

Budget Priorities Worksheet Responses

October 3, 2007

Responses are grouped by Survey section. Each survey was numbered as they were returned. Not all Surveys that contained comments. Numbers refer to Survey number.

I. General Government

2. Already cut too far; it's the Town's infrastructure.
3. The Select Board has assigned new tasks such as taking expanded minutes at Select Board meetings, to town staff, while reducing funding in this vital area. This cannot continue.
4. As an area over which Town Meeting/Town Government has some control, it has been hit hard in recent years of tight resources. Do not cut further in this area.
7. Increase Finance & Economic Development. Keep others Continue as is
10. Some part of the government needs to be more aggressive getting tax revenue business & facilities and to be far more helpful getting such through the "Amherst" paperwork problems.
12. Get rid of middle management. Reduce high pay of managers
13. Reducing or eliminating positions in other areas of the budget should result in a reduction in employee benefits in this section of the budget.
18. Reduce town office open availability; Human rights on "back burner"; Funding for Human Services for Amherst residents only
19. Try to cut legal costs, human rights, employee benefits (join GIC).
22. Continue to search for savings via internet-based transactions & communication. For instance, this excellent survey could be done online and people contacted via email.
24. Very good
26. How can one reduce services. We already have. Maybe access clerk and other services might be limited. No matter what you do someone will be hurt... [\[rest cut off page\]](#)
27. Consider sending semi-annual water bills instead of quarterly bills. Drastically reduce IT budget.
34. An absolutely critical, generally under-appreciated area. Restore position in the Fin. Dept.
36. Things seem to be going well
39. Last year you found some "fat" in this budget, so I'm assuming it will continue in its new sleek form. *
Please continue to find ways to reduce health care costs.
Consider a "[Healthy Incentives Program](#)"
Health care costs are rising 11% each year. Shifting costs to employees or cutting benefits are not good strategies.
IMPROVING OVERALL HEALTH is a GREAT STRATEGY!
EACH INDIVIDUAL TAKING MORE RESPONSIBILITY for their HEALTH is a GREAT STRATEGY!
40. Unfortunately more belt tightening all around, except benefits - where choices are limited.
44. Town should lobby legislature to increase revenues to towns, even if it means raising state taxes and / or fees.

49. Need to control health care costs!
50. *Making gains in IT will help responsiveness/efficiencies in many areas. **Consolidate elections. Increase # signatures for adding initiatives to ballots. ***Maintain facilities, don't let them slide
51. Trial elimination of Human Rights - share I.T. with schools - mandatory prescription meds from Canada - Hard look at employee benefits such as sick leave -- personal days off - religious observance days off
52. Nuts + bolts of Town operations. Provision of other services depends on proper, effective operation within Departments in this area.
56. Applies to all parts of the budget -- reduce equally across the board.
58. Cancel the upcoming anniversary celebration. It's too expensive. Why party when we can't afford it.
59. Future budgets will be determined by our ability to increase resources to match needs. The short term goals to partner with Ed. Institutions (UMass, etc.) coupled with long term plans with Ed. Institutions for development projects... are central to meeting our needs.
62. Duplication of positions with school positions for similar functions, i.e. computer
64. Seek governance changes to reduce # of Special Elections & Town Meetings
66. Services are now stretched so thin it's hard to see how it will survive. It was a monster to cut so much in FY2008
69. Nearly everything has to be reduced because of the deficit. Ways to reduce are to eliminate waste and combine as many functions / agencies as possible; reduce bureaucracy that was built up during the 1990's when state funding was high.
71. After the Town Manager was able to give up \$100K in TM last year I became very skeptical about the overall efficiency of this Town's gov't. leading me to think there could be more inefficiencies to cut
72. Support services for other budgets are buried here. Budget games seem to keep being played with this one.
79. These are essential functions. If the Town Manager believes it is still advisable to create an economic development position, we should consider increasing this function. The "4" is circled for that reason.
84. 1) Level Funding not Level Services;
2) Hiring Freeze;
3) No Lay Offs;
4) No Over-ride
85. How can employee health costs go down without further layoffs? Can they contribute more? Can the state health plan / lower cost plans be joined?
87. If contractors or businesses who operate in this town & owe money to the town -- shut them down! No more free ride (check your records) Fine them more for being 3 months late without giving you a reason for being late with payments. Get your accounts in order. Freeze town use -- No more DPW recycling, Inspection or permits
89. reduce areas highlighted, others remain as is and see attached.

