

# OUR SCHOOLS IN ACTION

**Budget Issue 2024**

# BUDGET VOTE

**Tuesday, May 21, 2024**



**INSIDE THIS ISSUE:  
RETURN ON YOUR INVESTMENT**

Amherst Central School District is grateful for the community's continued support. Your return on investment can be measured by the broad range of opportunities afforded to our students and their successes. Throughout this issue, you will find many examples of how your support is reaping great returns for our students.

[www.AmherstSchools.org](http://www.AmherstSchools.org)

## Our 2024-25 Budget Message



*Paul Steimle  
Board of Education  
President*

The Amherst Central School District presents a fiscally responsible, tax cap compliant budget proposal to our community that includes current state aid projections as adopted in the New York State legislative budget. We are grateful to our elected leaders for keeping the needs of school districts in the forefront of their minds during a difficult state budget session. The increase the District received in state aid allows us to present a budget with no reductions in staffing and maintains high-quality programming for students.

The 2024-25 budget includes:

- A tax cap levy increase of \$830,782. For 2024-25, the calculated tax levy limit for Amherst Central School District is 2.11%.
- An estimated tax rate increase of \$0.46 per thousand of assessed valuation, based on prior year town-wide assessments.
- A budget-to-budget increase of 4.3%.

We present this budget proposal to the community with confidence that it meets the school district's mission to prepare all students to excel in a dynamic world while being responsive to the needs of our taxpayers. Stay informed at [amherstschools.org/budget](http://amherstschools.org/budget). Please take the time to visit the high school on May 21 and vote.

Respectfully,

Paul Steimle, Board of Education President

## Electronic Poll Books

The Erie County Board of Elections has provided tablet-style electronic poll books for use at the polls on May 21, 2024. Voters may visit any table to sign in with a poll worker. Voters will provide their full name to the poll worker who will locate it on the iPad and flip the screen to the voter for a signature. A stylus will be available to use for signature.

# BUDGET VOTE

## Amherst Central High School

4301 Main Street • May 21 from 7 a.m. - 9 p.m.

# Amherst Central School District BUDGET VOTE

Tuesday, May 21, 2024  
7 a.m. to 9 p.m.



at the Amherst Central High School  
South Gymnasium

Please enter through the doorway off the driveway to the far left of the school (not the front entrance of the school).

## Budget At A Glance

**2024-2025 Proposed Budget**

\$78,785,000

**Budget-to-Budget Increase**

\$3,247,000

**Tax Levy Increase**

2.11%

**Estimated Tax Rate Increase**

\$0.46 per thousand assessed valuation

## What's on the Ballot?

Residents will vote on the following propositions:

### Proposition 1 – School Budget

The Amherst Central School District budget of \$78,785,000 for the 2024-2025 school year.

### Board of Education Candidates

The election of three members to the Board of Education to serve three-year terms.

Read the candidate biographies on page 5.



Gordon Crock

Lynn Errington

JoAnne Kukoda-Elnicky

Paul Steimle

## Capital Outlay Project

The 2024-25 budget includes \$100,000 for an Amherst CSD Capital Outlay project. The scope of the outlay project will be installation of window safety film at Smallwood Drive Elementary.

## Three Part Summary & Definition

All public schools in New York State are required by law to report their spending in three categories: program, administrative and capital.

	2023-2024	2024-2025	DOLLAR CHANGE	% Change
Administrative Expenditures	\$7,091,610	\$7,200,878	\$109,268	1.54%
Capital Expenditures	\$10,744,037	\$10,441,543	-\$302,494	-2.82%
Program Expenditures	\$57,702,353	\$61,142,579	\$3,440,226	5.96%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$75,538,000</b>	<b>\$78,785,000</b>	<b>\$3,247,000</b>	<b>4.30%</b>

