. The W&M Committee agreed that it would be best to table the conversation, think through the proposal, and as a committee provide feedback and additional questions to the BOS via email ahead of the next BOS Meeting, scheduled for November 22, 2021.
6. **Discuss Departmental Budget Meetings:**
  - Those in attendance provided updates for each department budget meeting attended.
    - It is generally agreed that each department manager has a firm hold of their department budget and is acting with prudent financial care while properly weighing the future needs of their department.
7. **New Business:** None
8. **Meeting Adjourned at 8:11pm**

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The next meeting is scheduled for November 22, 2021 immediately following the BOS Meeting in the Felix Hertzka Conference Room.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Mike Parisi, Chair

Amherst Ways & Means Committee