

Amherst School District Ways and Means Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
Brick School Meeting Room  
Monday, January 15, 2024, 6:00 PM

1 Attendees: Caitlin Thompson, Chris Goodrich, Matt Comstock, Matt Borden, Caleb Baird, Peter  
2 Maresco, and Brittany Donovan.

3 Also in attendance was Amy Facey, Ellen Grudzien, and Jason White.  
4

5 **1. Prior meeting minutes**  
6

7 *A MOTION was made by Caitlin Thompson and SECONDED by Matt Borden to approve the*  
8 *meeting minutes of January 3, 2024, as presented.*

9 *Vote: 7-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*  
10

11 **2) Warrant Article Discussion and Vote**

12 **a) Article 16 Vehicle Expendable Trust Fund**  
13

14 Matt Comstock attended the transportation subcommittee meeting and discussed this warrant  
15 article. This would allow the district to create a fund to save money to purchase vehicles to be  
16 used for extracurricular transportation. Currently, the district rents buses and drivers at a cost of  
17 about \$18,000 annually. This would almost entirely eliminate that need and save taxpayers  
18 money in the long run. Passing of this article would not have any additional tax impact.  
19

20 *A MOTION was made by Peter Maresco and SECONDED by Matt Borden to support this*  
21 *article as presented.*

22 *Vote: 7-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*  
23

24 The group voted as follows:  
25

26 Baird: Yes

27 Borden: Yes

28 Comstock: Yes

29 Donovan: Yes

30 Goodrich: Yes

31 Maresco: Yes

32 Thompson: Yes  
33

34 **b) Article 15 Technology Expendable Trust Fund**  
35

36 Matt Comstock attended the technology subcommittee meeting and discussed this article as  
37 well. This would allow the district to create a fund to save money to purchase technology related  
38 items. These items are typically expensive and are one of the first things to be cut from the  
39 budget in the case of a default budget. This trust fund would allow the district to anticipate future  
40 costs and save over multiple years. Passing of this article would not have any additional tax  
41 impact.  
42

43 *A MOTION was made by Chris Goodrich and SECONDED by Caitlin Thompson to support*  
44 *this article as presented.*

45 *Vote: 7-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*

46  
47 The group voted as follows:

48  
49 Baird: Yes

50 Borden: Yes

51 Comstock: Yes

52 Donovan: Yes

53 Goodrich: Yes

54 Maresco: Yes

55 Thompson: Yes

56  
57 **c) Article 14 Capital Reserve Fund**

58  
59 Caitlin Thompson discussed the capital reserve fund. This fund has been used in recent years  
60 to pay for repairs to the roof at the Amherst Middle School. Additional funds will continue to  
61 pay for the roof repairs at the Amherst Middle School. Caitlin expressed concerns about how the  
62 roof will be paid for if this article does not pass. Passing of this article would not have any  
63 additional tax impact.

64  
65 *A MOTION was made by Matt Borden and SECONDED by Chris Goodrich to support this*  
66 *article as presented.*

67 *Vote: 7-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*

68  
69 The group voted as follows:

70  
71 Baird: Yes

72 Borden: Yes

73 Comstock: Yes

74 Donovan: Yes

75 Goodrich: Yes

76 Maresco: Yes

77 Thompson: Yes

78  
79 **d) Article 13 Operating Budget**

80  
81 The group discussed the overall operating budget and how we got to a 3.8% increase. In  
82 general, after a zero-based budgeting process, the majority of the increase comes from the  
83 previously voted upon teacher contract and health/dental insurance increases. There were line  
84 items that were wanted but didn't make it into the budget in an attempt to keep this increase to a  
85 minimum. Amy discussed more of the budgeting process and how it was done this year. An  
86 inventory of all supplies was taken at an individual educator level. Only the needs were included  
87 in this year's budget. The process also took place at a personnel level. If you were to compare the

88 ASD to the SHS budget including an approved teacher contract, they are within 0.4% of each  
89 other.

90  
91 *A MOTION was made by Matt Borden and SECONDED by Peter Maresco to support this*  
92 *article as presented.*

93 *Vote: 7-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*

94  
95 The group voted as follows:

96  
97 Baird: Yes

98 Borden: Yes

99 Comstock: Yes

100 Donovan: Yes

101 Goodrich: Yes

102 Maresco: Yes

103 Thompson: Yes

104

105 **e) Article 12 Bond for Elementary School**

106

107 The group discussed the long-term impacts of this article on the town. There was discussion  
108 about some of the questions from the public hearing and the comparison between the current  
109 building and the design of the new building. This is difficult to quantify since at the current  
110 Wilkins building some rooms current use is not the original intended use. For example, there  
111 currently is no music room at Wilkins. The group discussed other questions that were asked at  
112 the public hearing as well. The interest rate that was presented at the public hearing was 5.5%.  
113 That rate has since decreased to 4.0%. This would bring the overall cost of the project from  
114 about \$85 million to about \$76 million. If this interest rate were to drop 5-10 years in the future,  
115 the bond bank will refund money to the district/taxpayers as well. The question was asked if  
116 there was any potential for state aid that could bring the cost down further. It is unlikely that  
117 there will be any state aid available.

118

119 *A MOTION was made by Matt Comstock and SECONDED by Chris Goodrich to support this*  
120 *article as presented.*

121 *Vote: 7-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*

122

123 The group voted as follows:

124

125 Baird: Yes

126 Borden: Yes

127 Comstock: Yes

128 Donovan: Yes

129 Goodrich: Yes

130 Maresco: Yes

131 Thompson: Yes

132

133

134

135 3) **Other Business**

136 The group discussed how to present their vote at the deliberation session. Different members  
137 will write a paragraph long statement that shares why they voted the way they did.

138 Caleb will be going to the ASD board meeting this week to discuss the Ways and Means  
139 Committee.

140 The meeting adjourned at 7:19 PM

141

142 Minutes record by: Matt Comstock

DRAFT