Changes to compensation structure and priorities-itemization and accountability needed.

The full time **Human Resources** Director retired several years ago yet continued on part time. Aside from the complaints I've heard from many, many town employees about the resulting lack of and substantial delays to HR services, the part-time Director undoubtedly received an hourly rate at the top of the pay scale. Would this not mean that the town / employees received part-time services at what could have been a full time cost?

(How appropriate or efficient was it that an employer the size of the town would have only a part-time HR Director to begin with?)

The **Information technology** department utilizes 7 full time employees (quite a growth in the last 5 years). Four of these employees, including the Director (hired in his early 20's w/no college degree and limited experience) are already at the top of their pay scale (11 steps theoretically equaling 11 years) despite having less than five (in some case two) years of service with the town. This is not only unfair to other town employees who must earn step raise increases through completed years of service, but seems unnecessary given the number of qualified individuals available in the job market who could would have been satisfied with less.

We taxpayers realize the way of technology. (That's a good point, how many in the IT department or those highly compensated in other departments are also Amherst taxpayers?) However, given budget constraints, must we grow this department at a rate perhaps out of proportion to our needs? For example, though the monies for the newly announced SSID project were not from the town's budget, the management of yet another IT program will be done by our employees whom we repeatedly hear are already overtaxed with work. And how is it that the taxpayer may actually be supporting the wireless use of non taxpayers including those the Police Chief has warned may be accessing inappropriate if not illegal sites. We are threatened about lay-offs for teachers and fire fighters while the writing on the wall speaks of adding to the IT department even if they are "assigned" to other departments.

Quite alarming is the possibility as rumored that there is no comprehensive inventory or accounting of IT equipment. (Is it true that several employees received the new and costly iPhones from town monies?) Wouldn't this, under the best of circumstances raise the risk of unnecessary or redundant spending? I've also heard that some monies were moved from the budgets of other departments for "related" IT projects. This certainly clouds the facts when "actual" department budgets are reviewed to make proposed budgets. Does this moving of monies also occur between line items in department budgets thereby skewing information regarding needs and expenditures?

Budgets should be itemized and made transparent and there should be a public end of the year accounting of all expenditures. We assume our money managers are people of integrity making wise choices. We just need and are entitled to understand exactly what the amounts needed are needed for and exactly where they went.

We should **consolidate departments**. For example: why doesn't the town interface the two IT departments? I've yet to hear any explanation other than "it's complicated."

Finally, many in my neighborhood and circle of resident friends don't understand why the simplest step to cost savings is not taken. All town employees apparently have a good job with good benefits or they wouldn't choose to continue their employment. In order to equally share the burden of the budget crisis, why not **suspend all step-rate increases and colas for one year**? This certainly wouldn't hurt the ones who are steps ahead of the game and no one would make less. After all, where else do employees routinely receive two pay increases a year? With the resulting savings perhaps every current town employee could continue to have a job without trying to further extract blood from the taxpayer stone.