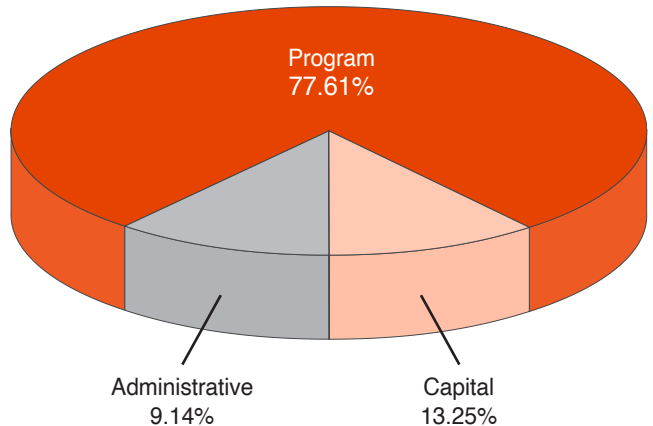
### Three-Part Budget Definitions

**Administrative Budget Component:** Includes expenses for office and administrative costs; salaries and benefits for certified school administrators who spend 50 percent or more of their time performing supervisory duties; data processing; public information; legal fees; property insurance; and school board expenses.

**Capital Budget Component:** This covers debt service on buildings and leasing costs; tax certiorari and court-ordered costs; and all facility costs, including salaries and benefits of the custodial staff; service contracts, maintenance supplies and equipment; and utilities.

**Program Budget Component:** This portion includes salaries and benefits of teachers and supervisors who spend the majority of their time teaching; such instructional costs as supplies, equipment and textbooks; co-curricular activities and interscholastic athletics; staff development; and transportation operating costs.

### Proposed 2024-25 Three-Part Budget



## Where Does the Money Come From?

REVENUE SUMMARY	2023-2024	2024-2025	CHANGE
Property Tax	\$39,466,028	\$40,296,810	\$830,782
In Lieu of Tax	\$695,000	\$660,000	-\$35,000
County Sales Tax	\$4,300,000	\$4,550,000	\$250,000
Community Ed	\$78,500	\$78,500	\$0
Interest Earning	\$257,500	\$474,500	\$217,000
State Aid	\$22,467,454	\$24,326,051	\$1,858,597
Building Aid	\$4,927,744	\$4,527,187	-\$400,557
Other Revenues	\$2,146,274	\$2,665,164	\$518,890
Appropriated Fund Balance	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$0
Use of Reserves	\$199,500	\$206,788	\$7,288
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$75,538,000</b>	<b>\$78,785,000</b>	<b>\$3,247,000</b>

## Where Does the Money Go?

EXPENDITURE SUMMARY	2023-2024	2024-2025	CHANGE
Personnel	\$34,613,928	\$35,883,466	\$1,269,538
Benefits	\$15,233,220	\$16,060,534	\$827,314
General Support	\$3,029,315	\$3,047,519	\$18,204
Instruction	\$5,858,596	\$6,624,717	\$766,121
BOCES	\$5,090,958	\$5,354,767	\$263,809
Transportation	\$4,009,258	\$4,417,772	\$408,514
Debt Service	\$5,702,725	\$5,396,225	-\$306,500
Contingency	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$75,538,000</b>	<b>\$78,785,000</b>	<b>\$3,247,000</b>

## Contingency Budget

Should the board declare a contingency budget the following would be implemented by law: no change in levy, no new equipment, must charge for all building use by community, no change in salary for non-instructional, non-unionized employees, no non-essential maintenance.

## Five Year Budget History

YEAR	BUDGET	LEVY
2019-20	2.72%	3.01%
2020-21	3.79%	2.39%
2021-22	3.03%	3.14%
2022-23	6.19%	-0.69%
2023-24	10.60%	2.02%
<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>5.27%</b>	<b>1.97%</b>

## Tax Levy & Rate

	2023-2024	2024-2025	CHANGE
Property Tax Levy	\$39,466,028	\$40,296,810	\$830,782
Assessment	\$1,808,617,356	\$1,810,483,259	\$0
Tax Rate per \$1,000*	\$21.821104	\$22.257488	\$0.458873

\*Rate based on prior year assessed value.



