

Attendees:

Lori Mix, Chair (LM)  
Tom Cook, Secretary (TC)  
Diane Layton (DL)  
Wendy Rannenberg (WR)  
Tom Silvia (TS)  
Steve Boczenowski, Alternate (SB)  
Russ Hodgkins, Alternate (RH)  
Mike Akillion (MA) Strategic Planning Advisor to Board of Selectman

Ways & Means Meeting Call to Order: 5:20 pm. Barbara Landry Meeting Room

Topics Discussed

1. Strategic Governance Overview Presentation from MA
  - a. Strategic Governance collects plans from town departments and BOS to create a more complete picture of everything that needs to be done, over what time, and the expected impact to give the BOS and W&M a more complete picture from which to prioritize spending recommendations.
  - b. Handout added to end of notes
2. Collaboration across different W&M Committees in Amherst
  - a. MA is on the Amherst School District (ASD) W&M and requested creating an informal line of communication between the various W&M to get a better understanding of each other's approaches and the basic spending issues across the various issue areas. MA said he wanted to create a sense of responsibility across W&M to address issues outside of each W&M's individual lane.
  - b. MA gave overview of the ASD W&M's value based analysis of the educational budget and their updated mission statement. MA's handout attached at end of notes.

6:06 PM Adjourned

6:10 PM Reconvened in Felix Hertzka Conference Room, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor

3. Discussed MA's ask for liaison to the Amherst School District W&M. Consensus that there is not a great deal of overlap between the two committees and will not nominate a formal liaison to the ASD W&M.
4. Motion to accept the 9/12 Meeting Minutes – WR motioned and DL second

6:25 PM Adjourned to join Board of Selectman (BOS) in Landry Meeting Room, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

5. Listened to and asked questions on the Strategic Plans from the following departments:
  - i. Amherst Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee
  - ii. Library
  - iii. Parks and Recreation
6. Selectman Peter Lyons presented BOS strategic goals developed as part of strategic planning process.
  - a. BOS Strategic Goals:

- i. Finance Department
- ii. Staffing Needs
  - 1. Wage & Benefits
  - 2. Retirement System decision
- iii. Continued support of upgrades to roads and bridges
- iv. Improve/Digitize records
- v. Improve communications with the community
- vi. Support review of housing needs through work with the Planning Board.
  - 1. What does town need/want in housing.

8:49 PM Reconvened in Felix Hertzka Conference Room

7. New Business


- a. Discussed library funding model and noted that no dollar figures were presented during the strategic plan.
  - b. TS noted that we should meet with the representatives from the Amherst Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee along with other departments. TC agreed.
  - c. TS asked for more details on why there's roughly \$7MM in unused funds in town coffers from prior years. Consensus among members that more knowledge is needed on how that money could get spent and why it has not been used.
    - i. Action WR to get John D'Angelo, Selectman, to present to the W&M on the rules surrounding those funds as he has previously done research on the money, its history, and rules on how it can be spent.
  - d. TC asked if there were other resources that could educate the W&M on other town funds. LM volunteered to present on the Capital Reserve Funds as she is a trustee.
    - i. Action: LM to schedule time to present to rest of W&M on Capital Reserve Funds.
  - e. TS noted that the strategic plan presentation from Peter Lyons seemed more tactical than strategic. TC agreed and asked if LM could get more details from the BOS on the work they did in collaboration with MA on their strategic priorities.
    - i. Action: LM to reach out to Peter Lyons for BOS strategic planning work results.
1. Next meeting: Monday, 10/11 at 6:15-6:25pm and following BOS presentations relevant to W&M at approximately 7:30pm in the Felix Hertzka Conference Room, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor.

9:28 pm Meeting adjourned

Respectively Submitted,

Tom Cook  
Secretary, Ways & Means

Appendix 1: MA Strategic Planning Overview Handout:



## The Center for Strategic Governance


**STRATEGIC** Thinking + Operational **GOVERNANCE** = **STRATEGIC GOVERNANCE**

### A Framework for Strategic Governance


Engaging Citizens to Envision and Achieve a Desired Future

<b>STRATEGIC Thinking</b> (What to Achieve)		<b>Operational GOVERNANCE</b> (How to Achieve It)	
<b>Vision</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizen Ideas</li> <li>• Research/Data</li> <li>• Department Input</li> <li>• Balanced Views</li> </ul>	<b>Measurable Goals</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defining Success in Citizen Outcomes</li> <li>• Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Challenging (SMAC)</li> </ul>	<b>Strategic Initiatives</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program Plans</li> <li>• Costs</li> <li>• Roles</li> <li>• Timing</li> <li>• Dependencies</li> <li>• CIP</li> </ul>	<b>Implementation &amp; Oversight</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department Plans</li> <li>• Board Plans</li> <li>• Ongoing Updates</li> <li>• Progress Reviews</li> <li>• Measurement</li> <li>• Plan Adjustments</li> </ul>

Constituent Communications




Year 1



Year 2...

