

FREMONT BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING

Fremont Town Hall
295 Main Street
Fremont, NH 03044
October 23, 2013
7:00 PM

I. CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Charles Kimball called the October 23, 2013 Budget Committee meeting to order at 7:01 pm on the main floor of Fremont Town Hall.

Present were: Budget Committee Members Charles Kimball, Pat Martel, Mike Nygren, Leon Holmes, and Greg Fraize; Town Administrator Heidi Carlson, and Recording Secretary Susan Perry. Members of the public included Sharon Girardi.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF OCTOBER 16, 2013

Greg Fraize motioned to approve the minutes of October 16, 2013 as presented. Mike Nygren seconded the motion. Motion passed 4:1 (abstention from L. Holmes)

III. TOWN CLERK/TAX COLLECTOR BUDGET (4140)

Sharon Girardi helped review the Town Clerk/Tax Collector budget (4140). A proposed work schedule for 2014 was included. The Clerk/Collector would work Mondays, Tuesdays, and Fridays from 1:30 – 6pm; Thursdays from 1:30 – 7 pm; and Saturdays 9am – noon. The Deputy/Clerical Assistant would work Mondays through Saturdays (closed Wednesdays) from 9 am to noon. The yearly stipend for the Deputy/Clerical would be \$9,744 with an additional stipend of \$1800 for when the person covers for the Clerk/Collector. The Clerk/Collector would receive a yearly stipend of \$35,000.

There was discussion about the number of hours necessary and the amount of money allocated for the position. The theory was to open the building for the convenience of the community. Ms. Girardi said that people have said they appreciate the service hours. There was a lot of counter work for the Clerk side and a lot of email/fax work for the Tax Collector side. Ms. Carlson mentioned that it was good to have a second trained person in place. Upon learning that Ms. Girardi was working her other job around the Clerk job, Mr. Nygren would have preferred that she be the main person responsible for the job. There was discussion about the Deputy driving to the bank at noon to make deposits from the prior day. Ms. Girardi said this was mostly for convenience but could be changed. The State mandates that the Treasurer should not touch the money. After next week (going to a class and getting her sign-on), the Deputy would be ready to be in the building alone.

Mr. Kimball had concern about there only being one person in the building at a time. Ms. Carlson noted that she is also in the building most of the time.

Mr. Nygren and Ms. Martel wondered if the default budget could be eliminated/ if there was no more obligation if the two positions no longer existed. Ms. Carlson said that there could be a Warrant Article to accept the top Clerk Salary line but it could not be made “nothing”. Voters would vote for either the default budget or the operating budget. Mr. Kimball pointed out that the default budget would be \$41,791 + \$25,250 = \$67,041. Voters would vote on the total amount and money could be shifted.

Ms. Girardi said that privacy was important and suggested having a sign at the entrance of the building alerting people to queue until called to the counter.

Mr. Nygren expressed concern about the combined position. He felt that positions for the Town should fit when the building was open, without exception, as was done in business. There was discussion. Mr. Holmes agreed but he mentioned that the Selectmen could not dictate hours; he wanted to be sure funding was there. It was suggested to call the Attorney General's office to ask about this. Mr. Nygren felt that the Town being open ten hours a week was sufficient for people to pay what they needed to. There was a discussion about the Town Hall being open on Saturdays, noting the issue of having to shovel, as well as State offices being closed and the additional cost for electricity, telephone, heat, etc. The Town portion of the tax rate was about 18%; the school was 82%. This budget would be reviewed again.

IV. OTHER TOWN BUDGET DISCUSSION

POLICE CRUISER

There was a discussion about the importance of purchasing a new police cruiser. Ms. Carlson said the DRA "no means no" statute meant that money could not be allocated from the Capital Reserve (a cruiser could not be purchased with money this year). The lease proposal was for \$25,000/year for two vehicles. One way would be to authorize the Selectmen to be agents of the Capital Reserve Fund (but the money could not be used to make a payment). Another way would be to put \$25,000 in an operating budget, which would be more than the default and would not pass. Warrant Articles could not be done for cruisers.

Mr. Nygren favored purchasing a police cruiser over increasing in the investigator line (\$20,000). He thought that \$44,000 was sufficient for a part-time (retired) investigator at 32 hours/week (not the Selectmen-approved pay of \$64,000). He said, where it might not be a popular decision, his purpose (on the Budget Committee) was to be sure taxpayers could pay. He suggested taking money from somewhere else (such as the Highway Department/Sealcoating line that was never done). Ms. Martel agreed that it was important to have a police cruiser this year and agreed with putting the highway item off until next year. She noted that Investigative wages increased by \$25,000. Mr. Holmes said that the Selectmen could look at this again.

CEMETERY

The Cemetery Trustees would be meeting with the Board of Selectmen tomorrow. Mr. Nygren wanted to know if they would spend the money or not.

POLICE SPECIAL DETAIL

Ms. Carlson spoke about having a Warrant Article to set up Police Special Detail as a revolving fund so it would come out of the budgeting process altogether. Modeled after Sandown, any extra money from details would go into a fund for cruiser replacement. Similarly, this could be done for a OHRV Special Revenue Fund. She said they were trying to do what was right and keep taxes low.

Ms. Carlson distributed a tally sheet of Town budgets updated to the end of this week. She was finishing tallies on Solid Waste Collection/Disposal. She said the big item in the General Government Buildings line (4194) is the roof. There was a placeholder of \$20,000.

Greg Fraize recommended the Board of Selectmen's budget recommendation of \$41,000 in line 4211:POLICE SPECIAL DETAILS. Mike Nygren seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0.

PARKS & RECREATION

There was discussion about the Parks and Recreation program. Though it was a good program, Mr. Nygren felt that there was careless spending (transferring money after spending the bottom line). Ms. Carlson mentioned that they tried to plan well. Ms. Martel suggested charging parents per trip if the cost is more.

Pat Martel recommended \$40,386 (the amount from last year) for Parks and Recreation (4520). Mike Nygren seconded the motion. Motion passed 3 aye: 2 nay (G. Fraize, L. Holmes).

SCHOOL BUDGET

Information was distributed that addressed information that Mr. Nygren had previously asked about the difference in positions cut, reduced and added into the budget between FY 2012-13 and FY 2013-14.

The School Board budget was due Friday, November 8. The Board would be meeting November 4th at 8 pm and November 5th at 6:30 pm to review the budget. Mr. Fraize offered to deliver the budgets if people could not pick them up at the SAU on Friday, November 8th. Ms. Carlson noted that she would be at Town Hall on the following Monday for Veteran's Day.

V. NEXT MEETING DATE: WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 6, 2013

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Greg Fraize motioned to adjourn at 8:50 PM. Pat Martel seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0.

Respectfully submitted by,

Susan Perry,

Budget Committee Secretary