

### **TA Report 2.1.13**

Tonight, Anaridis Rodriquez , a reporter for WWLP, will report her story on Amherst, Pelham, Shutesbury, Leverett Regionalization tonight at 5:30pm on WWLP 22 News. The report will be available on their website afterwards.

### **Regionalization School District Planning Board**

# **EDUCATIONAL AND FINANCIAL CONSULTANTS WILL REPORT FEBRUARY 2, 2013 1:00 to 3:00 pm Amherst Regional Middle School Auditorium**

Regionalization Analysts, Malcolm Reid and Marc Abrahams will present their findings on Educational and Financial Impacts of the four towns forming either a new pre-K-6 Region or a pre-K-12 Region in a public session at the Amherst Middle School Auditorium. Mark your calendar. Consultant reports can be found at, <http://www.RegionalSchoolPlanning.info>. Copies are available at the library and town hall.

The Regional School District Planning Board has secured one grant and waiting to here on a second. The goal of this board has been from the start to fund the cost of consultants and other costs outside town budgets. We have received state grants for this.

### **Report on the four town Regional Budget Meeting, January 12, 2013**

On January 12 the Amherst Regional schools presented their budget at a four town meeting attended by Selectboards, Finance Committees and School Committees. Maria Gyrek, Amherst Regional Superintendent and Rob Detweiller, Regional Finance Director presented the FY14 budget. It is a grim picture. Funding of a level services budget was not even requested. Level services will cost an additional \$1.4 million. The region requested each town increase their assessments to provide \$500,000 to the budget. The region will cut about \$500,000, and use \$400,000 in E&D reserves to balance the FY14 budget. Shutesbury's projected increase in assessment is 4.05%, \$58,000, Pelham's \$50,000 and Leverett's is \$110,000. Leverett cannot fund their share without an override. Further discussion will be held March 2, between all four towns to figure out how best to handle the situation. Last week Governor Patrick presented his state budget. The education funding levels in the house 1 budget are key to setting the stage for the budget debate. How the state funds chapter 70, education aid, whether it is cut, level funded or moderately increased will dramatically impact what happens at the region. The current level of funding requested by the Amherst Region will mean decreased services and programs. The Governor has proposed increases to education funding and local aid, but they are dependent upon an increase to income tax, coupled with a decrease in sales tax. If the tax revenues are not supported by the legislature, the Governor's budget will not be funded.

This current budget crisis at the region underscores one driving motivation for exploring regionalization. Our current regional school system has been eroding year after year with state cuts and level funding of state education aid. Cost of services is driven up by healthcare costs and federal and state unfunded mandate. Does regionalization pre-K-6 or pre-k-12 create the potential for financial sustainability?

Come Saturday 2/2 and Wednesday 2/27 to learn more.

### **WIREDWEST Update**

HELP YOUR TOWN AND NEIGHBORS: RETURN THE ?INTERNET? FORM

The Internet connects people to jobs, and children often need it for homework. It allows us to do many things from home, saving on driving and CO2 emissions.

The more forms returned, the better Internet rates for Shutesbury, now and in the future, so please fill out the form even if you do not yourself have an urgent need.

Best, Mikkell

New in town? Would you like to see fiber optic cable to every home in Shutesbury? Which will create dramatically improved internet service? Go online to [WiredWest.com](http://WiredWest.com) and hit the link in the right hand corner.

The support card campaign has done well but is stuck at just 65% response rate. Our goal is 80%. We need 101 more households to respond! Please continue to check with your neighbors and mention this issue. Stop by town hall, the Athletic Club (there is green box with forms) or library and fill out the form. Many people in town are desperate for this project to move forward. Like your neighbor on Locks Pond Rd. urging us all to be counted.

### **TRASH PICK UP**

Winter presents challenges. Allied Waste has a philosophy of moving forward whenever possible, but putting safety concerns first. They do not like to make an advance call in case conditions are not as severe as predicted. If they cannot complete trash pickup on the scheduled day they will return on the following day if conditions improve. If they are not coming at all on a regular I will use the CTY system, telephone system to notify residents. If you are not signed up for town emergency notifications you will not get a call. Please go to fire department page of the Shutesbury.org website to sign up. The town has a system for automatically contacting residents in case of emergencies. To read more and enter your contact information, see the [Fire Department page](#).

### **COMPOSTERS AVAILABLE AT TOWN HALL**

The Town Recycling Committee provides composters to town residents at a (grant supported) subsidized price of \$20. They are black magic! Watch your compost grow.

### **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED on the Recreation Committee**

**Becky Torres, Shutesbury Town Administrator, [townadmin@shutesbury.org](mailto:townadmin@shutesbury.org) 259-1214**

