

Amherst
Voters' Guide
to the
Deliberative Session
of the
Amherst School District
(Grades K - 8)
February 4, 2010
7:00 p.m. – Souhegan High School Auditorium

Officers and Agents of the School District

Amherst School Board

Nancy Head, Chair

Dwight Brew

Peg Bennett

Robert Graybill

Peter Maresco

School District Moderator

Carol Holden

School District Clerk

Nancy Baker

School District Treasurer

Jan Bunker

Amherst Ways & Means Committee

Mark Vincent, Chair

Steven T. Cummings

Stephanie Hall

Tedd Landon

Deb Naro

Paul Prescott

David Yabroudy

Office of the Superintendent

Mary Athey Jennings, Superintendent of Schools

Renea Sparks, Director of Special Instructional Services

Elizabeth Shankel, Business Administrator

Nicole Heimarck, Director of Curriculum & Professional Development

School Administration

Porter Dodge, Principal

Amherst Middle School

Gerry St. Amand, Principal

Clark-Wilkins School

Please bring this Guide with you to the Amherst School District (K-8) Deliberative Session on February 4, 2010.

Message from the Amherst School Board Chairperson

Thank you for taking the time to review this information about the Amherst School District and the warrant articles that the Amherst School Board is bringing forward this year.

The Amherst School Board, our school administration and the Amherst School District Ways and Means Committee have all spent a great deal of time preparing and refining article 12, the operating budget for the 2010-2011 school year. The warrant articles will be presented and discussed at the Amherst School District Deliberative Session to be held at 7:00 PM on Thursday, February 4th at Souhegan High School. If you have any questions about the warrant, please contact a member of the Amherst School Board. Our phone numbers and e-mail addresses are listed below.

2009-2010 in Review

The Amherst School Board would like to commend the administration and staff for their stewardship of the resources that are entrusted to them. By increasing revenue, bidding competitively and carefully managing the budget, the Amherst School District was able to return an FY09 surplus of \$470,252 to the Amherst residents to reduce taxes on the December 2009 and July 2010 tax bills.

The renovations for Clark, Wilkins, and the Amherst Middle School, begun in the summer of 2008, were completed this past summer. As a result of these renovations, our schools are safer, healthier, more efficient, and more cost effective. I would like to thank Jim Miner, Director of Buildings and Grounds for all the work that he did in overseeing the project from start to finish. Thanks to Jim and his staff, the work went smoothly. Emphasis was on quality and fiscal responsibility—getting quality where quality counted and always keeping in mind the long-term costs involved in maintenance as well as the immediate costs.

In 2009 we implemented phase two of the Scott Foresman Core Reading Program. It is presently being used in all kindergarten classrooms and two classrooms at grades 1 and 2. Next year the program will be expanded to all classrooms at grades 1 and 2 and two classrooms at each of grades 3 through 6. Along with the highly valued guided reading program already in place, the Scott Foresman Program provides a strong literacy foundation for all students and reflects the district's strategy of emphasizing reading and writing across the curriculum.

The newly revised science curriculum is in year two of implementation and continues to expand with a focus on inquiry based science as seen in the real world.

In October 2008 the failure of a sub-group of children to achieve expected results in math on the state tests led to an examination of the math program at the elementary level with resulting benefits for all students. A committee formed to identify causes for the math deficits and develop an action plan to meet the School In Need of Improvement (SINI) requirements recommended changes that included enhanced math instruction focusing on the mastery of basic math facts; dedicated instructional blocks for math instruction; community, volunteer, and parent outreach to improve student mastery of material; and expansion of flexible grouping.

A successful new initiative in 2009 was the Response to Intervention Program which has resulted in lowered special education numbers. This program is geared toward the early identification and remediation of learning problems and provides varying tiers of support for children found to be in need. At the heart of this program is a comprehensive testing program and increased sophistication in teacher use of test results to identify specific needs of individual children.

Teachers have been working at interpreting and using the results of the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) and DIBELS assessment for teaching purposes. Delayed start workshops

initiated in 2008 have allowed in-depth teacher training in this area as well as time for the staff to analyze the data. Using the assessment data to identify instructional needs, the teachers from both Clark/Wilkins and the Amherst Middle School have pursued student focused goals consistent with the district's goal of "engaging, challenging and supporting all learners."