91. Where is the budget for Debt Service? [reduce-2]

II. Public Safety

2. We need these services.
3. Two officer positions should be restored.
18. Continue to try to get UMass to underwrite more
19. Restore police staff cuts
23. This is hard. I think all Public Safety should be supported, but if we must cut - police are most important
24. Thank you very much to these
26. This is important.
27. Save police overtime pay by closing all bars and restaurants serving alcohol at midnight. Or prohibit sale of alcohol after midnight.
31. Police Priority! To go to the Police Station mid-day and find the lobby closed is a municipal disaster - they need more funding!
34. Restore 2 police officers + support staff
38. Must increase police -- the single most important change.
39. * These reductions reflect what the Gen/ Mgr is negotiating with UMass. *Police & Fire
40. Status quo. Don't cut animal welfare!
50. b - Could spend less time on compliance at UMass - new construction again be safe, not anal.
51. Downtown (late closing) bars should be required to pay costs of extraordinary DPW/Police coverage - or forced to close earlier.
54. All are important.
62. Public safety should be #1 priority - re-institute 2 police officers cut
64. Continue efforts to reduce fire & safety costs with UMass cooperation
66. What do we have in a community - "a la Springfield" - if we don't feel safe in this Town
69. Same as for No. 1.
75. I feel that police can be reduced!
79. Public Safety is 1st line intervention for people in crisis and an entry to the human services delivery system (e.g. domestic violence)
84. 5) Public Safety is essential, accordingly
6) Never cut in these areas!
85. We need additional officers to reduce the burden on our existing staff. UMass, Amherst College & Hampshire College need to step up & pay their share of this entire budget area.
87. With UMass proportional payment it should help the budget.
89. Again and in particular here, the **budgets must be made transparent.**

Why does the police department have so many vehicles (by their own statistics 28 for a force of 49)? How does that compare to similar sized departments? Why do at least 5 officers have exclusive 24/7 use of department vehicles? Why are town cars ever used for personal business? Perhaps we would need less (purchase price, maintenance, insurance, fuel) if these were not used for ones' roundtrip transportation to work (4 live out of town) or grocery shopping on Saturday mornings? As a neighbor of the station I have witnessed this for years. Just recently an employee joked about how a soon to be retired officer will have to buy his own car for the 1st time in 12 years as he has always had a department vehicle for his personal transportation.

Why does a department of less than 50 have 10 of their people assigned to a detective bureau including both a lieutenant and a sergeant? Factor to that another 11 ranking officers and you have little more than half of the department utilized for the care and critical day to day patrol/response work. (Unlike the fire department, ranking officers in the police department do not routinely respond to calls.) Perhaps we should also consider the salaries resulting from so many ranking officers. Does the average taxpayer realize that the combined salaries of just the top three officers in the department totals over a quarter of a million dollars?

Many of us heard the Chief defending against budget cut remark that there are only three patrol cars on the street most shifts the same as when he first joined the department over 30 years ago inferring that we haven't funded the department as we should. What he does not say is that the department was less than half the size back then with far fewer vehicles and positions of rank. Could it not be interpreted that the department operated more efficiently with less back then?

The Chief has also said that he is one of the only department heads that routinely spends less than his department is budgeted. Perhaps this means he gets too much.

90. Do audit /Mgtm't study

91. This should be a very high priority everywhere, especially a, b, & c. Without a safe environment, a community cannot be attractive nor pleasant to live in.

III. Public Works

2. Cut too far already

3. DPW now expected to do too much with too few employees.

4. Reduce the number of street lights. Cut back on cemetery and park maintenance

12. Increase to get electrician

23. The town does a great job - I'd like to see it continue as is.

24. Very well maintained

26. This is important, we don't want Amherst to appear seedy.

31. How are all these beautiful sidewalks being paid for when other essential services are not?

34. This budget cannot sustain any further cuts.

35. I often see the Public Works trucks gathered at Groff Park way before quitting time. Streets are many times plowed in winter -- and sanded -- often it is unnecessary.

