

## FREMONT BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING

Fremont Town Hall

295 Main Street

Fremont, NH 03044

December 16, 2015

7:00 PM

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Mary Anderson called the December 16, 2015 Budget Committee meeting to order at 7:00 PM in the basement room 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 School Financial Administrator Susan Penny.

**II. APPROVE MINUTES FROM DECEMBER 9, 2015**

*Gene Cordes made a motion to approve as amended the minutes from December 9, 2015. Mike Nygren seconded the motion. Motion passed 7:0.*

**III. SCHOOL ITEMS/FOLLOW UP**

There was review of cost-per-pupil data (that did not include debt service, transportation, or tuition to other districts), by district (FY2013-14). Fremont's cost-per-pupil seems to be average at \$14,489 currently. Sanborn Regional High School's cost is \$15,041 and the state average is \$14,466. The 2014-2015 report came out yesterday and Fremont is still right at the state average.

Ms. Penny reported that the high school tuition rate is unchanged from the prior GMR. In April, the district will get the actual cost but it will not be more than what was given out in November 2015.

Ms. Anderson referred to letters from Greg Fraize and Carla Smith (see attached).

There was discussion about the tax increase of \$400-\$600 and that is relative to house values.

There was discussion on class size and the proposal to bring the current 26-staff count down to 24 to meet the School Board policy. Ms. Anderson noted that this is more than the state policy of 18-19 teachers for the size of Ellis School. Ms. Brown said the Board's target is to strive to achieve class sizes of fewer than 24, but that staff looks at the specific makeup of students and classes. The Budget Committee proposed reducing the school budget by one more person (\$40,000) to reach the 24-staff guideline and have the School Board decide on the specific position reduction. Ms. Anderson was concerned in the large variance between the state policy on class size and the policy of the Fremont school district. Mr. Cordes noted that students on IEPs have aids with them, which is in addition to the classroom teacher. Ms. Brown said that if young students are not caught early on, there is a possibility they could need IEPs down the line that would be more costly, therefore, the idea is to try to close the gap sooner. She said that the interventionist position was removed and that this program was of help to students. She said teachers will need to work harder with the loss of the interventionist. Mr. Miccile said that there was the same number of staff when there were more students at Ellis and he felt that, with the number of experienced teachers there, reducing one additional teacher should be absorbed easily. Ms. Penny said that the interventionist helps k-3 students with specialized RTI. Ms. Anderson clarified that the estimated class sizes for next year should be:

K = 11.7	4 = 14
1 = 13.6	5 = 21.5
2 = 15.3	6 = 23
3 = 17	7 = 18.3

There was discussion about the Technology Director position and the concern about the last \$5,000 raise in the multi-year contract. Ms. Brown and Ms. Penny spoke about the significance of the work done by the Technology Director, including: Web to School/Parent Portal; grade book design; troubleshooting ADS issues; staff training; troubleshooting testing that is done on computers now; staff assistance in technology; aligning testing with state

standards (Smarter Balanced); and making sure everything is operable and up to date (both at the school and at the SAU). The raises in the contract were to bring the position to a salary that is commensurate with other technology directors. Mr. Cordes reasoned that the cost to contract this type of workload out would be high. Ms. Martel clarified that her idea was not to reduce the whole position, just the \$5,000 increase (to be equal to other staff). There was discussion about the issue of having to hire and recruit a new Director if the current person left. It was stated that the past raises showed the value of this employee and that perhaps there could be a raise the next year. Mr. Miccile spoke about the need to rationalize the income coming into town, even though people do want students to have a good education. He said budget cuts are not fun but that it doesn't mean there won't ever be raises. Ms. Anderson agreed, saying that it was important to get through this year and see where things are with enrollment, catastrophic aid, etc. next year. A vote was made (see below).