2010-2011 Looking Forward

The operating budget warrant article proposed this year all support the initiatives that make the Amherst School District one of the top performing school districts in the state.

The specific wording of each warrant article, along with detailed commentary from both the Amherst School Board and the Amherst School District Ways and Means Committee on the operating budget warrant article appears below. I hope that you will take the time to become more familiar with these warrant articles. Because collective bargaining between the Amherst Educational Association and the Amherst School Board did not result in a contract this year, the expected warrant article outlining negotiated costs will not be presented.

As mentioned earlier, if you have any questions about the Amherst School District or the warrant, please contact a member of the Amherst School Board.

The Amherst School District Deliberative Session will be held at 7:00 pm on Thursday, February 4th at the Souhegan High School auditorium. At this deliberative session, each of the articles on the warrant will be discussed, deliberated, and possibly amended. Once the Deliberative Session is concluded, the articles will be put onto the warrant and voted on by ballot voting on Tuesday, March 9th. We hope you will attend the Deliberative Session and exercise your right to this stage of the voting process in Amherst.

Sincerely,

Nancy Head

Amherst School Board Chairperson

Amherst School Board

Peg Bennett	peg.bennett@comcast.net	673-1404
Dwight Brew	dwight@brewgroup.com	673-5336
Rob Graybill	rob.graybill@yahoo.com	672-4793
Nancy Head	njhead@myfairpoint.net	673-1389
Peter Maresco	pfmaresco@yahoo.com	423-1064

Amherst School District Voting

Amherst School District follows the guidelines of Senate Bill 2 (SB2) which are outlined in RSA 40:13. Voting on budgets, appropriations, and other articles culminates with ballot voting; however, prior to the March ballot vote is the Deliberative Session, which will be held February 4, 2010.

The Deliberative Session is the first session of the annual meeting and consists of explanation, discussion, and debate of each article on the warrant. Only voters registered in Amherst can amend wording and dollar amounts and vote on approving the warrant articles.

All warrant articles that are presented at the Deliberative Session, including articles that are amended, are then placed on the official ballot and moved to the second session of the annual meeting for a final vote by ballot on March 9, 2010.

Amherst School District Voting is a Two-Step Process

Deliberative Session	February 4 th : Amherst School District
7:00 p.m.	
SHS Auditorium	
Ballot Vote	March 9 th
6:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.	
SHS Gymnasium	

Contact the Amherst Town Clerk for voter registration information and for absentee ballots.

www.amherstnh.gov/townclerk/voters.html

**AMHERST SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANNUAL MEETING WARRANT
February 4, 2010 and March 9, 2010
AMHERST, NEW HAMPSHIRE**

To the inhabitants of the Amherst School District, in the Town of Amherst, County of Hillsborough, and State of New Hampshire, qualified to vote in District affairs:

You are hereby notified to meet at Souhegan High School in said district on Thursday, February 4, 2010, at 7:00 p.m., for Session I (Deliberation), for the transaction of all business other than voting by official ballot. This session shall consist of the explanation of all the warrant articles and the discussion and debate of warrant article 12. Warrant articles may be amended subject to the following limitations: (a) warrant articles whose wording is prescribed by law shall not be amended and (b) warrant articles that are amended shall be placed on the official ballot for final vote on the main motion, as amended.

You are hereby further notified to meet at Souhegan High School on Tuesday, March 9, 2010, between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. to vote by official ballot for the election of School District officers and other action required to be inserted on the official ballot (warrant articles 11 through 12.)

IMPORTANT NOTE ON WARRANT ARTICLE NUMBERS: To avoid confusion caused by having two warrant articles with the same number, Souhegan Cooperative School District Warrant Articles are numbered 1 through 10, Amherst School District warrant articles are numbered 11 through 20 and Town of Amherst warrant articles are numbered 21 and above.

ARTICLE 11

To elect all necessary School District officers for the ensuing terms by official ballot vote on March 9, 2010, Souhegan High School, 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

- Election of two (2) members of the School Board for the ensuing three (3) years.
- Election of school district clerk for the ensuing one (1) year.