... or sooner, as needed.

### A Virtuous Cycle




Select Board/Council, administration, and other groups shape broader goals.

Departments propose multi-year strategic plans.

Financial impacts are assessed, prioritized, and framed into multi-year budgets.

Planning Board develops a master plan (land use) and CIP based on those goals.

<b>Understand the Past</b>	Enhanced understanding of historical performance, drivers of success, key environmental trends, critical issues.
<b>Envision the Future</b>	Clarified mission, values, SWOTs. Future scenarios with implications. Vision of desired future. Internal consensus around a coherent set of strategic initiatives, programs, goals.
<b>Manage the Present</b>	Set of tools (dashboard metrics, strategic budgets) to manage strategic initiatives and continually assess progress toward goals.



**Work Plan**

**Strategic Thinking**

**Operational Governance**

**Task / Activity**

**Plan & Organize the Project**

- Meet with Institutional Leadership Team
- Develop work plan
- Form Instt. Planning Council (IPC)
- Conduct IPC kickoff meeting

**Understand the Past**

- Compile, analyze data
- Review Historical Dashboards
- Conduct interviews, focus groups
- Undertake Environmental Scan

**Envision the Future**

- Clarify Mission/Values
- Do dynamic SWOT analysis, prioritize
- Conduct visioning sessions
- Develop Strategic Initiatives/Goals
- Design Vision Dashboards

**Manage the Present**

- Develop Strat. Opng Plan / Budget
- Design Current Dashboards
- Design monitoring process


**Report & Monitor the Plan**

- Prepare Strategic Plan Report
- Board review / approve Plan
- Review Dashboard results
- Revise assumptions, goals

### Elements of a Strategic Plan

- **Mission** – Why the organization exists (enduring purpose).
- **Vision** – How the mission will be achieved over the plan timeframe.
- **Outcomes** – Constituent-centered results to be achieved.
- **Investments** – Initiatives/resources to achieve outcomes.
- **Structures and Staffing** – How to organize to do work.
- **Operations and Procedures** – Best practices.
- **Schedule** – Timeline to achieve planned outcomes.

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Appendix 2: MA Handout #2: ASD W&M Mission Statement and Communication Plan:

**W&M Mission Statement**

The Ways & Means Committee is a self-organizing advisory committee that provides independent input into and assessment of the executive budgeting decisions of the Amherst School Board, SAU39, and school leaders. Its role is to conduct due diligence into the strategic fiduciary decisions of the school district on behalf of the residents of Amherst.

The budgeting process should be a conversation between the school leadership, the SAU leadership, the School Board, the W&M Committee, and the public. The Committee participates actively, collaboratively, and transparently in the board's budgeting discussions – asking hard questions, making suggestions, and agreeing or disagreeing with decisions taken.

While its focus is on the proposed, upcoming annual school budgets, its perspective can cover multiple years of expenditures (past and future) as well as insights into how the Amherst School District schools compare with similar and aspirational ones in delivering educational value (academic outcomes achieved given the investments made).

The Committee's final deliverable is an independent report to the town's voters on its findings about the budgeting process and the educational value of the proposed budgets and warrant articles – including narratives explaining votes taken for and/or against specific articles.

**Near-Term Communications Plan**

Here's what we propose for analyses to be done (in likely chronological order):

1. A multi-year historical analysis of the educational value delivered by ASD,
2. An analysis of last year's proposed AEA contract and its cost implications for ensuing years,
3. A multi-year analysis of the SAU39 budget (including the proposed annual budget) and cost implications,
4. An analysis of the proposed annual ASD budget (by DOE-25 categories and relevant subcommittee categories) and its cost implications for ensuing years,
5. An analysis of proposed facilities and their cost implications for ensuing years.

We have compiled a list of comparable districts and schools that can be used in these analyses, as appropriate. We've reached out to the ASD Board and the superintendent for their input on these and any aspirational schools or districts they compare themselves to.

These analyses, once reviewed by the W&M Committee, will be posted to the W&M website, and audiences notified of their existence via a letter in the *Citizen*, Facebook posts, and other approaches.