

Jazz Night at SHS

February 12, at 7:00pm, listen to Greg Hopkins and the Berklee College Concert Jazz Orchestra.

Sports

Amherst Middle School's ice hockey team scores a win over Hollis-Brookline

Historic Amherst

Part II of Katrina Holman's Foundry: Its Origin, Heyday and Demise.

AMS Spelling Bee

Fifth grader excels in Scripps Spelling Contest. Photos of finalists included inside today's newspaper.

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Family Math Night Attracts Large Crowd

By 6 p.m. the Wilkins Gym was filling up fast with students, their parents, volunteers and teachers. The theme for the PTA sponsored evening was Family Math Night Carnival complete with Midway games, a prize Redemption Zone and free popcorn. There were nine activity zones, sometimes with several games at each: numbers & operations, geometry, measurement, logic & problem solving, probability, time & money, midway games, bonus and computer games. Learning math is so much fun!

MORE PHOTOS ON PAGE 9.



1st grader Elliot Enriquez works on a problem.



Cathy Duchesne with Abby Cannon and daughter Lizzie, at one of nine activity zones at Math Night.



The Prize Zone.

AMHERST CITIZEN PHOTOS

Town Deliberative Adjourns After Midnight

By CLIFF ANN WALES

AMHERST - "We're facing difficult economic times" and "The economy is worse than it was last year" were comments heard repeatedly at the Town of Amherst deliberative session, Wednesday, February 3.

After their operating budget failed last year at the polls, the Board of Selectmen are trying to prevent another clobbering by the voters by proposing a FY 2011 operating budget with small increase of 0.32% and a tax impact of \$0.02.

It took five hours and ten minutes, adjourning past midnight to review the wording and amend where appropriate the operating budget and 23 articles. If the articles passed another \$1,165,929 worth of spending as calculated before the meeting would be authorized. New numbers will be forth coming from Town Hall since some articles were amended.

The first article to be considered was the largest, \$15 million for the reconstruction of twenty three miles of road. The selectmen would be authorized to borrow no more than \$4 million in any one given year. The project may take four or more years to complete. The estimated tax rate this year would be \$0.23.

Several attempts were made to amend the article. One motion was for a one year \$4 million bond which would give



George Infanti, Chairman, thanks Brad Galinson for his years of service on the Board of Selectmen.

AMHERST CITIZEN PHOTO

the voters a chance to see the results and not lose time. It was commented that last year the voter turned down \$6 million so now you want \$15 million. "You have a better chance at \$4 million," said Mark Vincent the author of the motion. Another amendment was made to reduce the price to \$8 million which also failed.

Article 24 proposes to raise \$625,000 to purchase the 57.2 acre property off Stearns Road referred to as Brewster fields. This article was presented by petition from the Amherst Recreation Commission to address the fact that legally the Recreation Department will have to return Cemetery Field by 2014 to the Cemetery Trustees for cemetery use.

Cemetery field also has a playground, a baseball diamond and two soccer fields. The Stearns Road property has four developed soccer fields already for use. Rick Katzenberg spoke to the petition explaining that if Cemetery Field isn't replaced there are programs with no place to go. He also said that the community needs more space for exercise and the promotion of a healthy lifestyle. This purchase has the potential to develop as a park offering many recreational needs, ball fields, walking, snowshoeing, cross country skiing and a playground. There is a signed purchase and sales agreement with the owner for \$625,000. The estimated impact on the tax rate is \$0.04. When asked about the taxpayers' further financial obligation, Recreation Director Nancy McMillan explained that the maintenance and development of the property would be paid for by grants, contributions from sports organizations and capital user fee initiatives.

Selectmen Tom Grella and Brad Galinson opposed the article expressing their concern about the price and maintenance.

From the audience Tim Farris and Steve Stepanek said the property was over priced and floods every spring. Paul Martin, abutter said it couldn't be built on because of the flooding.

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Amherst School Board Presents Budget With .67% Increase



Dwight Brew receives a service plaque from Nancy Head.

By CLIFF ANN WALES

AMHERST – In a well-paced meeting, which lasted only one hour and ten minutes, forty-six voters listened as the Amherst School Board presented an operating budget with an increase in spending of \$156,142, less than a 1% over last year's budget. Board chair Nancy Head described the budget as lean yet supportive of existing educational goals. The budget is \$23,371,144. The default budget is \$23,007,421, a difference of \$363,723. The passage of the budget will increase the school tax rate by \$0.10 to \$9.78.

The board explained that the budget has contractual increases of 22.5% in health insurance and 5.5% in dental increases. Also, the state retirement for teachers has increased 15.23%.

With a flat enrollment projected for next year of 1,500 students, it was possible to reduce the professional staff by 3.5 teachers and support staff by 2. The budget also supports the replacement of aging techni-

cal equipment. Questions from the audience first focused on cost of living increases for staff. SAU staff receives a 2% increase in FY11. Joe Esposito asked how the board justifies salary increases when it's not contractual. "We felt it was justified," said Head. On the question of contributions to the teachers' retirement fund, Amherst Middle School teacher, Sam Giarrusso said that we are now paying for past years when employers contributions to the NH Retirement System weren't adequately funded and "a large fluctuation is now occurring."

School Board member Dwight Brew added, "The State shifted most of the burden to the town rather than sharing equitably in the burden."

Ways and Means Committee chair Mark Vincent said the committee was unanimous in its support of the budget. "The School Board has maximized the efficient use of tax dollars and we urge citizens to vote in favor of this budget."

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Few Attend Souhegan Deliberative Session Budget Up 2.48%

By CLIFF ANN WALES

AMHERST - It took one hour for Souhegan Cooperative School Board chairman, Steve Coughlan to review the operating budget for the high school and present two warrant articles to the deliberative session on February 2nd. In the audience were 48 members (0.50% of registered voters) of the general public.

As explained by Mr. Coughlan the budget is

driven by four main factors, personnel, programs, special education and operation and maintenance of the facility.

Since 2007 the student population has declined by 9% to 891 students with a school staff of 163.55. The student enrollment for the next three years is projected to be steady at 890. The peak year for student enrollment was FY 2004-05 at 1048.

The proposed budget presented by the school board is \$18,211,827, an increase of \$441,105 (2.48%) over last year. The default budget if the proposed budget fails at the polls is \$18,061,184. A difference of \$150,643.

The report of the Souhegan Cooperative Finance Committee was given by the chair, Marilyn Peterman. In supporting the budget the finance committee noted a rise of 22.5% (\$221,860) in health bene-

fits, a 5.5% (\$9,986) increase in dental benefits and an increase in NH Teacher's pension of 15.23% (\$91,603).

Increases in salaries were contractual and included step increases and increase in base (COLA).

Two articles will be on the ballot to appropriate a portion of the surplus at the end of the year to two expendable trust funds. \$50,000 is proposed to be added to the

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