- 36. Sidewalks are in bad condition except for the fancy inlaid brick ones. Roads in very bad condition throughout; cemeteries bad; trees ok but not great
- 39. Last year this dep't voluntarily decreased their budget. Let's award them by not reducing it this year.
- 40. Don't spend it all downtown. Outlying areas have been neglected.
- 50. Keep most at level funds, but need tree repair and new tree planting especially in older neighborhoods where century-old trees are dying.
- 51. Don't be so quick to plow 1-3" of snow. It's ridiculous! Relax on the cemetery maintenance. Same on park & tree maintenance. Let the Youth Soccer Assn pay for Potwine Field maintenance. Share DPW with schools.
- 52. Continued operation with inadequate funding jeopardizes assets + infrastructure
- 53. Capital items need to be subjected to tighter scrutiny (e.g., fence around S. Amherst Cemetery, rejected by TM); also sidewalk replacement downtown (is this really necessary?)
- 54. All are needed.
- 60. But I would cut down use of some street lights
- 62 Tree & park personnel functions should be contracted out to private vendors as well as some snow plowing. Public works should be maintenance, not construction
- 66. Streets, snow removal, Downtowns, Trees All are so important.
- 69. Same as for No. 1.
- 77. Reduce snow & ice removal. It will slow down traffic -- what is the rush?!
- 84. 7) Public Works is a true mission of Town Government;
8) However efficient and cost conscious management at Public Works is to be watched.
- 85. I'd like to say increase funding here, but I don't think that's realistic.
- 87. Volunteerism can help in the Parks area. Keeping up with upkeep (maintenance) of parking lots → filling in cracks, weeding edges, sidewalk edging
- 91. My sense at this fiscal time is that Highways, Snow/Ice removal, and Lights probably need a small increase to adjust for cost increases. Others probably could be reduced to balance category or just remain the same.

IV. Planning/Conservation/Inspections

- 4. One recent complaint has been the slowness of inspection services to process application, also the arbitrariness of inspection decisions. It needs greater support.
- 10. Inspection Services need to be more understanding & become a helpful service, getting people through the regulations rather than being a punitive department that discourages the development friendly service it should be.
- 12. Eliminate Middle Management and several bldg inspectors
- 15. Keep budget such that expenses = income from fees
- 19. Add economic development director or designate a planning position as such. Conservation can focus on current lands rather than adding to our already large holdings.

- 26. The Conservation Dept. has not kept certain trails in good condition.
- 39. With all the extra money/energy associated with the Master Plan, let's reduce these budgets. Also Inspection services have become efficient, assuming that reflects in less money needed.
- 40. I don't know well enough to say.
- 44. Make inspection services self-sufficient through fees
- 45. c Insp services → doesn't matter because fees cover costs
- 51. Increase user fees!
- 53. possibility of early retirement for high salary officials should be considered
- 57. Use trail volunteers to maintain trails instead of hiring -- good opportunity for community service using High School or college kids.
- 62. One of the planners should be economic development point person. Conservation has too many staff.
- 64. c2 only if fees can be increased
- 66. Inspections needs at least 2 more people. It's criminal what Bonnie Weeks must endure. She is the best Bldg. Comm. we've had in years & years
- 69. Same as for No. 1.
- 79. See note on page 1 in gen. Govt. Support to increase is to enable Town Manager to achieve some real economic development.
- 84. 9) Planning Dept. has become the handmaiden of Developers.
10) Preservation, Conservation, and Inspections protect our quality of life.
- 87. making fines "stick" -- collect the fine. If contractors owe the town money it equals no more permit grants or inspections
- 91. A moratorium on spending in this area would allow: 1) time to review/revise/modernize the current by-laws; 2) allow the Town to decide what direction it needs to work towards; and 3) develop appropriate by-laws, regulations and intentions that positively improve Amherst's attractive for business and residency alike.

V. Community Services

- 2. Useful, but less so than others.
- 3. The town should not donate money to private non-profit agencies unless there's a contract requiring those agencies to perform specific services that would otherwise be a basic town function.
- 4. Leisure and Recreational Services should be treated as "extras". Here is a prime area for doing with LESS. Close one outdoor pool in summer, cut back on hours of rec. swims at Middle School pool. Make recreational sports a "pay as you go" option. Make Senior Center more Volunteer and self-supported.
- 12. Get rid of many of the "new" programs adopted in the last 30 years
- 14. We don't need Bangs Center. Don't need Public Health.

