

FREMONT BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING**Fremont Town Hall****295 Main Street****Fremont, NH 03044****September 30, 2015****7:00 PM****I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Mary Anderson called the September 30, 2015 Budget Committee meeting to order at 7:00 PM on the main floor of Fremont Town Hall.

Present were: Budget Committee Chair Mary Anderson, Vice Chair Mark Kidd, members Mike Nygren, Neal Janvrin (substitute Selectmen Rep. for Gene Cordes), Pat Martel, and Joe Miccile, School Board representative Jennifer Brown, and Town Administrator Heidi Carlson. Also present were: Police Chief Jon Twiss, Library Trustees John Hannelley, Cheryl Rowell and Suzanne Weeks, Librarian Eric Abney, and Town Clerk/Tax Collector Nicole Cloutier.

II. APPOINTMENTS**A. POLICE DEPARTMENT (4210) CHIEF JON TWISS 7PM**

Police Chief Jon Twiss reviewed the Police Department budget and its rationale.

Of note:

- Chief Twiss budgeted for the hiring of 2 additional full-time officers (half-year); the Selectmen budgeted for 1 officer.
- 2.5% increase in raises due to uniformed officer pay matrix.
- There is an increase in the Equipment line due to maintenance fee/tech support/ and there were some desktop replacements.
- There was an increase in the Firearms Train Wages line due to academy mandates.
- Chief Twiss noted that there was an increase in the cost of ammunition and in the length of time it took to get it (11 months).
- In-service Training was increased a bit; this line item represents 2 hours/month per officer.
- First Aid Training represents gunshot trauma, CPR for all officers who are the first on-scene.
- New Officer Training covers expenses to hire part-time officers. Mr. Janvrin mentioned that small departments seem to be "training ground" for new officers who move on to bigger districts.
- The Patrol Wages line reflected the Department recommendation of \$300,397 (that included the hiring of 2 full-time officers – half-year) and the Selectmen's recommendation of \$279,791 (that included only 1 full-time officer).
- There is a slight decrease in the Investigation Wages due to a change from Sergeant to Lieutenant pay rate.
- The Uniform and Safety Equipment Department-recommended amount of \$12,600 included 2 officers; the Selectmen's recommended amount of \$9,600 included 1 officer.
- Communications line: Chief Twiss was concerned about using personal cell phones on the job, which can be unsafe when using it during a call, but he noted that getting cell phones was expensive and that he will revisit this again.
- The First Aid Equipment line increased due to the request to purchase another AED.
- There was a decrease in the fuel line. Chief Twiss mentioned that there is a company in Maine that provides gas cards so that state and federal taxes do not get taken out at the pump (there is no need to file paperwork).
- Cruiser Equipment/L/P: the lease program was paid off and the Department wants to buy equipment for cruisers ahead of time. If the Department got another officer, there would be no need to purchase another cruiser.

There was discussion about part-time coverage. Chief Twiss noted that once the part-time officer was out of training, he will be on his own in April. It was noted that he was going to cover weekend hours in the interim.

Chief Twiss presented information to corroborate the need for another full-time officer. Information included statistics in towns similar to Fremont as regards types of incidents, wages, etc. He stated that towns such as Fremont should have about 6 full-time officers (per FBI standards). He emphasized the liability and training components in relation to the number of full-time officers a district has. Mr. Miccile asked about the part-time officers if Fremont had 6 full-time officers. Chief Twiss replied that the part-time officers would supplement higher call times (e.g. nights) and the supplemental force could be reduced. Ms. Anderson said the focus should be that full-time officers can do more and it was noted that there used to be 4 full-time officers

Mr. Kidd asked if the number of officers in Fremont satisfied the needs of the school's safety plan. Chief Twiss mentioned that Homeland Security had an active shooter training this summer that the full-time officers attended. He said there is an emergency plan in place and police have keys. Officer Huard runs the D.A.R.E. program and does a very good job working with students. Ms. Anderson agreed that it is a good partnership with the school and the expense could be shared. D.A.R.E used to be funded by donations but that has dried up over the years. It has been suggested to write a Warrant Article to help fund the program. It was noted that educating students when they are young is important in order to help prevent them from starting drug use.

There was discussion about the importance of what the officers do during service calls, varying from checking on welfare people who have not been heard from to acting as first responders and using AEDs and CPR. People also discussed the idea of adding full-time officers in a stepped process, either within the budget or as a Warrant Article. The fact that Fremont is SB2 was considered. Ms. Carlson noted the importance of bringing this to the attention of citizens. Ms. Anderson said it was important to make public safety a top priority.