Learn more at [amherstschools.org/budget](http://amherstschools.org/budget)

**PROPOSED BUDGET INFORMATION**



**PROPOSED BUDGET INFORMATION**



Amherst Central School District  
Budget Notice

**OVERALL BUDGET  
PROPOSAL**

	<b>Budget Adopted for the 2023-24 School Year</b>	<b>Budget Proposed for the 2024-25 School Year</b>	<b>Contingency Budget for the 2024-25 School Year</b>
Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	\$75,538,000	\$78,785,000	\$78,243,506
Increase/Decrease for the 2023-24 School Year		\$3,247,000	\$2,705,506
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		4.30%	3.58%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		4.12%	
A. Proposed Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	\$39,466,028	\$40,296,810	
B. Levy to Support Library Debt, if Applicable	\$0	\$0	
C. Levy for Non-Excludable Propositions, if Applicable **	\$0	\$0	
D. Total Tax Cap Reserve Amount Used to Reduce Current Year Levy	\$0	\$0	
E. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy (A + B + C - D)	\$39,466,028	\$40,296,810	\$39,466,028
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	\$881,396	\$863,407	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, Excluding Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$38,584,632	\$39,433,403	
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, Excluding Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E - B - F + D)	\$38,584,632	\$39,433,403	
I. Difference: G - H (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval - See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions) **	\$0	\$0	
Administrative Component	\$7,091,610	\$7,200,878	\$7,153,554
Program Component	\$57,702,353	\$61,142,579	\$60,820,514
Capital Component	\$10,744,037	\$10,441,543	\$10,269,438

\*Provide a statement of assumptions made in projecting a contingency budget for the 2024-25 school year, should the proposed budget be defeated pursuant to Section 2023 of the Education Law.

A contingent budget would require the elimination of all equipment purchases, no community use of District facilities without payment of full operating costs, no Community Education Programming, no salary increases for non unionized employees, an additional fund balance and reserves appropriation of \$367,788, and no increase to the 2024-25 tax levy.

Note: The District has agreed to a three year extension of our current contract with our contract transportation provider, First Student. 2024-25 is the first year of that three year extension.

	<b>Under the Budget Proposed for the 2024-25 School Year</b>
Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings <sup>1</sup>	\$512

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2024-25 by the qualified voters of the Amherst Central School District, Erie County, New York, will be held at the Amherst Central High School in said district on Tuesday, May 21, 2024 between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m., prevailing time in the Amherst Central High School, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting ballot or machine.

<sup>1</sup> The basic school tax relief (STAR) exemption is authorized by section 425 of the Real Property Tax Law.

## Gordon Crock

Gordon Crock grew up in northeast Ohio, but he has lived in the Buffalo area since 1990 and in Snyder since 1998. He earned a B.A. in Art History at Kent State University in Ohio in 1983 and an M.A. in English from the University of Delaware in 1986.



He began his career teaching freshman composition as an adjunct faculty member at the University of Delaware and West Chester University. After moving to Buffalo, he taught English at two local private schools, The Buffalo Seminary and The Park School, before accepting an English position at Amherst Central High School, where he taught for almost 27 years. While there, he won several awards for his teaching, including the Joseph B. Whitehead Educator of Distinction Award (2000), the PTSA Award for Excellence to an Outstanding Educator (2002), the National PTA Life Achievement Award (2012), and was acknowledged several times as an Amherst High School Teacher of the Month (2003, 2009, 2011, 2014). He also served as a teacher representative on the Amherst Central School District's Health Plan Oversight Committee (2008-2022).

He served as a Reader for the AP Composition and Literature exam (2018-2020), and he co-taught an education course at Daemen College (now Daemen University) for prospective English teachers (2016). He currently volunteers at the Tiger's Den Food Pantry, tending the vegetable garden to provide fresh vegetables for the pantry's clients. Gordon retired from teaching in 2023 and lives with his wife, Shirley, a retired English professor. They have one son, who graduated from Amherst High School in 2010.

## Lynn Errington

Lynn Errington, and her husband, Jeff, are native to Western New York and have been residents of Amherst since 2006. They made the decision to move back to the WNY area to settle and raise their family. They have two daughters, Lauren and Julia, that currently attend Amherst Central High School.



Mrs. Errington has a Mechanical Engineering degree from Purdue University and worked as a Technical Sales Engineer throughout the Great Lakes region. Since moving back to the WNY, she has worked as a decorative painter and design consultant. This career change has afforded an opportunity to devote more time to raising her family and volunteering within the community.

