

FREMONT BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING

**Fremont Town Hall
295 Main Street
Fremont, NH 03044
August 21, 2013
7:00 PM**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Gene Cordes called the April 21, 2013 Budget Committee meeting to order at 7:01 pm on the main floor of Fremont Town Hall.

Present were: Budget Committee Members Gene Cordes, Griffin Cordes (arriving at 7:05), Leon Holmes Sr, Charles Kimball, Patricia Martel, Mike Nygren, and Greg Fraize; Town Administrator Heidi Carlson, and Recording Secretary Susan Perry.

Members of the public included Superintendent Betsey Cox-Buteau, Financial Administrator Laurie Verville and School Board Member Sharon Girardi.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MEETING OF APRIL 17, 2013

Charles Kimball made a motion to approve the minutes from the meeting of April 17, 2013 as written. Mike Nygren seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0:1 (abstention from G. Fraize).

III. REQUEST FROM THE SCHOOL BOARD TO DISCUSS FALL MEETING SCHEDULE/BUDGET PLANNING PREPARATIONS/SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET REPORT

There was a discussion regarding when the Budget Committee would like to see the School District budget. Laurie Verville will be leaving the District and that Collective Bargaining Agreements would be occurring alongside the budget work. There was agreement to have the School budget available to the Budget Committee by Friday November 8, 2013 at the end of the day. This would enable the Budget Committee to review it before their meeting on Wednesday November 13, 2013. Betsey Cox-Buteau stated that she would give progress reports to the Budget Committee along the way.

Ms. Verville said that the report for 6/31/13 would be available in the next few days, along with a summary report. About \$200,000 would be returned in the fund balance. This would be emailed and available in hard copy if requested.

Mr. Nygren asked if school staffing remained the same. Dr. Cox-Buteau replied that one full-time position for Title I was added back (significant for students for the focus area of math). Money was saved from position hiring and people who did not take health insurance. The guidance position was cut to .75 (the Counselor left the District so they were transitioning into a smaller position now).

Dr. Cox-Buteau invited people to contact her with any questions, noting that she gives straight answers. Mr. Nygren mentioned that the Committee had established a chain that went through the School Board Chair (via School Board Representative Mr. Fraize).

IV. TOWN BUDGET REPORT THROUGH JULY 31, 2013

Ms. Carlson reported that nothing was really out of the ordinary regarding expenses. There were changes in the Police Department as a new Police Chief was just hired. There would be one election in

2013 and 3 elections in 2014. The Town Clerk has resigned and Sharon Girardi was training for the position. There have been substitutes in the meantime. There was a discussion about the proposed Town Clerk/Tax Clerk combination position (hours, planning, etc.) Mr. Nygren noted that the (elected) combined position was supposed to be a cost savings.

V. FALL MEETING SCHEDULE

The following meeting dates were established: Wednesdays September 18 and 25; October 2, 9, 16, 23, and 30; November 6, 13, and 20; and December 4, 11, 18, 2013; and January 8, 2013 with the Public Hearing beginning on Wednesday January 15, 2014 (and allowance for a snow date Thursday January 16, 2014). Focus on the School Budget would commence with the November 13 meeting until January 8, 2014.

Mr. Cordes mentioned that the Board of Selectmen sit with Department Heads and review budgets but Department Heads could request to meet with the Budget Committee or vice versa. The Budget Committee favored having the following Department Heads meet with the Committee: Police, Fire, Highway and Library.

Mr. Fraize asked if there was thought about recording Committee meetings. Ms. Carlson said that was a goal but not possible at the moment as equipment has not been finalized and purchased. Mr. Fraize said he could record and post meetings on YouTube, as he does with School Board meetings.

Petition Deadline: Tues. January 14, 2014 (Town by 12 noon)

Public Budget Hearing: Wednesday, January 15, 2014; snow date (or continuation) January 16, 2014

The Deliberative Session Date for school should preferably be on a different date than the Town (window is between 2/1/14-2/8/14, noting that the 8th as a snowdate would make it too late for Town report deadlines).

VI. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Kimball said he would like to attend the LGC training session on September 17th.

Mr. Kimball asked about over-expenditures in the Police/Highway line. Ms. Carlson said that, with conversions in the Police Department, tracking had not been as good as before. Mr. Kimball said he would like to see this before reviewing each Department because they could see things over a period of time by looking at under-budgeted lines. Ms. Carlson said that this could be seen from year to year trending as well. The book of line item transfers is available in the Selectmen's Office.

Ms. Martel asked when the welfare assistance budget might run out. Ms. Carlson said it is close and if it runs out, changes would need to be made elsewhere to cover the overage.

Mr. Nygren noted that there was mention of the subject of a fire truck in the April 17 minutes and he wondered how the Budget Committee felt about needing another fire truck. He felt that, in the current economy, if it went on another Warrant Article, it would again not pass. He said that for four years in a row the Department had not spent \$30,000 on repaving cracks in the streets. He suggested using that and other money to pay for a fire truck without the use of a Warrant Article. He suggested allocating that line item money into the "new equipment" line (debt service). The tax rate would stay the same and it would become "viable money" to spend on a fire truck. Mr. Cordes said there would need to be a Town vote – that there was a need to present debt as a Warrant Article; Mr. Kimball felt that no Warrant Article was necessary if it was put in the line. Ms. Carlson said that if a down payment of \$30,000 were made, they would need to spend it this year (they couldn't transfer it to Capital Reserve without a Warrant Article). There was discussion about binding debt service and it requiring a Town Meeting vote.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

At 7:55 PM, Griffin Cordes motioned to adjourn. Charles Kimball seconded the motion. Motion passed 6:0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Perry
Recording Secretary