ARTICLE 12

Shall the Amherst School District raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amount set forth on the budget posted with the warrant, or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling **\$23,371,144**? Should this article be defeated, the operating budget shall be **\$23,007,421**, which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Amherst School District or by law; or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13, X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only.

Majority ballot vote required to pass.

The Amherst School Board unanimously recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 4 to 0. The Ways and Means Committee unanimously recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 7 to 0.

Amherst School Board Commentary

The proposed Amherst School District operating budget for the 2010-2011 (FY 2011) school year is \$23,371,144. This is an increase over last year's budget of \$156,142 or 0.67% over the FY2010 adopted budget.

Increases to this budget include health increases of 22.5%; dental increases of 5.5%; an increase in the state retirement for teachers of 15.23%; and a contractual wage increase for our support staff. In addition, the price of supplies and utilities has also increased.

Enrollment is predicted to be relatively flat overall. With shifting grade enrollments, however, it has been possible to reduce our professional staff by 3.5 teacher positions and our support staff by 2 positions. The budget continues to support adequate staffing at all grade levels and across curriculum levels, provide appropriate instructional materials at all levels, continue with the planned replacement of aging technical equipment, and provide adequate support for special education needs.

We have made every effort to keep costs down while continuing to maintain the quality of education that we want for our children. The Amherst School Board urges you to support this operating budget.

