

FREMONT BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING

Fremont Town Hall
 295 Main Street
 Fremont, NH 03044
November 13, 2013
 7:00 PM

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Charles Kimball called the November 13, 2013 Budget Committee meeting to order at 7:00 pm on the main floor of Fremont Town Hall.

Present were: Budget Committee Chair Charles Kimball and members Gene Cordes, Greg Fraize, Pat Martel, Mike Nygren, and Tyra Vargas, and Recording Secretary Susan Perry. Members of the public included Fremont School Superintendent Betsey Cox-Buteau, Financial Administrator Sue Penny, School Board Chair Ida Keane and member Sharon Girardi.

II. SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET FY14-15

There was discussion regarding enrollment projection (423 to 427). Ms. Martel wondered about the increase of 4 while the chart showed -4. It was clarified that Special Education students were part of 423. Fremont expected Ellis enrollment to remain the same next year but the high school enrollment might decrease by around 9. Sanborn Regional High School was projecting to lose about 31 students in total next year. The tuition per student increased about 15%. Other factors for the high school increase were: new CBA (Collective Bargaining Agreement) increases District-wide of \$1.1 million and increases in health insurance cost.

Types of expenses included: contracted services, at 81% of the budget (e.g. CBAs, Special Education Services, Transportation contracts, salaries, etc.); fixed cost (building); and variable costs, at 2% of the budget (what the District had control over e.g. classroom expenses such as supplies).

Major drivers of the increase in the School budget included a 9.2 % projected maximum increase in health insurance premiums. They were working with insurance brokers to try to keep the cost low. The CBA with support staff added the option for them to purchase coverage (full year). They should know by the beginning of December how many people would be taking insurance. Another part of the increase was the high school tuition increase. There were no new FTEs or staff raises (there was a pool for administrative raises in the SAU line).

Hope to use some of the Trust Fund for maintenance items that were not included in the budget (e.g. replacement of vacuum cleaners, etc.). A maintenance cycle had been set up for the next twenty years to plan ahead. There was a sufficient amount in the maintenance budget so there should not be an increase to the budget next year.

Warrant Articles included two CBAs (one for teachers and one for support staff) that would need to be voted on. Others included: holding a special meeting if either Warrant failed, adding \$10,000 into the building and maintenance trust fund, holding a special meeting if either Warrant failed, the operating budget, and one to ask voters to allow the District to accept and expend unanticipated funds (e.g. grant money – to supplement the budget, not supplant it). An example of a helpful grant was for a pellet boiler, which would help with energy costs in the District.

Mr. Nygren asked about the supplementation of the budget (@ \$170,000) at Deliberative Session last year. Some of the money was spent to cover a transportation shortfall of about \$80,000, a social studies teacher and a part-time nurse was put back in. A guidance position was cut to .75.

The default budget (due out by the end of this week) was expected to be a little lower than the general budget.

Mr. Cordes was concerned with the high percentage (25%) of Special Education students in Fremont (K-8). For instance, in grade 8, 19 students out of 39 were coded. A typical average was about 16%, as was in Sanborn. Dr. Cox-Buteau said it depended on the population of the Town and needs. Some students were placed out at different high schools and would not show up in statistics. Ms. Girardi noted that Special Education Coordinator Sarah Krebs had graduated out of the program students whose needs had been met and were brought up to grade level. The program continued to be scrutinized.

There was discussion about the high school tuition increase and hopes that they would make cuts. Dr. Cox-Buteau asked what the ratio was for employees to students at Sanborn. Mr. Nygren replied that there were about 380 employees and 1800 students. There were another 13 years left in the tuition contract (10 years plus graduating out the last Freshman class). Ellis's cost per student was about \$13,000/student.

Ms. Martel noted that the Guidance salaries did not change much but the health insurance was down \$14,500. Dr. Cox-Buteau said, according to FERPA law, they could not discuss who took insurance and what kind, e.g. if someone took a different insurance.

There was one student at Seacoast School of Technology (high school).

NWEA testing (grades 3-8) in math, reading, language and science was done to determine progress made throughout the year. The cost was \$13.50 per student. Scores in assessments have improved over the years.

Equipment replacement items were placed more appropriately in this budget.

Ms. Martel asked why the salaried extended year program was moved from 5118 to 5125. Ms. Penny would check on that. Dr. Cox-Buteau clarified that this was a stipend line for summer school, not salaried. The money was taken out of the regular salary line and put it into a stipend line. The Extended School Year line 37, under Special Education, line was for stipends for staff that teach Ellis school elementary students over the summer.

There was a \$1 in the salary line for English Language Learners (for students for whom English was not the first language). Currently, there were no qualifying students but a dollar amount was kept in the budget just in case.

Mr. Cordes asked about the State teacher retirement; Dr. Cox-Buteau said things were on-track and things should stay stable for 30 years.

Ms. Martel asked about NEASC (New England Association of Schools and Colleges) on p. 36 in the SAU budget. Dr. Cox-Buteau explained that this was a rigorous accreditation process. There was a cost for the fee and to pay teachers to go through the process. This was moved out of the dues line. Ms. Girardi noted that this was a requirement for Fremont to be considered for a co-operative with Sanborn, who was accredited.

On page 35, positions within the non-CBA salary adjustment pool would include SAU staff, Principal, Assistant Principal, Special Education Coordinator, School Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, Speech, etc.

Electricity was included in the propane line but it should have been in two lines. This would be adjusted for the final version of the budget.

There was discussion about the necessary updates to the nurse's office. The foreign language program was postponed due to the expenses in the current budget as well as the necessary time the school would need to plan on a proper program.

Dr. Cox-Buteau would create a glossary of the acronyms used in the budget for the next meeting.

The Budget Committee members would bring questions on the school budget to next Wednesday's meeting (November 20, 2013). There would be three meetings in December.

Mike Nygren motioned to postpone the vote on the minutes of November 6, 2013 until the November 20, 2013 meeting. Greg Fraize seconded the motion. Motion passed 6:0.

III. ADJOURNMENT

Gene Cordes motioned to adjourn at 8:25 PM. Greg Fraize seconded the motion. Motion passed 6:0.

Respectfully submitted by, Susan Perry, Budget Committee Secretary