Mrs. Errington is an active and engaged Amherst parent. She has spent much time volunteering in classroom and school sponsored events, and continues to manage the Scholastic Book Fair at Windermere Boulevard Elementary. She is a member of the Amherst Skating Club Board and is the Meet Hospitality Coordinator for STAR Swim Club. She is also a board member and performer with a local theater organization, ACTS.

Mrs. Errington was first elected to the Board of Education in 2018, and has been a member of the Board of Education's Policy Committee, Transportation Committee and Legislative Committee. She is the Board representative for ACSD's Professional Learning Committee. Being a member of a highly functioning school board has been a privilege. She will continue to support the commitment of the Amherst School District to promote student and staff safety, encourage pathways to success for all students, and celebrate our diverse community all while maintaining district fiscal responsibility.

## JoAnne Kukoda-Elnicky

JoAnne Kukoda-Elnicky and her husband, Rob, have lived in Amherst since 2010. One of their primary reasons for settling in Amherst was the quality school district. She and her husband have three children: their twins are in sixth grade at Amherst Middle School and their eldest attends Amherst Central High School and is involved with JV soccer, hockey and track & field.



Mrs. Kukoda-Elnicky continues to be actively involved in district organizations and currently serves as the Membership Chair of the PTSA. She was the winner of a Windermere PTA Golden Apple and a NYS PTA Distinguished Service Award for her considerable involvement at Windermere. During her tenure with the Windermere PTA, she served as President, Membership Chair, Ways and Means/Fundraising Chair, and Box Top Coordinator. She has also been a member of the District Strategic Planning Committee and is currently a member of the district level Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee.

JoAnne attended SUNY Geneseo, graduated with a Business Management degree, and moved to the Washington DC area shortly after graduating. She currently works for a consulting company, supporting clients in the areas of program management, system implementation, and financial audit readiness.

Mrs. Kukoda-Elnicky is running for the school board to help advocate for initiatives to allow all students to thrive and ensure success beyond their time at ACSD. Her background and commitment to volunteering to help support students and teachers makes her a well-suited candidate for the ACSD School Board.

## Paul Steimle

Paul Steimle and his wife, Amy, are both long-time residents of the Town of Amherst and have lived in Snyder since 1998. They have five children all having attended Amherst Schools.



Mr. Steimle is a Partner with Ryan LLC, an international provider of tax services and software. Prior to this he had been President of MJI Consulting Group LLC, a real estate consulting firm he started in 2004 and worked for the international accounting firm KPMG LLP where he was a Senior Manager in their State and Local Tax Consulting Group. Mr. Steimle holds a B.S. degree in Finance and an MBA both from the University of Buffalo. Mr. Steimle is also a 2007 graduate of the University of Buffalo's Center For Entrepreneurial Leadership program. In addition, he completed the "Not For Profit Management Development Program" through the Harvard Business School Club of Buffalo in 2016.

Mr. Steimle is currently serving his fifth term as a Board of Education member where he is involved in the Capital and Tax Certiorari Committees in addition to serving as Board Vice President for one year and Board President for the last eight years.

During his 15 years on the Board of Education, he has been responsible with taxpayer dollars and adhered to the State's tax cap all while navigating many difficult budgetary issues due to state funding gaps, unfunded mandates and COVID. The board has maintained a high-quality education, increased our graduation rates and improved our facilities.



## WHERE CAN YOU LEARN MORE ABOUT THE BUDGET?

### Board of Education Meetings

Presentations on the 2024-2025 budget were made at several Board of Education meetings in December, February, March and April.

### On the Website

The 2024-2025 budget presentations that have been made during Board of Education meetings are posted after each meeting on the website. The documents can be found on the Budget 2024-2025 webpage.

### On YouTube

Board of Education meetings are videotaped and the recordings are available to view. They can be found on the Amherst Central School District YouTube channel.

### In the District Office

Budget documents are available for review by calling the district clerk at 716-362-3051.

### Publications

The 2024-25 budget newsletter is delivered to every resident in the school district via USPS mail and available on the Budget 2024-25 webpage.



## TIGER PRIDE: A MULTI-GRADE LEVEL COLLABORATION ACHS Club Teaches Recycling to Windermere First-Graders

One of the best ways to teach young children a complex topic is to use something they are familiar with. Toys would be a good example.