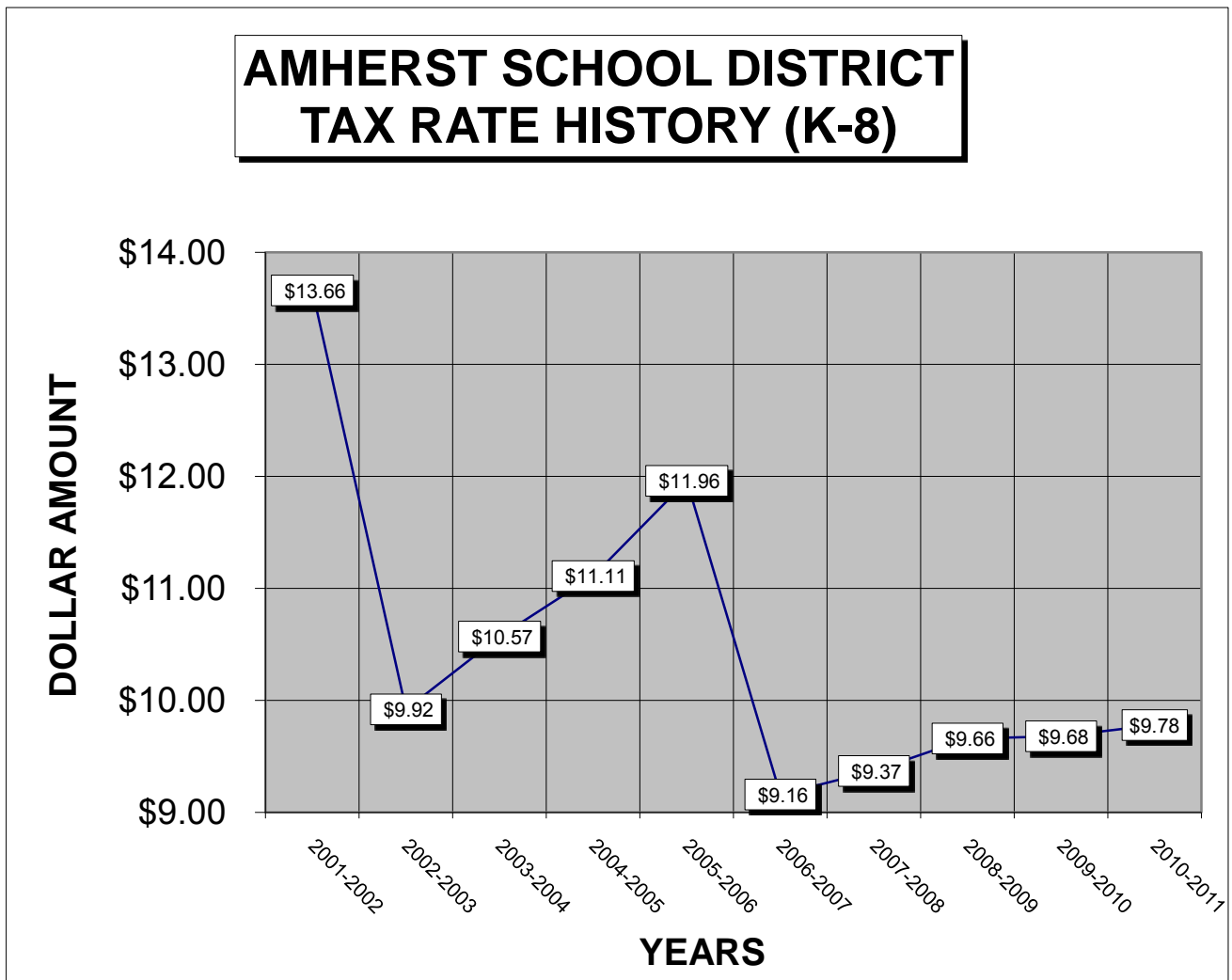
ARTICLE 13

To transact any other business that may legally come before the meeting.

SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL WARRANT ARTICLES AND FINANCIAL TAX IMPACT

If all articles on the warrant pass, the estimated school tax rate for the upcoming 2010-11 school year will be \$9.78.

		Amount	Tax Rate/\$1,000 Town Assessed Valuation
2009-10 Annual Amherst School District Tax Rate		\$ 23,215,002	\$ 9.68
Article 12	Operating Budget	\$ 23,371,144	\$ 0.10
FY11	2010-11 Amherst School District Estimated Tax Rate	\$ 23,371,144	\$ 9.78



Amherst School District Enrollment
Historical* and Projected Amherst District K-8 Enrollments

	Projected	Actual
2000-01	1726	1743
2001-02	1695	1708
2002-03	1655	1705
2003-04	1657	1695
2004-05	1761	1703
2005-06	1726	1657
2006-07	1654	1647
2007-08	1662	1579
2008-09	1550	1547
2009-10	1498	1504
2010-11	1500	

Historical* and Projected Grade by Grade Enrollments

	K	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	7 ^a	8 ^a	Total
2000-01	110	34	160	158	172	187	204	239	237	242	1743
2001-02	110	17	165	157	163	174	198	207	279	238	1708
2002-03	131	13	149	166	160	173	183	195	254	281	1705
2003-04	129	0	185	161	180	174	176	190	245	255	1695
2004-05	138	0	168	189	178	189	178	181	228	254	1703
2005-06	130	0	185	164	183	172	186	174	230	233	1657
2006-07	120	0	165	182	162	185	184	187	224	238	1647
2007-08	102	0	142	174	184	161	190	185	211	230	1579
2008-09	108	0	129	145	178	186	169	196	221	215	1547
2009-10	92	0	147	134	153	184	189	165	216	224	1504
2010-11	102	0	140	147	134	156	184	196	220	221	1500

^aIncludes Grades 7 and 8 students from Mont Vernon.

*As reported to the N.H. Department of Education on October 1.

