

FREMONT BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING

Fremont Town Hall
295 Main Street
Fremont, NH 03044
November 4, 2015
7:00 PM

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Mary Anderson called the November 4, 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, Gene Cordes, Pat Martel, and Joe Miccile, School Board representative Jennifer Brown, and Town Administrator Heidi Carlson.

II. APPROVE MINUTES FROM OCTOBER 28, 2015

Jennifer Brown made a motion to approve as amended the minutes from October 28, 2015. Pat Martel seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0:2 (abstentions from M. Anderson and G. Cordes).

III. SCHOOL ITEMS/FOLLOW-UP

School Department budget books were distributed on Monday, November 2nd. Updates were distributed this evening. Financial Administrator Susan Penny met with Mary Anderson today for review of budget items. She will attend upcoming Budget Committee meetings to answer questions about the school budget. Sanborn's estimate was ratified. Health plans increased 10% (they were expected to be lower than that). Ms. Anderson felt that an 8% (\$3) increase is not good (where COLA is at 3%). Mr. Miccile was concerned that the budget was increasing even though historical data showed the enrollment trend decreasing. Ms. Anderson said it involved to an economy of scale.

Ms. Brown said that the Executive Summary was helpful in explaining the budget. She said that the School Board tried to carefully look at the budget, recognizing wants vs. needs, and did not add a lot of warrant articles. A teacher is retiring that will not be replaced. She mentioned that, though some parents do not support larger class sizes, the Board decided not to put that line item back. There was discussion about the policy on class size (18-24) that was adopted by the Board. Mr. Miccile said that Fremont is lower than the state average regarding class size. Ms. Brown noted that, as discussed at a recent School Board meeting, the ratio dealt with all teachers that instruct (e.g. Unified Arts teachers), not just homeroom teachers, so that the numbers are slightly skewed. Mr. Miccile said that he looked at towns with demographics similar to Fremont and said that Fremont is number 1 or 2 in local education tax. Ms. Brown said she understood as she was also a taxpayer, but she said a lot of that has to do with the high school. She felt that Ellis school should not take a hit for the tuition contract with Sanborn Regional High School. She cautioned where to make budget cuts. Mr. Nygren said he would rather pay the capital debt and go into another school (than pay the high cost for high school tuition).

There was discussion about the SAU lease which will expire on June 30, 2016. Ms. Brown said that options are being looked into (the most costly being the renovation of the modular where HVAC work would need to be done, etc.). The Board had discussed seeing if they could get another year lease to allow more time to see where the architectural study was going. The idea is not to waste money.

IV. TOWN ITEMS

A. 4210 POLICE DEPARTMENT

There was continued discussion about the Police Department budget, which was voted on already but opened up for discussion. Mr. Kidd was against the appointment of any new police officers. Mr. Nygren was more concerned about the salary line and he felt that there was plenty of money for staffing (even with a full time officer next year) using 8 hour shifts vs. 10 hour shifts. Ms. Anderson did not see that it was the responsibility of the Budget Committee to recommend shifts/schedules for town departments. Mr. Nygren said that he was looking at the cost factor, not how to schedule officers. Ms. Brown felt that Chief Twiss had brought forward adequate information about having an extra officer, especially in the current times we are living in.

Jennifer Brown made a motion to stay with the original vote of the Budget Committee for the 4210 Police Department budget (\$534,496). Gene Cordes seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:2 (M. Kidd, M. Nygren, nay)

B. 4155 PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION – Vote was clarified for the record:

Joe Miccile made a motion to approve \$295,271 for the budget of 4155 Personnel Administration. Gene Cordes seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:2 (M. Kidd, M. Nygren, nay)

C. WARRANT ARTICLES

There was discussion about the Town Budget, which was \$2,747,888 (an increase of about \$199,000 over the 2015 appropriation). This represents about a \$0.50 increase (about \$1.00 increase including warrant articles). The default budget is \$2,589,170. Votes on a few articles were deferred until the November 18th meeting.

ARTICLE A: 2016 OPERATING BUDGET

Gene Cordes made a motion to recommend Warrant Article A (\$2,747,888 for the Town Operating Budget; \$2,589,170 for the default budget). Jennifer Brown seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:2

ARTICLE B: CREATE TOWN EXPENDABLE TRUST FUND FOR WINTER HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE: TABLED

The Selectmen wanted to discuss this article with the Road Agent so a vote was deferred. The Budget Committee members will review this warrant for a vote after the Selectmen make a recommendation.

ARTICLE C: CONTRIBUTION TO THE LIBRARY BUILDING EXPENDABLE TOWN TRUST FUND

Mark Kidd made a motion to recommend Warrant Article C as presented. Gene Cordes seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:2

ARTICLE D: CONTRIBUTION TO THE BRIDGE CAPITAL RESERVE FUND

Gene Cordes made a motion to recommend Warrant Article D as presented. Jennifer Brown seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:2.

