



**We have passed just two overrides for the Amherst operating budget in the last 30 years.** One in 1991 and one in 2004. Opponents are reusing their signs from 2007, and they're reusing their message, too. But it's not 2007 anymore. A lot has changed since then.

**In 2007 (the last override vote), voters sent a message: get the budget under control before you ask us to pitch in. That has been done.** Amherst made huge sacrifices to cut more than \$7 million in

spending over the last two years, including closing a much-loved elementary school, shutting down a swimming pool, and cutting 51 positions from the schools last year alone. Economic development is bringing in new dollars. LSSE is almost entirely fee-based. Ambulance receipts have been increased. And the new meals and lodging tax option is bringing in funds as well. While other towns passed their overrides, Amherst tightened its belt first.

**To protect our most important services from being slashed by the recession, we have to step up now, locally.** We've gotten our house in order, but the recession caused the state to cut our funding by \$3.3 million over the past two years; another \$1 million in cuts is expected next year. We can't control the federal and state fiscal climate. And we can't stop all of the cuts from happening. But we can step up locally to protect our community from the worst of the damage from this short-term, external crisis.

**Thanks to employee wage givebacks, the impact of the override on the average homeowner's taxes is now only \$133/year after tax deductions – that's 37 cents a day!** Town leaders have said any additional revenues will be used to reduce taxes, not restore additional cuts. Police, firefighters, teachers, principals, and managers have all made salary givebacks. This means that homeowners will pay less taxes to restore the services the override seeks to protect. Teachers are pitching in an average of \$1,000 apiece – surely we can pitch in \$133, or \$2.50 a week!

**This is not a "blank check" for government – it's a choice between cutting \$2.5M and avoiding the worst cuts, or cutting \$4.2M and slashing those services identified by staff as most vital to keep and most damaging to lose.** Even if the override passes, an additional \$2.5M of cuts will be made. But the override will preserve staffing for road work, emergency dispatch, and senior programs. It will protect an additional 25 positions from being cut from our schools, on top of the 51 already cut last year and about 20 more that will be cut this year regardless. It will keep street lights on. It will maintain the libraries' hours, state certification, and interlibrary loan program. It will protect low-income families' access to recreation programs. And much more.

**Think about why you live in Amherst, and not some other town with lower taxes and lower services.** The override is a question about what we value – what we are willing to step up and protect as the fundamental core of our town? Previous generations have invested in schools, libraries, public safety, roads, recreation, elder services – all the public infrastructure that supports our diversity, our vibrancy, and our strong property values. After all the work previous generations have done to build Amherst, and after all the recent work that's been done to get our fiscal house in order, let's not be "penny wise and pound foolish." It's time to step up now and do our part, to preserve this legacy for the future.

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Every Vote Counts!**