**AMHERST SCHOOL DISTRICT
FY11 REVENUE PROJECTION**

Ln	Acct #	Item	2009-2010 DRA	2010-2011 Proposed	Change
1		General Fund Expenditures	\$22,438,491	\$22,563,022	\$124,531
2		Special Revenue and Food Service	\$776,511	\$808,122	\$31,611
3		Budgeted Expenditures (All Funds)	\$23,215,002	\$23,371,144	\$156,142
4	770	Unreserved Fund Balance	\$470,252	\$233,711	(\$236,541)
5		State Aid			
6	3210	School Building Aid	\$156,988	\$145,500	(\$11,488)
7	3230	Catastrophic Aid	\$183,502	\$135,000	(\$48,502)
10	3280	Medicaid	\$50,000	\$85,000	\$35,000
12		Subtotal: State Aid	\$390,490	\$365,500	(\$24,990)
13		Federal Aid			
14	4500	Grants In Aid	\$308,665	\$319,037	\$10,372
15		Subtotal: Federal Aid	\$308,665	\$319,037	\$10,372
16		Local Revenue			
17	1311	Tuition - Parents	\$7,000	\$3,500	(\$3,500)
18	1320	Tuition - Mont Vernon	\$829,275	\$1,088,960	\$259,685
19	1510	Interest Income	\$100,000	\$50,000	(\$50,000)
20	1600	Food Service	\$453,858	\$482,885	\$29,027
21	1910	Rentals	\$16,400	\$1,500	(\$14,900)
22	1920	Spaulding/Lawrence Trust Fund	\$6,000	\$3,000	(\$3,000)
23	1920	Boutelle Grant	\$3,200	\$3,200	\$0
24	1951	Services Provided Other LEA's	\$26,500	\$25,000	(\$1,500)
25	1990	Other	\$35,000	\$33,000	(\$2,000)
26		Subtotal: Local Revenue	\$1,477,233	\$1,691,045	\$213,812
27		Assessment:			
28		Budgeted Expenditures (All Funds)	\$23,215,002	\$23,371,144	\$156,142
29		Less Unreserved Fund Balance	\$470,252	\$233,711	(\$236,541)
30		Less Subtotal: State Aid	\$390,490	\$365,500	(\$24,990)
31		Less Subtotal: Federal Aid	\$308,665	\$319,037	\$10,372
32		Less Subtotal: Local Revenue	\$1,477,233	\$1,691,045	\$213,812
33	1111	Current Appropriation	\$20,568,362	\$20,761,851	\$193,489
34	1111	Current Appropriation	\$20,568,362	\$20,761,851	\$193,489
35		Total Appropriation	\$20,568,362	\$20,761,851	\$193,489
36		Total Appropriation	\$20,568,362	\$20,761,851	\$193,489
37		Less Adequacy Aid Grant-ASD Portion	\$2,658,717	\$2,658,676	(\$41)
38		Subtotal-Appropriation paid by Local & State Tax	\$17,909,645	\$18,103,175	\$193,530
39		Less State Property Tax - ASD Portion	\$2,506,753	\$2,413,776	(\$92,977)
40		Amherst School District Tax Assessment	\$15,402,892	\$15,689,399	\$286,507
41		Local Assessed Valuation - with Utilities	\$1,856,029,700	\$1,856,029,700	\$0
42		Local Assessed Valuation - less Utilities	\$1,820,483,500	\$1,820,483,500	\$0
43		Estimated Tax Impact			
44		ASD State Property Tax Rate (per \$1,000)	\$1.38	\$1.33	(\$0.05) *1
45		ASD Local Education Tax Rate (per \$1,000)	\$8.30	\$8.45	\$0.15 *2
46		Total ASD Tax Rate (Local + State)	\$9.68	\$9.78	\$0.10 *3
47		Adequacy Grant Aid savings to ASD Rate	\$1.43	\$1.43	(\$0.00)

*1,2 Amherst is a receiver town - any decrease in the State Property Tax has an offsetting increase in the Local Education Tax

*3 The estimated Amherst School District Local and Amherst School District State tax rate for next year is \$9.78 per \$1,000

