

# FREMONT BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING

Fremont Town Hall

295 Main Street

Fremont, NH 03044

**December 19, 2012**

**7:00 PM**

## I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Gene Cordes called the December 19, 2012 meeting to order at 7:02 pm on the main floor of Fremont Town Hall.

Present were: Budget Committee Members Gene Cordes, Griffin Cordes, Greg Fraize, Charles Kimball, Patricia Martel, Joe Miccile, Mike Nygren, Greta St. Germain and Recording Secretary Susan Perry.

Members of the public included: School Superintendent Michelle Langa, School Business Administrator Laurie Verville, School Board Chair Ida Keane, School Board members Sharon Girardi and Andy Kohlhofer, and citizen Margie Diggins.

## II. SCHOOL BUDGET FOLLOW UP/ EMAIL INFORMATION CIRCULATED THIS PAST WEEK...

There was discussion about bus routes. There were 8 routes and the bid opening would be tomorrow. If the bid came in less than what was budgeted and accepted before the Deliberative Session it was possible that this would help reduce the budget a bit. It was confirmed that two buses did go out to Tuck Ave but one was for the high school run and one was an Ellis bus.

There was a review of proposed grant positions. The first two names on the list were teachers in the Title I Program (helping students struggling in reading and math – based on the number of students enrolled in the free/reduced lunch program – not IEP driven). The bottom two positions were IEP-driven (Special Education Case Manager and Social Worker under IDEA (in effect for the fourth year). Grant funds were dedicated to these positions. These were currently in the general fund and if Federal money came in to support them, money would be shifted temporarily.

It was explained that the State Education grant was part of an award that the Supreme Court mandated that the State provided to pay for education. With the passage of SB-41, the State was looking at different reporting: an official enrollment count (average daily membership). The enrollment count on October 2013 was 655 students. It was clarified that a small portion of the Preschool teacher salary was part of a Federal grant; the appropriation was only about \$2,300. Ms. Verville noted that she used the October 1 enrollment figure for reporting.

One Warrant Article required a change to the operating budget based on advice given by the attorney today about the Affordable Health Care Act. The School District was an employer of over 50 employees; for those employed 30 or more hours/week, the cost of health care could not exceed 9.5% of their household income. This would be due for a 6-month period (January 2014-June 30, 2015) – and equaled \$62,980 (pro-rated). The Attorney advised putting \$81,500 into the operating budget. There would be a penalty if the District did not offer insurance to people. If the Article was approved and voters agreed to the \$62,980 cost, the District would take the difference of \$18,520 and would reduce the operating budget by that amount (give back at end of year). There was discussion of the idea of reducing the hours that Para-professionals worked. It was explained that they work full days helping children with IEPs. The attorney had provided a letter to the SAU explaining the penalty. The Federal mandate overruled the CBA (the District was required to provide health insurance and there would be a penalty if the District did not pay for it - \$2,000 for each employee in the District). The IRS said the

District could use the employee's salary as an indicator of household income. They took the Paraprofessional salary and cost of a single plan for Matthew Thornton (over \$9,000) and found that 82.5% would be paid by the District and 9.5% would be the premium (percentage of a person's income, based on W-2s). The District could not take into consideration if a Paraprofessional was married, etc. since inquiring would be an invasion of privacy. The District's contribution would be \$7,726.26 per employee; the employee's contribution would be \$1,638.09 (correct amount?). There has been general frustration with the lack of guidance with the Affordable Health Care Act. It would cost the District \$102,000 in annual contract if health insurance was not offered; it was not cheaper to take the penalty. The penalty increased the year after insurance was not offered. Unlike businesses, schools did not have the option to cut back on hours. The prior approved support staff CBA provided no increase in salary with a clause to revisit it if the Affordable Health Care Act went through.

Ms. St. Germain proposed reducing the School District's operating budget by \$154,000 (from \$11,093,863 to \$10,939,863) by:

- Reducing 1 guidance counselor at \$89,000 (including benefits, etc. per NH DOE 306-13 stating that each elementary school provide 1 full time counselor per 500 students – Ellis had 428 projected for next year)
- Reducing 1 school bus (from 8 to 7) based on the decline of 115 students/ bus capacity = 77 people
- Reducing 1 Paraprofessional at \$20,000 average salary based on low enrollment (she felt this was attainable and fair for the School and Town)

Mr. Fraize thought they should consider the time kids spend on the bus to see any impact. Ms. Martel felt that the bus company made the best routes for everyone. Mr. Nygren said that data had been provided showing that one bus could be reduced.