15. Close Bangs Center & put Health inspections under IV. c) above. Privatize b) Senior Center & c) Community Human Services
16. LSSE should not use tax funds. It should be self-supporting.
18. more user support cut b. & d. [\[Senior Center & LSSE\]](#)
19. 1) Maybe we could develop a town United Way to support private charities with private donations, but this is an area our town shouldn't fund. 2) Also, while the LSSE director is a nice person she's not much of a manager - cut her post and let her more competent staff run the program.
23. While I would prefer not to cut, there are higher priorities - Education
24. Thank you to these excellent services.
29. Ouch!
34. Sorry, but
39. c) [\[Comm. Human Services\]](#) these were so drastically cut last year, please increase! Take some \$ from LSSE (middle-upper-class leisure) & put it into this.
40. Hard calls. LSSE serves everyone in so many ways . Seniors, as a voting block, have strongly opposed overrides (of course there are exceptions, but largely true), so give them the cuts they want. Eliminate the Senior Center!
44. Make LSSE self-sufficient through fees
50. a- more people should be eligible for low cost health care through the State. May allow reducing local level assistance.
57. 3 if possible - Important department -- maintain programs even if some may need to be trimmed. Avoid whole sale cuts of programs. Can this dept. be run w/ fewer personnel or cuts in hours of some personnel?
59. "Sharing the pain" requires addressing an attitude that "we cannot afford poor people". I hope we can address this disparity in budget projections in the future.
60. Charge higher fees for services.
62. LSSE should be re-structured to provide basic athletic functions like Northampton -- \$500,000 could be saved by reducing scope. e) Cherry Hill 1 [\[eliminate\]](#)
66. What does Epi Bodhi do for her dept. & this Town - Very Little! Senior Ctr. Activity gets too much (& I am a senior). We need to give to the future - LSSE.
69. Same as for No. 1.
72. Checks shouldn't be sent to charities. Instead the town should determine what targeted human services it makes sense to contract out for or do itself.
79. 1) LSSE - it is important that we provide year round aquatic programs. If additional funds are needed, we should look to reassessing priorities, in LSSE or fee increases where possible. 2) Community / Human Services should continue if it is tied to specific measurable services that are unique for Amherst residents- more than donations to agencies.
84. 11) Town Government should be out of the Leisure and social services business by FY 2010.
 - 12) Put the Health Dept. under the General Government budget.

85. These should all be spun off as nonprofits. The town could contribute office space and field maintenance, but all other expenses, inc. employees, should become the responsibility of the nonprofit. Then maybe fees for out of town people would be fair.

87. Leisure services are "Leisure" and maybe should be self sufficient with fees from the public. Cherry Hill should think about X-country skiing program -- DPW gets X-country skis all the time at "take it or leave it".

89. **Why do we even have a LEISURE Services department** during times of fiscal crisis?

Throughout the history of mankind people have created their own fun and recreation...like having a chauffeur driver a car when you can walk, this department, though well run and appreciated, is pure decadence given our financial situation.

It is not my responsibility as a taxpayer to cover the cost of anyone's entertainment.

I take many steps to keep myself healthy and entertained and it does not cost the taxpayer a penny, as a matter of fact it likely saves them money.

For the health and well-being of our open space and community spirit I say keep the fields groomed, run summer day camp programs and open one pool. After that, let life be as it was for the decades before thru to the mid 70's, filled with all the playing, exercise and art one's imagination could create.

(Now that the season is over, how many people actually used the War Memorial Pool anyway?)

Community Human Services should not be a function of town government.

91. This is not a fiscal time for neither frills nor extravagance. Public Health and Human Services are vital to promoting a total healthy community; the Senior Center should be maintained, but some costs of activities can, and should be borne by those participating in them. There is a need for many more multi-diverse categories of activities offered-not just ones that are economically out of reach for many Seniors in Amherst. LSSE, though a needed extra, at this time, paring offerings back to those that can "pay their own way" still would provide for those who have interest and means to participate in them. More use of the natural environment for alternative activities of minimal expense seems, to me, the betted way to proceed.

VI. Education - Regional Schools

2. Need to maintain

4. Maintain the per pupil costs

12. Get rid of middle management

15. Do Regional School budget before small towns vote on it!! We know no more in July than January!!

16. Need strong effort to persuade other towns to accept lower percentage increase, or else scrap current apportionment. Eliminate small classes. Eliminate 7th grade Russian.

18. High priority to fund

19. The schools have endured too many cuts in the past. They are key to Amherst's well-being, property values, etc. They need more resources.

