

Agenda for Amherst Open Government Advisory Board meeting

Meeting dated April 10, 2024.

The Amherst Open Government Advisory Board meeting to be held at Amherst Town Hall.

In this agenda, the Amherst Open Government Advisory Board will be referred to as “Open Government” for brevity.

Town Board member and Open Government Liaison Szukala will act as chair of the meeting until a chair is selected.

The meeting will open with the taking of attendance. Should a quorum be present, nominations for Chair of Open Government will be solicited.

When a candidate steps forward, an election will be held. If only one candidate steps forward, a voice vote will be held. Should multiple candidates present themselves, a secret ballot will be held. The votes will be counted by the acting chair.

Upon selection of a chair, the acting chair will “surrender the gavel” and the meeting will continue.

Open Government needs to:

- 1) Review the Town Code that lists the responsibilities of Open Government. (See attached)
- 2) Select any other officers Open Government feels necessary. This may include a secretary, vice-chair or other titles.
- 3) Choose to discuss the following:
 - a. The Transparency Legislation passed in March of 2024.
 - b. Any other topics.
- 4) Choose to accept public comment (not required) and if public comment is accepted, under what limits.
- 5) Select a day and time for the next meeting.
- 6) Discuss any other business.

Duties. The Open Government Advisory Board shall develop goals and objectives of the steps that the Town of Amherst can take to incorporate the principles of open government into its daily activities. Such goals/objectives shall be formulated with the input of senior policy, legal, and technology leadership in the Town; open government experts; and the general public. The goals and objectives of the Board should focus at a minimum on the three areas listed below:

Transparency: Steps the Town can take to conduct its work more openly and publish its information online, including ready public access to ordinances and regulations, policies, legislative records, budget information, crime statistics, public health statistics, and other information. Each Town department and agency shall be encouraged to develop a schedule for making information available to the public and updating it on a regular basis. To the extent practicable and subject to valid restrictions, departments and agencies shall publish information on line (in addition to other planned or mandated publication methods), and in an open format. The open format will provide data in a form that can be retrieved, downloaded, indexed, searched and reused by commonly used web search applications and software.

Public Participation: Enhancing and expanding opportunities for the public to participate throughout each department's decision-making process, including instructions for online access to published information and opportunities for comment; methods for identifying stakeholders and other affected parties and encouraging their participation; links to appropriate websites where the public can engage in the Town's existing participatory processes; and proposed changes to internal management and administrative policies to increase public participation.

Collaboration: Steps the Town can take to enhance and expand cooperation among its departments and agencies, other governmental agencies, private and nonprofit entities, and the public, to fulfill Town goals and obligations; including proposals to use technology platforms and links to appropriate websites to improve, and inform the public about, existing collaboration efforts, and use of innovative methods to obtain ideas from and to increase collaboration with those in the private sector, nonprofit and academic communities.