Griffin Cordes asked who would teach Health Education if a guidance counselor were reduced. Ms. Langa was unsure how the Health Care program would be covered; currently the program covered 8 grades and was divided between 4 people (2 counselors, the p.e. teacher and the nurse). A nurse was already being reduced.

Ms. Keane asked what the justification was to reduce a Para educator. Ms. St. Germain replied that it was based on staffing history given by the District plus the reduction of 115 students. Ms. Langa explained that Para-educators were assigned to the most severe students. Currently, there were 61 Special Education students. She said this number can vary year to year but she was unsure of past history. Eight students attend charter school but Ellis still had to provide services for them. The most typical scenario of top-level services included students with autism, and there has been an increase in the number of students with autism. Providing one on one Para-professional support helps with out-of-district costs.

Greta St. Germain made a motion to recommend \$10,939,863 for the School District budget. Charles seconded the motion. VOTE: 5 aye: 3 nay (motion passed)

Mr. Fraize said that their budget was close to what the default was last year, that 6 positions were cut and that the District was dealing with increased tuition costs.

Breakdown of School Warrants:

1. elected officials
2. no number yet: was Budget Committee's number (due to SB-2)
3. did not have number at School Board meeting so it was tabled
4. Budget Committee needed to take a position
5. Budget Committee needed to take a position
6. Budget Committee needed to take a position
7. Budget Committee needed to take a position

Ms. Langa mentioned that the School Board would need to meet (January 2?) to vote and bring Warrants to the Budget Committee, which would meet at 6 pm on January 8, 2013 before the public hearing.

RECESS: 8:05-8:10

Greg Fraize made a motion to reconsider the Budget Committee's recommended School budget (add \$102,000 to the School budget, in the School Board budget line for Other Expenses, to cover penalties that would occur with the Affordable Health Care Act). Griffin Cordes seconded the motion. Motion failed: 2 aye: 6 nay.

### III. APPROVE MINUTES FOR DECEMBER 5, 2012 AND DECEMBER 12, 2012

*Greta St. Germain motioned to approve the minutes as written of December 5, 2012. Mike Nygren seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0:3 (abstentions from J. Miccile, Gene and Griffin Cordes).*

*Greg Fraize made a motion to approve as written the minutes of December 12, 2012. Charles Kimball seconded the motion. Motion passed 7:0:1 (abstention from G. St. Germain).*

### IV. TOWN

#### A. REVIEW POLICE BUDGET AS UPDATED WITH FINAL SELECTMEN'S RECOMMENDATIONS (4210, 4211)

Some issues had been addressed such as clerical wages/hours/coverage, adjusting in-service training wages (required vs. proposed); patrol wages; and equipment replacement (from current operating budget).

Mike Nygren motioned to reduce the Police Department line item 4210207 New Officer Training by \$4100 (not needed now). There was discussion about an officer who had left Fremont and the replacement had been working full time elsewhere and did not need the whole academy training now. Ms. St. Germain said there was still a bottom line budget and that money could be allocated if necessary and that having a higher salary helped retain good officers. Mr. Nygren rescinded his motion. Ms. St. Germain seconded.

*Greg Fraize recommended the Board of Selectmen's budget recommendation of \$405,851 for 4210 POLICE DEPARTMENT. Charles Kimball seconded the motion. Motion passed 7:1.*

*Pat Martel recommended the Board of Selectmen's budget recommendation of \$41,000 for 4211 POLICE SPECIAL DETAILS. Greta St. Germain seconded the motion. Motion passed 8:0.*

#### B. REVIEW GENERAL GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS BUDGET (4194)

*Charles Kimball motioned to increase line item 4194365 SC FURN MAINT & REPRS by \$6,400 (from \$2,000 to \$8,400). Motion passed 7:1.*

*Mike Nygren recommended the Board of Selectmen's budget recommendation of \$69,385 plus the \$6,400 increase in line 4194365 to equal 75,785 for 4194 GENERAL GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS. Griffin Cordes seconded the motion. Motion passed 7:1.*

#### C. CONSIDER REDUCTION IN SELECTMEN'S RECOMMENDATION FOR INSURANCE (4196)

Ms. Carlson mentioned that LGC would reduce the insurance bill as a one-time “holiday”. Therefore there was a readjustment.