B. LIBRARY (4550) 8PM

The library budget and its rationale were reviewed by the Library Trustees and Librarian Abney.

Of note:

- There is a 5% wage increase due to: expanded hours, bookmobile, added movie night. Ms. Anderson asked about the increase and Mr. Abney said that there had been no increases in a while and they wanted to "level it out a bit". Mr. Nygren asked if a study was done regarding the extra hours. Mr. Abney replied that people get to the library at later hours (he sees them pull up and look at the hours posted on the door and leave). Patronage varied from about 1,100 people in January to up to 2,500 in the busiest times in the summer. He said there are also more materials geared toward children (videos, non-fiction books, etc.) Ms. Brown asked if students still take trips to the library; Mr. Abney said they do (get library cards, etc.) He said most traffic is sporadic unless there is an event (e.g. storytime).
- Mileage Reimbursement: new line for the bookmobile van.
- Periodicals line is increased to cover the cost of some weekly magazines including the Economist (effort is made to save money by getting introductory magazine rates).
- There is an increase in the Office Supplies line to cover replacement of books in the catalog that are outdated (e.g. space books from the 1960s).
- Books and Media: the cost for online media is \$1,000 and library staff help patrons with the use of tablets, etc. Fremont citizens rank high in the use of library online media.
- \$250 is added to the Furnace Maintenance & Repairs line for a unit that broke.
- There was an increase in the Water Systems Maintenance line due to the contract with Second Wind
- The Drinking Water line was no longer needed since the water issues were fixed.

- There was an increase in the Exterior Maintenance line to cover materials that the staff uses to do maintenance themselves (fix handles, carpet, etc.)
- The Electricity line went up in all the Town District lines.
- Custodial wages increased for extra hours (from 5 to 10).
- It was noted that the library is the second broadcasting location for FCTV and meetings are held there more. This requires more use of electricity, HVAC, etc.

Ms. Brown asked if students could work at the library (e.g. community service) to help offset man-time. Mr. Abney said that students volunteer during the summer (making props, etc.) but the State does not allow children to volunteer to do the work of a librarian (e.g. shelving, etc.)

Mr. Miccile said that the cost of books increased and asked how this is determined. Mr. Abney said that this line was cut dramatically and this budget reflected the number that was before the recession. He noted that in a bad economy, the book budget gets cut first. No late fees are collected. Copies cost \$0.10 a page.

There was concern that the total budget is up 24% (increases in custodial wages and cost) and that the Selectmen and Budget Committee will need to look at this vis-à-vis the safety in town etc.

C. TOWN CLERK/TAX COLLECTOR (4140): NICOLE CLOUTIER: 8:20 PM

Nicole Cloutier reviewed the Town Clerk/Tax Collector budget and its rationale.

The budget is up 12%. Ms. Cloutier reviewed comparable towns as far as population, hours of operation, benefits and deputy. She averages 23-25 hours/week of work excluding elections and 2 tax billing cycles. She did not feel that her rate of pay was commensurate with that of similar towns. Mr. Nygren said that the position was based on 50 weeks at 35 hours/week (\$700/week). He had concern about the request for a raise now. Ms. Anderson noted that if the job expectation was for 35 hours/week and Ms. Cloutier worked less hours, the rate is comparable (working less for the same pay). They felt that \$27/hour was a fair wage for 25 hours/week. Ms. Cloutier said that she was not given a job description with stated hours, etc. but that she was happy with the job. There was discussion about how the position was in prior years when the office was open longer, etc. Mr. Nygren said that the position was open 25 hours a week with 6-8 hours of administrative help and then the former Town Clerk asked to expand the hours to 31 hours/week. Ms. Carlson noted that after the transition, Ms. Cloutier got into an efficient routine that has streamlined the position.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: SEPTEMBER 16, 2015: TABLED

IV. APPOINTMENT OF TWO BUDGET COMMITTEE MEMBERS TO THE CIP COMMITTEE

Joe Miccile and Mary Anderson will represent the Budget Committee in the CIP Committee.

V. SCHOOL ITEMS/FOLLOW-UP

The tabs of prior budget books will be reused/recycled.

VI. OTHER

Ms. Martel noted that as of now the Departments' requests are up 19.5% and the Selectmen's requests are up 10.4%. There was discussion about putting a full time police officer as a Warrant Article, noting both the importance of safety and the condition of the roads, and other budgetary concerns.

IX. NEXT MEETING DATE: OCTOBER 7, 2105 AT 7 PM

X. ADJOURNMENT

At 9:10 PM, Pat Martel made a motion to adjourn. Mike Nygren seconded the motion. Motion passed 7:0.

Respectfully submitted by, Susan Perry, Secretary