21. Amherst offers, and is required by law to provide a great deal in the way of special education. Is there any way to modify this, for instance to reduce the hours of one-on-one class-room aides
23. This is what makes Amherst great - our schools are hurting!
26. Some administrators should be let go.
27. Reduce sports, close pool, charge students a large fee for parking. Do not play any evening outdoor games that require field lighting. Charge fee/fine if students do not ride their bus without a valid excuse.
31. The students are our future -- not an area to skimp in. Good schools are a draw for a strong tax base.
37. Reduce administration
39. The schools took big cuts last year. Let's get them back to smaller class sizes.
40. Give an honest evaluation of the regional formula. Is Amherst paying more than its fair share? Increase if at all possible.
44. No further reductions in services; increase if possible the # of teachers to reduce class size.
49. We must STOP reducing school budgets year after year. It is a crime! Education should be our #1 priority
51. Engage in coordinated wage negotiations with schools so Schools & Town can offer uniformly fair wage + benefits packages... and so more eyes are on schools than the Superintendent
53. Amherst Regional seems to have more administrators than similar systems in the region (e.g., Agawam, which has more students but only 2 assistant principals)
57. increase if possible
58. Fewer administrators and others who don't teach. Dip into reserves.
59. Major focus & leadership to bring more state taxes back to local communities for infrastructure needs (schools, etc.)
60. schools too top-heavy with administrators. If school buses belong in this category, I would reduce idling time from 5 minutes to 1 minute (as proposed by Mass. Environment Dept.) for the health of children and staff and saving of money.
62. duplication of administrative personnel with the Town.
66. When so much of the overall budget is given to the schools, one has to question. Is their problem solving strategy cost effective? Do they throw money at too many things? Is the administration top heavy? Why do other school districts do it more cheaply? (e. g. Deerfield, which is excellent)
69. Same as for No. 1.
75. Can administrative costs be lowered?
77. can't tell from the budget
79. Schools define this community and the reason many people choose to live here.
84. 13) Outsource repairs, maintenance, cleaning, food service;
14) No cuts to faculty numbers, Cut costs across the board;

- 15) As the "host" community, Amherst should "recharge" all possible "Regional" costs to the other towns.
- 85. Quality schools are what people expect from the town. Without this, property values will fall, budgets will continue to be stressed & a downward spiral of town life will continue.
- 87. Volunteerism -- get creative with Seniors
- 89. There are too many administrative positions in the school system. Surveys of highly performing systems in New England and beyond can verify this. We have at least 1/3 more administrators today than 15 years ago and yet our student population is lower????
- 90. By eliminating admin positions
- 91. Seems fiscally responsible to try to maintain school funding, at this time, below 55% of property tax generated revenues. If there is a priority for school spending, it should be facility/building maintenance; putting any new capital expenditures on hold; and work to improve the quality of the basic education the one needs today to survive in a high paced multi-faceted world.

VII. Education - Elementary Schools

- 2. Need to maintain
- 4. Maintain the per pupil costs
- 12. Get rid of middle management
- 15. Don't put all the Spanish-speaking kids in one school - Spread them around so children can be immersed with English speakers especially in early grades.
- 18. High priority to fund
- 19. See above.
- 21. Same comment. For instance group children who have similar disabilities & need similar programs & environments
- 23. Ditto above
- 26. Some administrators should be let go. Preschool is a good idea.
- 35. There are many ways to save: have buses turn off motors and not stop so frequently; turn off lights when not in use; turn down heat and air conditioning and have people dress appropriately for the weather
- 37. Reduce administration
- 39. (same as above)
- 40. Increase or continue as is.
- 41. *4 Increases for Crocker Farm -- very high % of kids at risk at this school *and others level fund
- 44. Same as above.
- 45. The town schools are underfunded because we created a lot of low income housing. Lots of children need extra help when they come from poverty.
- 49. Same, should be our #1 priority!