*Pat Martel motioned to reconsider what was voted on in September and reduce to \$35,519. Mike Nygren seconded the motion. Motion passed 8:0.*

#### **D. REVIEW TOWN WARRANT FOR 2013**

##### ARTICLE 4: REGULATION OF HORSES, OTHER DOMESTIC ANIMALS

*Griffin Cordes motioned to consider Warrant Article 4. Joe Miccile seconded the motion. Motion passed 8:0.*

*Greta St. Germain motioned to recommend W.A. 4 (no financial impact). Joe Miccile seconded the motion. Motion failed 2 aye: 5 nay: 1 abstention.*

Consensus was to wait for Board of Selectmen review. A concern was the seemingly excessive penalty of \$1,000.

##### ARTICLE 5: PURCHASE A NEW FIRE TRUCK

*Greg Fraize motioned to recommend Article 5. Charles Kimball seconded the motion. Motion passed 8:0.*

##### ARTICLE 7: CHANGE THE PURPOSE OF A CAPITAL RESERVE FUND PREVIOUSLY ESTABLISHED

*Charles Kimball motioned to recommend Article 6. Joe Miccile seconded the motion. Motion passed 8:0.*

##### ARTICLE 8: CONTRIBUTION TO THE BRIDGE CAPITAL RESERVE FUND

*Charles Kimball motioned to recommend Article 8. Greg Fraize seconded the motion. Motion passed 8:0.*

##### ARTICLE 9: CONTRIBUTION TO THE POLICE CRUISER CAPITAL RESERVE FUND

Charles Kimball motioned to change the \$12,500 figure to \$15,000. Pat Martel seconded the motion. Discussion. Vote was tabled to ask the Selectmen to come back with recommendation.

##### ARTICLE 10: CONTRIBUTION TO THE FIRE TRUCK CAPITAL RESERVE FUND

*Joe Miccile motioned to recommend Article 10. Charles Kimball seconded the motion. Motion passed 6:2.*

##### ARTICLE 11: CONTRIBUTION TO THE HIGHWAY BUILDING CAPITAL RESERVE FUND

*Greg Fraize motioned to recommend Article 11. Griffin Cordes seconded the motion. Motion passed 6:2.*

##### ARTICLE 12: PURCHASE NEW BREATHING AIR EQUIPMENT FOR THE FREMONT FIRE DEPARTMENT

There was a chance this could be purchased if there was residual money in the budget – it was uncertain if final figures would be available before the public hearing. Consensus was to table the vote on Article 12 until the Committee met on January 8, 2013 at 6pm.

**ARTICLE 13: REMOVAL OF MONEY FROM CAPITAL RESERVE TO PURCHASE A POLICE CRUISER - \$(9039) TO BE RAISED BY TAXATION**

*Griffin Cordes motioned to recommend Article 13 as written. Charles Kimball seconded the motion. Motion passed 8:0.*

**ARTICLE 14: REMOVAL OF MONEY FROM OHRV SPECIAL REVENUE FUND TO PURCHASE OHRV EQUIPMENT – NO AMOUNT TO BE RAISED BY TAXATION**

*Joe Miccile motioned to recommend Article 14. Charles Kimball seconded the motion. Motion passed 8:0.*

**ARTICLE 15: FUNDING THE MOSQUITO CONTROL PROGRAM**

*Charles Kimball motioned to recommend Article 15. Griffin Cordes seconded the motion. Motion passed 8:0.*

**ARTICLE 16: CONTRIBUTION TO THE TOWN EPENDABLE TRUST FUND FOR THE 250<sup>TH</sup> CELEBRATION OF FREMONT**

*Joe Miccile motioned to recommend Article 16 as written. Greg Fraize seconded the motion. Motion passed 7:1.*

**ARTICLE 17: CONSIDER FUNDING FOR A NEW SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCY**

The Family Promise of Greater Rockingham County Inc. provided shelter for homeless people in churches.