When members of the Amherst Central High School Climate Action Club visited a first-grade class at Windermere Boulevard Elementary to teach them about plastic pollution and recycling, they took toy boats, cars, rockets and coloring sheets. The toys were not ones the kids might have seen in a store, though. These toys were all handmade by the club members from recycled plastic and paper waste such as plastic water bottles, plastic spoons, rubber bands, paper cups and cardboard.

The collaborative project between first-graders in Sofia Maxick's class and the high school Climate Action Club, advised by high school math teacher Alexandria Fabiano, used toys in

activity stations to educate the young students about the problem of global plastic pollution and the importance of recycling. Maxick and Fabiano are part of a UB Research and Mentorship program to raise awareness about global plastic pollution concerns related to plastic waste, recycling and upcycling.



The Climate Action Club gathered the materials and built the toys used in four activity stations with the first-graders. As they interacted with the younger kids, the high schoolers talked about how the toys were made, but also about ways the kids could recycle at home and keep their environment clean by not littering.

This project created ways for our students to be engaged, collaborative and imaginative, which aligns with our mission to prepare all students to excel in a dynamic world through the development of their abilities to reason, solve problems, apply knowledge, communicate and collaborate effectively.

## TIGER PRIDE: CHARACTER EDUCATION Smallwood Named NYS School of Character

Smallwood Drive Elementary School has been named a 2024 New York State School of Character by character.org. Character.org certifies schools and districts each year at the state level that have developed and implemented an intentional, proactive, and comprehensive approach that embeds character into all aspects of the school life. In 2019, Smallwood was the only school in WNY to be named both a State and National School of Character. The awards are valid for five years. Smallwood Drive is now eligible to be considered again for the highest honor, a National School of Character. Smallwood has consistently prioritized the development of character and the importance of social, and emotional health with students. There have been several successful initiatives since 2019, such as "Power of a Puppet," "Mantra Mondays," "Use your voice," "Lending a Paw," and "Our Community, Our Plan," that have played a direct role in teaching students the skills they need to grow into exceptional citizens of the community.

# TIGER PRIDE: CAREER FAIR

## Amherst Middle Offers Career Exploration

A day-long career fair at Amherst Middle School brought over 90 guest speakers to the school and every student spent the day learning about various career paths. Organized with input from students about careers they were interested in, students rotated as a group with their homebase through five sessions, a building-wide kick off assembly and two larger group presentations during lunches.



## A Best Community for Music Education

Amherst Central School District was named a 2024 Best Community for Music Education by the NAMM Foundation, which is a support organization of the National Association of Music Merchants. Annually, the NAMM Foundation recognizes over 1,000 schools and districts for their commitment and support of music education. This marks the eighth consecutive year that Amherst CSD has earned the recognition which celebrates districts for support and commitment to music education and ensuring access to music for all students as part of a well-rounded education.

## WORK FOR AMHERST CSD

Now and throughout the school year, the district has job openings for instructional, non-instructional and substitute positions. All openings are posted online on the Human Resources Employment webpage. The Human Resources Department at Amherst Central is committed to fostering an employee culture focused on our mission to prepare all students to excel in a dynamic world and rooted in core values of respect, responsibility, and the celebration of diversity and community pride. At Amherst, we pride ourselves for offering opportunities for collaboration, challenge and rewarding career growth.

### RecruitFront Employment Portal

Amherst Central Schools is now using RecruitFront for all job applicants. All candidates will need to complete an application through RecruitFront in order to be considered for future employment. Those who have applied to job postings in WNY School Application System Applicant Tracker MUST complete a new profile account and application in RecruitFront to apply for any current openings. Visit [amherstschoools.org/employment](http://amherstschoools.org/employment)

### Subscribe to Job Alerts

When you are logged into RecruitFront, you can set up the Job Alert Subscription to get notified when a new job is posted that you may be interested in.

### Flexible Schedules and Benefits

A number of positions offer flexible daytime schedules during the school year including food service helpers, teacher aides and part-time teaching assistants. ACSD employees qualify for New York State pension, may enroll in health benefits and get paid vacation, sick days and holidays.

## RETURN ON YOUR INVESTMENT

### District

- We serve approximately 3,000 students and 560 staff each day.