50. Consider reorganizing the 4 schools to be most efficient: group all similar grades 1-2 grades, 3-4 gr, 5-6 So services could be efficiently provided to same age groups.
51. Same as above
53. However desirable small class sizes may seem, budgetary limitations may dictate slightly larger sizes
57. Increase if possible
58. same as above.
59. I would challenge every Legislative body -- schools, Town S. Bd., Legislators to: Meet together & build coalitions at local and state level to work with community interest groups to improve funding from State and Feds.
60. See note above
66. See above!
69. Same as for No. 1.
74. of "primary" importance!
75. Cut admin. costs!
78. We appear to have saved money this year so I hope this will work.
79. Our schools are the most essential prevention program for human services crisis and the strength of our community.
84. In addition to VI above:
- 16) Preserve teaching position count;
 - 17) take all cuts from bureaucracy. Freeze hiring there.
 - 18) PTO should get serious with fundraising;
 - 19) Be aggressive with recharges for any use of school facilities, i.e. Town Meeting, Leisure Services, etc.
87. Volunteerism can help in the grounds area
90. Same
91. Again building/facility maintenance should be priority. Look for fundamental programs that assist or provide funding to ease pain of implementation; improve basic education instruction quality, not quantity nor extravagant, limited-participatory programs.

VIII. Public Libraries

2. Need to cut services -- Some not necessary -- e.g. computer classes
3. A town of 34,000 population with a better-than-average public transportation system and a university library open to the public, DOES NOT NEED three public town libraries.
4. Reduce overall services by reducing hours at satellite libraries. Concentrate services at Jones.
12. Get rid of the two branch library operation.
19. I don't know why we need 3 libraries. I would say close both branches and increase hours somewhat at the Jones. Or at least cut branch hours, and open the branch libraries on alternate days with one shared set of staff, rather than two sets of staff.

- 23. Libraries are critical, but with limited budget, education has to be our first priority. It is our future!
- 25. Library should use more of its endowment and/or increase fundraising.
- 26. The libraries are the soul of Amherst. Most residents of Amherst use them. They provide the town with meeting places. Children and other town residents without computers are able to use them there. Books are the windows to the world.
- 27. Close branch libraries, if necessary
- 39. Let the libraries collect their own fines & use that revenue to be less dependent on tax payers \$!
- 40. No increases until schools are increased to reasonable funding level
- 45. Perhaps North and South could be made into children's libraries.
- 57. To what extent are the branch libraries used? Is their cost justified by the use they get?
- 58. Get rid of Bonnie Eisman.
- 61. Increase the hours, reduce books, CDs, other materials, if necessary
- 64. N. Amherst - seek funds to move library & reconstruct road intersection; enlarge library land area.
- 66. Our libraries great But outside funding may be available to help.
- 69. Same as for No. 1.
- 78. harder for me to judge b) & c) as opposed to a) which I use
- 79. Libraries are the adult equivalent of the schools, and an adjunct of the education system when schools aren't open. The branches provide access and we should do all possible to maintain them.
- 84. 20) The libraries should pursue an aggressive fundraising / development campaign;
 - 21) Increase fines;
 - 22) Recharge aggressively for facility use i.e. gallery, lectures, socials
- 85. We should have one central library, open every night & on Sundays & sell off the other two properties.
- 90. One town = One library

IX. Are there any services that you wish the Town would provide that we are currently not providing?

- 1. Not at this time!
- 4. Please do not initiate new programs
- 7. Economic Development Advisor; Middle School Pool
- 12. Hell No!
- 13. No. Philosophically, I believe the Town should provide only services that cannot be provided by private businesses or charities.
- 14. No - Can't afford any more.

