

Four Towns Meeting—Amherst Regional School Committee
Saturday, January 12, 2013
Library, Amherst Regional Middle School

In Attendance:

Kip Fonsh, Chair
Katherine Appy
AnneMarie Foley
Rick Hood
Lawrence O'Brien

Maria Geryk, Superintendent
Rob Detweiler, Director of Finance & Operations
Kathy Mazur, Human Resources Director
Rhonda Cohen, Director of Teaching and Learning
Betsy Dinger, ARMS Principal
Annie Foley, CF Co-Principal
Debbie Westmoreland, Recorder
Public

DOCUMENTS: *Four-Town Meeting Packet dated Saturday, January, 12, 2013*

Ms. Geryk welcomed members of the four towns' Select Boards, Finance Committees and School Committees to the meeting, along with members of the public. She briefly reviewed the norms of the meeting, noting that this is a working group rather than a public forum.

Ms. Geryk and Mr. Detweiler gave a Powerpoint presentation outlining:

- the vision and mission of the Regional schools;
- the initial assumptions used in developing the FY14 Regional School District budget;
- the internal budget process including identified efficiencies as well as budget challenges in FY14 and beyond;
- the level services budget, including a three-year picture and the budget gap of just over \$900,000;
- the ways in which the district is planning to address the gap; and
- the imperative to function within the new fiscal realities while keeping a focus on both current and future students.

Discussion followed regarding the financial realities of the member towns and Mr. Detweiler and Ms. Geryk answered clarifying questions for board members. Ms. Shively noted that Leverett is facing a no growth scenario in recent years so the projected assessment of \$101,000 would be a big hit to the town and may require an override. Mr. Trickey stated that the target assessment increase for Pelham would be about \$40,000. Ms. Torres noted that Shutesbury is also facing a very tight budget. Mr. Musante said that it would be workable for Amherst to have an assessment increase in the range of 3%. Mr. Detweiler explained what moving from the 3% increase to a 2% increase would mean for the town assessments, noting that the impact on the budget would be an increase from \$900,000+ to more than \$1 million in cuts.

Mr. Steinberg followed the budget discussion with a Powerpoint presentation updating the town officials on the work of the Regional School District Planning Board (RSDPB) since the last Four Town meeting.

He noted that the consultants to the RSDPB—Mac Reid, Education and Mark Abrahams, Finance—will report on their findings to the community at a public forum on Saturday, February 2 from 1:00-3:00 p.m. in the ARMS auditorium. Mr. Steinberg noted that DESE awarded grant funds to the RSDPB to support development of a regional plan and board activities in FY13. In addition, the board has applied for a Community Innovation Challenge grant which, if awarded, will support community engagement and implementation if the recommendation is made to move forward with regionalization of the elementary schools. Mr. Steinberg noted that each town will host a local public forum in addition to the February 2nd forum and asked that the board and committee members encourage constituents to attend one or more of them.

Ms. Geryk reviewed upcoming meetings on the budget calendar:

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| Amherst School Committee: | January 15—Initial Budget Presentation |
| | February 5—Detailed Budget Presentation |
| Pelham School Committee: | February 7—Detailed Budget Presentation |
| Regional School Committee: | February 12—Detailed Budget Presentation |
| Snow Date RSDPB Forum: | February 9 |
| Four-Town Meeting: | March 2 (Tentative) |

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Debbie Westmoreland

Approved February 12, 2013