*Greg Fraize motioned to recommend Article 17 as written. Mike Nygren seconded the motion. Motion passed 6:2.*

**ARTICLE 18: COMBINING THE OFFICES OF TOWN CLERK AND TAX COLLECTOR**

*Griffin Cordes motioned to recommend Article 18. Joe Miccile seconded the motion. Motion passed 8:0.*

**ARTICLE 19: DESIGNATION OF SMITH LAND AS TOWN FORESTS**

*Greg Fraize motioned to recommend Article 19. Griffin Cordes seconded the motion. Motion passed 8:0.*

*Greta St. Germain motioned to accept \$2,499,591 as the recommended (Town) budget (number in W.A. 6). Mike Nygren seconded the motion. Motion passed 8:0.*

Mr. Fraize requested that an email be included in these public minutes since there was concern about a Budget Committee member stating that it was unproductive to have the School Board present when no other Department was told this. Gene Cordes said he was mindful of it being late but that he tried to make the process inviting but efficient. He understood the process could seem

cumbersome with new staff. Mr. Nygren was concerned about seeing budgetary information right before meetings but he understood also that questions could sometimes seem repetitive and he commended the School Board for getting requested information.

**COPY OF EMAIL IN QUESTION:**

**From:** [saint57@comcast.net](mailto:saint57@comcast.net)

**Subject:** **School Budget**

**Date:** December 13, 2012 10:19:35 AM EST

**To:** [gwcordes@yahoo.com](mailto:gwcordes@yahoo.com), [martel4@comcast.net](mailto:martel4@comcast.net), [coyoko@comcast.net](mailto:coyoko@comcast.net), [jmiccile@comcast.net](mailto:jmiccile@comcast.net), [sjperry04@comcast.net](mailto:sjperry04@comcast.net),

[gcordes3@gmail.com](mailto:gcordes3@gmail.com), [GREGORY.FRAIZE@LibertyMutual.com](mailto:GREGORY.FRAIZE@LibertyMutual.com)

**Cc:** "Carlson, Heidi" <[Fremontta@comcast.net](mailto:Fremontta@comcast.net)>, "Keane, Ida" <[ikeane@comcast.net](mailto:ikeane@comcast.net)>, "Scribner, Annemarie" <[Scriby1@gmail.com](mailto:Scriby1@gmail.com)>

*Hello Greg, and All*

*Could you kindly request from Laurie the documents discussed last evening.*

- 1. What teachers (names) are Federally funded and how much of their Salary and Benefits are grant funded?*
- 2. Revised Revenue with Adjustment to State Ed grant for 10 less students.*

*If we could get that prior to next weeks meeting that would be wonderful.*

*With the above request I believe we have enough information for the Budget Comm. to make decisions to complete their budget, as we must be finished with this before January 8th. This is only allowing us two more sessions to work on this budget. (Dec 19th and Jan. 3rd) Therefore I don't feel it would be productive for the School board to be present.*

*Certainly they are welcome to this public meeting but we need to complete this by January 3rd. We cannot waste anymore time going back and forth like this.*

*Regards Greta St. Germain*

Ms. St. Germain confirmed that the email sent to all Budcom members was her personal perspective on the past month of back and forth questions and emails. Mr. Fraize commented that he took offense to the email. She stated that she sits on the Budget Committee as the Selectmen's representative and is required to answer for their decisions; she believes she comes with the knowledge and is prepared to do so. She continued to explain that because Mr. Fraize does not fully understand the School Budget himself the Budget Committee has had to wait for answers from the School Administration which she feels has wasted valuable work time for the Budget Committee. She referenced "Roberts Rules" for meetings and the need for proper meeting structure.

**V. NEXT MEETING DATE: PUBLIC HEARING JANUARY 8, 2013, MEET AT 6 PM**

**VI. ADJOURNMENT**

*At 9:50 pm, Griffin Cordes made a motion to adjourn. Greg Fraize seconded the motion. Motion passed 8:0.*

Respectfully Submitted,  
Susan Perry,  
Recording Secretary