ARTICLE E: CONTRIBUTION TO THE TOWN HALL RENOVATIONS CAPITAL RESERVE FUND

Renovation plans for the Town Hall include the following for the basement: bathroom, Land Use office, bigger meeting room, offices, space suited to Community Access TV, and a second egress at the ground level.

Gene Cordes made a motion to recommend Warrant Article E as presented. Mary Anderson seconded the motion. Motion passed 7:0.

ARTICLE F: CONTRIBUTION TO THE PROPERTY REASSESSMENT CAPITAL RESERVE FUND

Gene Cordes made a motion to recommend Warrant Article F as presented. Mike Nygren seconded the motion. Motion passed 7:0.

ARTICLE G: CONTRIBUTION TO THE HIGHWAY EQUIPMENT CAPITAL RESERVE FUND

Gene Cordes made a motion to recommend Warrant Article G as presented. Jennifer Brown seconded the motion. Motion passed 7:0.

ARTICLE H: CONTRIBUTION TO THE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT EQUIPMENT CAPITAL RESERVE FUND

Gene Cordes made a motion to recommend Warrant Article H as presented. Mike Nygren seconded the motion. Motion passed 7:0.

ARTICLE I: FUNDING HIGHWAY PAVING AND IMPROVEMENTS TO CHESTER ROAD

Gene Cordes made a motion to recommend Warrant Article I as presented. Joe Miccile seconded the motion. Motion passed 7:0.

ARTICLE J: HIGHWAY PAVING AND IMPROVEMENTS TO SANDOWN ROAD: TABLED

ARTICLE K: CHANGE THE SALARY FOR THE ELECTED POSITION OF TOWN CLERK TAX COLLECTOR: TABLED

There is a typographic error in the title: the estimated tax rate impact of the article should read "\$.0_____"

The Selectmen felt that compensation for an elected position should go to voters. They are looking to clarify benefits of the position. A vote was deferred until they discuss this with Ms. Carlson.

ARTICLE L: CREATE A TOWN EXPENDABLE TRUST FUND FOR THE FREMONT POLICE DEPARTMENT DARE PROGRAM AND NAME THE SELECTMEN AS AGENTS TO EXPEND

Gene Cordes made a motion to recommend Warrant Article L as presented. Mike Nygren seconded the motion. Motion passed 7:0.

ARTICLE M: FUNDING THE MOSQUITO CONTROL PROGRAM

Gene Cordes made a motion to recommend Warrant Article M as presented. Joe Miccile seconded the motion. Motion passed 7:0.

ARTICLE N: CREATE A REVOLVING FUND FOR PARKS AND RECREATION FIELD AND PARKS IMPROVEMENTS AND MAINTENANCE: TABLED

Mr. Kidd suggested removing "maintenance" from the Article N title since it is already covered in the town budget. Mr. Nygren asked if the town appropriated money from Parks and Recreation to start this fund. Ms. Carlson said yes and that there was about \$1,500 in surplus to start the fund (from the road race). The intent is to place revenue less road race expenses into this fund. One idea is to build a pavilion.

Mr. Nygren wondered if the town can legally purchase things from fundraisers. Ms. Carlson explained the fund and suggested replacing the word "fundraisers" with "user fees from events" in warrant article N. Mr. Cordes explained that the Selectmen deferred their vote in order to discuss and understand it further.

ARTICLE O: FIRE TRUCK CAPITAL RESERVE FUND (RAISE/APPROPRIATE \$50,000): TABLED

ARTICLE P: CONTRIBUTION TO THE HISTORIC MUSEUM CAPITAL RESERVE FUND: TABLED

This fund began about 5 years ago when there was \$10,000 in it; it hasn't been proposed since then. The Selectmen deferred their vote. The intent of the fund is to add space to the historical building to house antique pieces of equipment (old fire pumper, hand tub, hearse, etc.)

ARTICLE Q: VOTE TO REESTABLISH CABLE FRANCHISE FEES AS PART OF THE TOWN'S CONTRACT WITH COMCAST (DRAFT): TABLED

This warrant was to re-establish cable franchise fees in accordance with the Town's cable contract for the continuation of broadcasting, programming and other FCTV activities. Money was collected previously from Comcast (franchise fees) that will last a while but will zero out at some point. The money has been sitting with the Town. In around 2010, the Town made a revolving fund to expend to do cable things. Ms. Carlson said this is a warrant template so it is not forgotten (it might not go forward for 2016, as Town's Cable Committee is not sure it wants to ask voters to decide on this yet.) Ms. Anderson said that residents enjoy the opportunity to watch meetings on television and the meetings help get information out to voters.

V. NEXT MEETING DATE: NOVEMBER 9, 2105 AT 7 PM (6:30 PM walk-through at Ellis School prior to meeting)

VI. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:45 PM, Gene Cordes made a motion to adjourn. Mike Nygren seconded the motion. Motion passed 7:0.
Respectfully submitted by Susan Perry, Secretary