

FREMONT BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING

Fremont Town Hall
295 Main Street
Fremont, NH 03044
August 15, 2012
7:00 PM

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Gene Cordes called the August 15, 2012 meeting to order at 7:08 pm on the main floor of Fremont Town Hall.

Present were: Budget Committee Members Gene Cordes, Charles Kimball, Greg Fraize, Greta St. Germain, and Joe Miccile, Town Administrator Heidi Carlson, and Recording Secretary Susan Perry. Members of the public included: School District Superintendent Michelle Langa and Business Administrator Laurie Verville, and Griffin Cordes.

II. INTRODUCTIONS

The Budget Committee and School District members introduced themselves.

Mr. Cordes gave an overview of the budget season, noting that they would try to get to the School District's 2013 budget around the first week of November 2012. He mentioned that the School District budget was put together well last year, as zero-based budgeting based on goals. He said the Ellis School Principal did a good job involving staff, establishing goals and building the budget keeping in mind District needs.

Ms. Langa mentioned that the School Administration was planning to get their budget to the School Board by November 7 and that having it ready for the Budget Committee before then might be difficult. There was discussion about how availability in November and December becomes difficult due to the holiday season when there are always time constraints. The (Town) budget would need to be done by the first week of January 2013. Ms. Langa said they would take a look at the schedule with the School Board.

Ms. Verville said that she would make available to the Budget Committee the end of fiscal year information by next Tuesday-Thursday.

Ms. Langa briefed the Committee on a conference she attended by the NH Retirement System, noting that they were proposing 14% contributions by employers for teachers and 12% for employees. Traditionally, there was a low employer contribution rate that was not corrected years ago. Mr. Miccile asked if there could be increments of 1% etc. over years but Ms. Langa said the actuarial calculations resulted in the contribution rate and it could not be argued.

From the Budget Committee's standpoint, Mr. Cordes noted that the Police Department and the School District were affected by this contribution (which is mandated by the State legislature).

Ms. Carlson noted that the police system had incremental hikes but then there was a huge bump. Employer contribution has been underfunded for years since investment returns were good.

Ms. Langa also mentioned that there would be penalties involved for School Districts who do not offer insurance plans. They will try to renegotiate with teachers in the hope to make savings with the choice of a different health plan that would be reasonable and fair to employees and taxpayers.

Mr. Kimball asked if teachers got social security too (on retirees) and Ms. Verville said yes.

Group 1 included teachers and other municipal workers and Group 2 indicated police and fire personnel.

It was noted that calculations/ employer contribution rates since 1970 were available at www.nh.rs.org.

There were three lawsuits pending against this brought by employers, police and fire unions, and retirees.

Ms. Langa said that Ellis is a great school to be proud of, where there is a new reading program, a great math program, and curriculum mapping that everyone follows. Ms. Verville said she was getting acclimated with the budget, history of expenditures, etc. and that she hopes to streamline things for the future.

III. NH RIGHT TO KNOW LAW TRAINING

Information was presented on the training session presented by NH LGC's legal department on the NH Right to Know Law, RSA 91-A on Wednesday, September 19, 2012 at 7 pm in Danville, NH.

IV. REVIEW/APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 18, 2012

Charles Kimball made a motion to approve the minutes of April 18, 2012 as written. Greg Fraize seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0.

V. MEMBER RECRUITMENT TO FILL VACANCIES

There were two vacancies on the Budget Committee that still needed to be filled until March 2013.

Ms. Carlson mentioned that people could sign up for the town newsletter and other information via the new Website.

7:45 pm: meeting turned over to Vice Chair Charles Kimball to discuss Chair Gene Cordes' son Griffin's interest in being on the Budget Committee.

Griffin Cordes introduced himself, noting he had: lived in Fremont all his life; graduated (college) last May; worked in sales; had managed the budget in school; been the treasurer of a fraternity; attended Ellis School; was enthusiastic and enjoyed public speaking. Mr. Miccile said having a younger person with initiative to do budget work brings new ideas. Ms. Carlson agreed that youth brings good refreshing perspective and energy.

VOTE for Griffin Cordes to fill a vacant position on the Fremont Budget Committee until March 2013: 3:0:2 (2 abstentions = Gene Cordes and Greta St. Germain)

Meeting was turned over to Chair Gene Cordes at 7:51 pm.

VI. TOWN'S YTD: 7/31/12 SPENDING REPORTS (hand out)

Ms. Carlson mentioned that Sharon Girardi had put together a helpful budget spreadsheet. Ms. Carlson would be emailing updates as they happen. Mr. Miccile asked if there could be a shared location for members to access budget information, such as the Website. Ms. Carlson said there were issues on protecting/unprotecting the many pages of the budget but she could make locked PDFs. Pertinent/completed reports would be reviewed at each Budget Committee meeting.

Mr. Cordes asked if the budget spreadsheet could include budget vs. actuals year to date and Ms. Carlson said she could add that column.

VII. OTHER FOLLOW UP

Mr. Cordes reviewed that at the end of the fiscal year (6/30/11), the School District was in administrative reorganization and expenses were categorized that way. A number of \$102,000 or \$90,000 range had come up having to do with personnel changes. At the April 18 Budget Committee meeting, there was discussion about this since it was mentioned but public members at the Deliberative Session. The School Board response was that everything was in the public minutes online. Ms. Carlson had follow up to minutes (email trail). Mr. Cordes said, from the Budget Committee's standpoint, this was a past expenditure/financial information that he was unsure how it was paid. It was unsure in April if information was in legal documents that could be released or not. He would just like to move on at this point.

VIII. UPDATE ON AUGUST 7 TRAINING SESSION IN PLAISTOW

Mr. Miccile attended the August 7 training session in Plaistow and he said that it would be helpful to attend the more in-depth training session on August 18 in Manchester, NH. Registration could be done online and the cost should be able to be covered.

IX. SET MEETING SCHEDULE FOR THE YEAR

The following dates set for Budget Committee meetings (at 7 PM) were:

September 12
September 26

Then every Wednesday until the holiday season unless otherwise noted.

X. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:15 pm, Greg Fraize made a motion to adjourn. Greta St. Germain seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Perry
Recording Secretary