**Amherst School District
FY11 Budget Proposal Summary by Function**

Function	Description	FY10 Adopted Budget	FY11 Proposed Budget	Variance \$	Variance %
1100-1199	Regular Education Programs- Teacher salaries, textbooks, substitutes, supplies	11,088,420.00	11,280,171.00	\$191,751.00	1.73%
1200-1299	Special Education Programs- Teacher salaries, aides, substitutes, evaluators, textbooks, supplies, and items specific to SPED	4,802,086.00	4,676,711.00	-\$125,375.00	-2.61%
1400-1499	Co-Curricular Programs - Interscholastics, intramurals, student body activities	99,339.00	101,199.00	\$1,860.00	1.87%
2000-2199	Student Support Services- Guidance, health, nurses, and SRO salaries	898,315.00	953,012.00	\$54,697.00	6.09%
2200-2299	Instruction Support Services- Library salaries, supplies, curriculum coordinators, professional development, consultants	446,479.00	463,091.00	\$16,612.00	3.72%
2300-2319	School Board- Treasurer, moderator, SB stipends, SB minute taker	115,034.00	82,847.00	-\$32,187.00	-27.98%
2320-311	District Assessment - SAU 39 ASD portion of the SAU budget	1,013,847.00	1,043,806.00	\$29,959.00	2.95%
2400-2499	School Administrative Services- Principal salaries, office staff, office equipment	964,566.00	997,007.00	\$32,441.00	3.36%
2500-2599	Business- Printing costs	2,400.00	2,430.00	\$30.00	1.25%
2600-2699	Operation and Plant Maintenance- Custodial salaries, electricity, heating oil, water, trash, loss and liability insurance premiums, building maintenance	1,365,469.00	1,316,745.00	-\$48,724.00	-3.57%
2700-2799	Student Transportation- Bus contract, fuel	571,997.00	578,618.00	\$6,621.00	1.16%
2800-2899	Support Service - Technology Technology staff salaries, local and wide area network costs	251,086.00	339,925.00	\$88,839.00	35.38%
4000-4999	Facilities Acquisition & Construction - Portable classrooms, site and building improvements	141,539.00	59,013.00	-\$82,526.00	-58.31%
5000-5199	Debt Service - Principal & Interest	672,914.00	658,447.00	-\$14,467.00	-2.15%
5200-5299	Fund Transfers	5,000.00	10,000.00	\$5,000.00	100.00%
	Total Fund 10	22,438,491.00	22,563,022.00	\$124,531.00	0.55%
	Fund 21 - Food Service	458,646.00	482,885.00	\$24,239.00	5.28%
	Fund 22 - Title Grants/IDEA Grant	317,865.00	325,237.00	\$7,372.00	2.32%
	Total General Budget	\$23,215,002.00	\$23,371,144.00	\$156,142.00	0.67%

**Amherst School District
FY11 Default Budget Calculation**

Adopted 2009-2010 Budget		\$ 23,215,002
REDUCTIONS		
	Teacher Salaries	\$ 353,975
	Support Salaries	\$ 11,974
	Technology & Instructional Equipment	\$ 32,680
	Teaching Supplies & Textbooks	\$ 54,161
	Contracted Services	\$ 36,825
	School Board Expense	\$ 1,293
	Building Operations & Site Maintenance	\$ 153,215
	Electric/Fuel	\$ 53,670
	Debt Service	\$ 14,467
	Subtotal	\$ 712,260
ADDITIONS		
	Transportation Expenses	\$ 6,621
	Out of District Tuition	\$ 38,964
	SAU Assessment	\$ 29,959
	District Share of Employee Benefits	\$ 404,477
	Food Service Fund (Benefits)	\$ 17,286
	Grant Fund	\$ 7,372
	Subtotal	\$ 504,679
	FY 2010-2011 Default Budget	\$ 23,007,421
	FY 2010-2011 Proposed Budget	\$ 23,371,144
	Difference Between Default Budget and Proposed Budget	\$ 363,723

MODERATOR'S RULES OF PROCEDURE

Amherst School District Deliberative Session

1. No smoking in the building.

Announce Rules 2, 3, and 4 only if attendance warrants:

2. Non-voters will be permitted in the auditorium only if room permits after meeting has begun.
3. Rooms 101 and 102 are set up with audio and video from the auditorium if needed, for an overflow crowd.
4. People in overflow rooms 101 and 102, if any, who wish to speak must use a microphone in the auditorium.

5. Motions to amend must be made in writing and will be voted separately. Amendments will not be allowed to accumulate.
6. Each speaker shall state name and limit his or her time at the microphone to three minutes. No individual will be allowed to speak a second time until all others wishing to speak for the first time have done so.
7. Speakers wishing to address the meeting should form a line at either of the two standing microphones (one labeled "For" and one labeled "Against"). The moderator will attempt to alternate pro and con points.
8. The moderator will only accept a motion made at a microphone.
9. No motion to call the question shall be accepted by the moderator until there has been sufficient debate on the article.
10. A motion to restrict reconsideration in accordance with RSA 40 Section 10 should be made immediately following the announcement of the vote on that article.
11. The moderator will dispense with reading the warrant at this time; however, each warrant article will be read when it is moved to the floor for deliberation and action. The warrant is also printed in the Voters' Guide. The Annual Report and Voters' Guide to Official Ballot Voting will be sent to all residents prior to March 9th.

Carol H. Holden
Amherst School District Moderator