

FREMONT BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
Fremont Town Hall
295 Main Street
Fremont, NH 03044
November 12, 2014
7:00 PM

I CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Pat Martel called the November 12, 2014 Budget Committee meeting to order at 7:00 PM on the main floor of Fremont Town Hall.

Present were: Budget Committee members Mary Anderson, Gene Cordes, Greg Fraize, Neal Janvrin, Mark Kidd, Pat Martel, and Tyra Vargas.

Members of the public included: School Superintendent Betsey Cox-Buteau, School Board Chair Ida Keane, Angela O'Connell, and Michael Rydeen.

II. REVIEW OF SCHOOL BUDGET

Dr. Cox-Buteau gave the following summary of the FY16 School Budget:

The overall FY16 budget is down by .39%. Within that decrease, there are budget areas increased and these areas include:

- A 3.4% projected maximum increase in health insurance premiums.
- The November 1st written estimate for Sanborn Tuition of 10.4%. The Board has chosen to budget only 7% as a "reasonable" increase based upon historical data of actual increases versus the November 1st annual written estimate provided by Sanborn.
- The expenses associated with FY16 capital maintenance costs per the building maintenance cycle.
- The increase of ~2% of the employers contribution to the New Hampshire Retirement System.
- An increase in personnel to meet the need in areas that are underserved:
 - .5 FTE custodian to improve cleanliness issues causing an unhealthy school building.
 - .5 FTE Spanish Teacher to meet the requirements of the new 2015-20120 Fremont School District Strategic Plan.
 - .25 FTE Payroll Specialist to provide appropriate working conditions and support to the Financial Administrator.

Since the last budget update, the SAU added 8 Charter students for which Fremont had to pay high school tuition so that the budget was now down by .39%. The actual GMR would be available by December 15, 2014.

Mr. Kidd noted that there was a Special Education increase of about \$25,000 per student.

.5 Spanish Teacher would teach grades 5-8: in grades 5-6, it would be part of the Unified Arts rotation; in grades 7-8 it would be part of the RTI program for qualified students (who would test into level 2 at Sanborn High School). Dr. Cox-Buteau spoke about the need for a .5 FTE custodian and .25 FTE Payroll Specialist.

Ms. Anderson asked to see a layout of the school (what classrooms are used for what, etc.). She felt that a 7% increase in high school tuition was not reasonable. Dr. Cox-Buteau noted that there was declined enrollment. Ms. Anderson felt that class sizes of 15 in higher grades were unreasonable. Mr. Kidd noted that school staff and Fremont taxpayers had varied thoughts about this and should be considered. Ms. Anderson agreed. It was agreed that the tuition contract was poorly negotiated. Ms. Anderson had concern with the cost of \$18,000 per high school student.

Ms. Martel noted that the FY14-15 Expenditure Report (done on 9/16/14) Tuition Line Item 11-556130 (p. 2/84) showed the high school at \$3.9 million and the District moved \$274,218.56 to the contingency fund, which brought it down to \$3.6 million. However, she noted that the proposed budget states the cost to be \$3.567 million (\$119,500 less). Dr. Cox-Buteau would look into that.

There was a Warrant Article to consider putting \$100,000 in a reserve for high school tuition cost. Mr. Cordes was interested in this and mentioned that there was a history of rising "surpluses" (difference between what was budgeted for high school tuition cost vs. what the actual cost was). Ms. Keane noted that this was not the case this year. Dr. Cox-Buteau mentioned that other Districts (including Sanborn) had tuition trust funds. Ms. Anderson was in favor of a trust fund and noted that this was beneficial regarding tax rates. The trust fund would be for both Regular and Special Education out-of-district tuition.

Dr. Cox-Buteau mentioned that an increase in health insurance was due to one employee who was grandfathered in with an expensive JY plan.

Ms. Keane said that the School Board was in negotiations and was focused on trying to get teacher contracts passed.

Line 2900 was the contingency fund to which money was transferred from savings of tuition and health insurance costs (since the actual GMRs came in less than was budgeted). There had previously been no line f or this. Ms. Martel suggested it be labeled something other than "Benefits".

There was discussion about the underfunding of retirement led to actuarial response (payback for what was underfunded).

It was noted that enrollment seemed to be stable. It was recommended to do accurate enrollment projections, especially for long-range planning.

ALP were Alternative Learning Plans for regular education students.

Ms. Vargas was concerned with the number of identified Special Education students in the District. Ms. Anderson and Dr. Cox-Buteau replied that Fremont's numbers were comparable to the State average of 15%.

Benefits of the pre-school program were mentioned.

The remaining pages of the budget books will be available next week. Susan Penny has been ill.

The Energy Committee Report should be available soon.

The school budget included hiring an Architect Engineering Firm. The Demographic Study for Strategic Planning would be used to determine how the (school) population would change over the next 10-15 years. The NESDEC study was out of date and incorrect.

On p. 39/84, in line 4800, there was an increase in the Superintendent's line for salary increases, a part of which was a pool for people not in the CBA. Ms. Anderson requested a breakdown of the number of people in that line. Dr. Cox-Buteau explained that salary increases were in this line but were transferred to actual salary lines upon appropriation.

There was concern that the Budget Committee worked to approve the school budget but that the School Board could ultimately move within the bottom line. Ms. Anderson felt that it was difficult to gauge how well the budgeting was if line item amounts kept changing. Ms. Keane noted that in the past, other Budget Committee members wanted to see the budget done in different ways. She said budget transfer sheets were available for anyone to view. The Budget Committee would discuss/vote at an upcoming meeting what it would prefer to see as far as line item transfers in the school budget.

The Budget Committee members could send budget questions to the SAU, filtered through Mr. Fraize, for the next meeting. No questions would be answered until the next meeting.

III. NEXT MEETING: WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 19, 2014

IV. ADJOURNMENT

At 7:50 PM, Neal Janvrin made a motion to adjourn. Greg Fraize seconded the motion. Motion passed 7:0.

Respectfully submitted by, Susan Perry, Budget Committee Secretary

Committee approved on November 19, 2014

November 12, 2014