15. No, we must keep Amherst affordable for homeowners
16. There are no funds for additional services.
17. No. Not having any other information, it is impossible to determine cuts or not. I'll wait until a budget appears and use that as a determining factor.
19. Economic development director is needed to help get us out of this mess.
21. No - fine as is, though we should not be in the human services business!
27. Fining residents that do not shovel their sidewalks. Do this for every snowfall over 2".
32. None.
34. Economic development director
35. Leaf Removal!
40. Sidewalks in "mid-town" areas and leading to "village centers". Enough with downtown already. Safer bike lanes.
41. No new affordable / subsidized housing projects -- too costly for the town. -- Amherst is at 10% --
45. Not Now
49. Foreign language education in Elem. Schools.
54. Collect leaves. Pay for all lighting (home owners should not have to pay to keep a street light on.)
56. Community wind & solar power generation
57. No, but if cuts need to be made, try to avoid cutting whole programs. Reductions in programs are better than wholesale elimination of programs. Once something is eliminated, it is hard to get it back.
58. Compost organic waste and sell the compost... like Umass.
59. Any planning to provide shelter for homeless must be in partnership with 14 towns presently being served by Survival Center + input from Legislative Reps.
The Survival Center currently serves homeless
Approximately 50 homeless being served.
25 Amherst residents,
25 surrounding towns.
62. NO - It's time to fund only basic services - police, fire, teachers, highways
65. Economic Development staff
66. An "ombudsman" may help with citizen complaints/comments. The Select Board cannot do it all, nor should the Town Manager. It could be a volunteer (given the right person or a paid person. This has been talked about for 15-20 yrs! The time is now!!
69. No, not in view of deficit and lack of funds. Definitely no new capital projects.
78. no
79. We can't afford new -- it will be hard to maintain what we presently provide. An override is not desired but may be necessary.

81. Improve waste management; clean up roadside trash --(community service by student alcohol offenders--?)
84. 23) Increase traffic calming → trap and fine.
 24) Reform parking system to reflect specific value at "specific time" for "specific spaces".
 Seek parking revenue from fees not fines.
 25) Use cameras to enforce red light / stop sign regulations
85. I would like to see the town provide fewer services, but have these services return to top quality: public safety, public works & schools.
86. 1) Since downtown streets are cleaned once a week, clean neighbor streets twice a year -- spring & fall after the leaves fall; 2) Pick up leaves
87. Welcome Wagon organization with information about the town and its benefits, assets, why live here for new arrivals buying property in our town. Real Estate agents don't push the town assets enough
89. absolutely not
90. Too many already
91. It would be nice to increase town-oriented subsidized transportation for residents, re-configure traffic patterns, circulation, controls, and enforcement, but realistically, until revenue sources stabilize or improve, it is not fiscally prudent to attempt increase the need for additional taxation upon residents, business and property owners, or visitors. If the belt can be cinched a little tighter now, it might be possible to survive through this depression and still maintain a reasonable level of services to all.

Overall Comments

9. Comments - I still believe the fairest way to do this is to have all departments share the burden. We already have attained a balance - Let's get on with more businesses in town and fewer residences starts.
18. Bus from N. Amherst to S. Amherst should have sufficient regular users to continue funding
28. Select Board: Thanks for soliciting my judgments/preferences or whatever term fits re budget priorities. But the exercise seemed to me to border on the insane. Would I rather have a vigorous Jones Library, healthful (inspected) restaurants, functioning traffic lights, notices of Town Meeting mailed out...? Which is why so much of budgeting is incremental, I suppose -- we can't start from scratch each year figuring the "proper" amount to spend on each service. I must rely heavily on elective bodies (Select Board, School Com., Library Trustees) and appointive chief executive officers (Manager, School Supt'd, Library Director). At least they are closer to the gritty realities than I am. In Town Meeting I rely heavily on the advice of these close-to-the-facts folks. They put in hours/days doing the immensely difficult balancing, choosing whom to throw out of the lifeboat -- it comes with the territory. Good Luck.
34. This is in addition to more detailed comments submitted earlier.
47. How could any of these be eliminated? We don't have enough money to pay for basic essential services, and increased taxes are essential.
54. Something has to be reduced! I am not well enough informed to suggest which ones.

69. 1. Because this opinion survey does not address, in a direct way, the "structural deficit," I can only select in terms of the deficit -- using this survey, that is, as a way to address the problem. 2, How does the Select Board plan to use the answers / choices? SB does not say how it will use the survey.

72. I'd like to give 4's to budgets I-III; but don't know what to give 2's to.

74. trim bus routes -- too costly if ridership is low