### Class of 2023

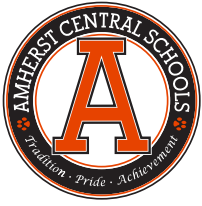
- 79% of seniors continued their education at post-secondary institutions.
- 17 seniors entered the workplace; 5 entered the military.
- 64% of students graduated with Advanced Regents designation; 36% with Advanced Regents with Honors.
- 2 National Merit Finalist; 7 National Merit Commended Students.
- 24% of the student population took Advanced Placement courses.
- Over \$22 million in scholarships awarded.

### Family Support Center

- Our Family Support Center counselors help students who struggle with issues such as anxiety, depression, low self-esteem/self-image, substance use, family conflicts, peer relationships or serious school academic or behavior concerns.
- The Center will assist parents with getting their children and family the most appropriate, affordable support in a timely manner.
- The Family Support Center offers a newsletter for parents, as well as informational and activity-based events for families throughout the year. All events are posted on the website calendar.

### English as a New Language (ENL)

- Our district has over 40 different languages spoken by our families; some students speak up to 4 languages in their homes.
- There are currently 180 students districtwide receiving ENL services.
- There are 11 ENL staff members.
- ENL teachers do so much more than teach English. They also help students through culture shock, teach about American culture and customs, help with translation and interpretation services for families, host parent orientation to teach about American school expectations, move-in interviews, help with paperwork, make connections with services both inside the district and outside, facilitate students' sharing of their cultures with classmates, and build bridges between our families and the school.



Amherst Central School District  
55 Kings Highway  
Amherst, NY 14226-4330

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Dominic Vivolo  
  
Anthony J. Panella, *Superintendent*

\*\*\*\*\*ECRWSEDDM\*\*\*  
District Resident

**Community Education  
This Summer**

Registration is open for 2024 summer camps in Basketball, Wrestling, Volleyball and PE Games for boys and girls. All registration is done online at [amherstschoools.org/communityed](http://amherstschoools.org/communityed). If you have questions, please contact Lori Sosenko in the community education office at (716) 362-3031 or email at [lsosenko@amherstschoools.org](mailto:lsosenko@amherstschoools.org).



**Krolick's  
Chicken  
Barbecue**



**Tuesday, May 21, 2024  
3-5:30 p.m.**

at Amherst Central High School  
Pickup in Washington Highway parking lot.  
Dinner includes two sides, dessert and roll.  
**Cost \$15**  
Pre-order recommended, by Friday May 10  
by email to Laurie LeGoff at [llegoff@amherstschoools.org](mailto:llegoff@amherstschoools.org)  
or call 716-362-8174.

**School Registration  
for 2024-25**

If you have a child who will be five years old on or before December 1, 2024, and live within the boundaries of the Amherst CSD, they are eligible for kindergarten. Our district uses a central registration system. Instructions for the online registration process is available on the district website at [www.amherstschoools.org/registration](http://www.amherstschoools.org/registration).

**BUDGET VOTE**  
**May 21, 2024**  
Amherst Central High School South  
Gymnasium  
7 a.m. to 9 p.m.

**Budget Feedback**  
The Amherst CSD Board of Education will not conduct an exit survey this year, but the board values insight from the community and has set up an online feedback form. Find the form on the budget webpage, [amherstschoools.org/budget](http://amherstschoools.org/budget).

**Absentee Ballots**

Absentee ballots are available for the Amherst Central School District vote.

The completed ballot must be received by the District Clerk by 5 p.m. on May 21, the day of the vote.

A qualified voter in the district may use an absentee ballot if, on voting day, he or she is a patient in a hospital or unable to appear personally because of illness or physical disability; is required to be outside the country because of duties, occupation or studies; is on vacation outside the country; or is detained in jail awaiting action conviction of an offense other than a felony.

For more information, contact the District Clerk at 362-3051 or visit the office at 55 Kings Highway, Amherst, NY.

**Voter Eligibility**

- To qualify as a voter, a person must be:
- a citizen of the United States
  - at least 18 years old
  - a resident of Amherst Central School District for at least 30 days prior to May 21, 2024. (Education Law § 2012)
- Apartment dwellers who meet these qualifications are eligible. No prior registration is required and residents do not have to be registered voters. (Education Law § 2012)