There was discussion about the Special Education Administrator positions. Ms. Anderson felt that a case load of 12 was low, though 16-17 cases were a bit high (depending on the students' needs). Four case managers manage IEPs and remedial work in the classroom (and meet parents and related services personnel). There is one teacher for preschool. The Special Education department had said they were maxxed out at 4 case managers (one was converted into an interventionist in 2014-15). Ms. Anderson spoke about the possibility of providing special services in the home district (rather than out-of-district) to save on transportation and other costs. The Special Education contracts are for 200-days each (working 3 weeks longer than teachers): \$71,000 and \$61,000. Ms. Anderson felt that there seemed to be a lot of Special Education administration for 64 students; Ms. Penny noted that the administration (2 Supervisors, 4 case managers, one preschool and 18 aides) also deals with high school and out-of-district students.

Ms. Anderson asked for: 1. the number of out-of-district students and 2. a detailed job description of what the Out-of-District Coordinator does (number of students, cases, time).

There was discussion about the \$21,000 cost for the Evaluator. This year, there is one full-time Principal and a .6 FTE Assistant Principal. A full-time Principal and Assistant Principal was originally budgeted for FY17, but, to save about \$65,000, the Assistant Principal was reduced to .625 FTE and an Evaluator was added (at \$21,000), yielding a final savings of \$44,000. There has been parental concern about not having the evaluator position. Ms. Anderson said that the School Board has made a good effort with the budget but that it is important to do what is necessary. She felt that the Principal and Assistant Principal will be responsible for evaluations. Mr. Cordes said that, as a result, other tasks will be put aside.

The Committee addressed other areas in the school budget, including: Plant Operation (\$23,200 (combination of \$6K in painting, \$12K in countertops, and \$5,200 in new cabinets), \$40,000 training in line 343; Repair Plant Building (correction of placing supply items in the correct line (not in the Repair line); and the Tuition Private Other (line 1200) is up \$287,000 for next year to meet special services needs for students.

**POSSIBLE CHANGES TO THE 2016/17 SCHOOL BUDGET (discussed by the Budget Committee on December 9, 2015):**

**PROPOSED CHANGE COST SAVINGS**

Reduction in Transportation Budget \$80,000

Transportation bids open on December 30, 2015 at 11 AM at the SAU. Ms. Anderson will attend and update the Budget Committee. A vote was tabled until after then.

Math Intervention Specialist \$32,000

Mr. Kidd said that reducing the math intervention specialist was not taking away regular training; it was to utilize the free training supplied by the math program company. He said teachers will still be trained in the math program.

*Joe Miccile made a motion to not recommend the Math Intervention Specialist in the FY16-17 school budget. Mark Kidd seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:2.*

Engineering \$25,000

*Pat Martel made a motion to reduce the \$25,000 Engineering cost from the FY16-17 school budget. Joe Miccile seconded the motion. Motion passed 6:1.*

Non-Union Salary Increases \$11,813

*Pat Martel made a motion to reduce the non-union salary increase line by \$11,813 in the FY16-17 school budget. Gene Cordes seconded the motion. Motion passed 6:1.*

Computer Technology – Computer Equipment (line 213) \$7,606

*Pat Martel made a motion to reduce the Computer Technology – Computer Equipment (line 213) by \$7,606 in the FY16-17 school budget. Joe Miccile seconded the motion. Motion passed 6:1.*

Teaching Staff \$40,000

*Pat Martel made a motion to reduce the request for teaching staff by \$40,000 in the FY16-17 school budget. Joe Miccile seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:2.*

Course Reimbursement \$20,000 (Teaching) + \$3,000 (Admin.)

Because course reimbursement is contractual for teachers and administration, the Committee took no action.

Technology Director Contract \$65,000

*Pat Martel made a motion to reduce the Technology Director contract by \$5,000 and the Technology Director course reimbursement line by \$3,000. Joe Miccile seconded the motion. Motion passed, 5:2.*

Regular Education Supplies \$5,000

*Pat Martel made a motion to reduce the Regular Education Supply line by \$5,000 in the FY16-17 school budget. Joe Miccile seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:2.*

Special Education – 1 case manager

This vote was tabled.

Special Education Administration – second position f/t to p/t

This vote was tabled.

Evaluator \$21,000

*Pat Martel made a motion to reduce the request for an Evaluator at \$21,000 in the FY16-17 school budget. Joe Miccile seconded the motion. Motion failed 2 ayes: 4 nays: 1 abstention.*

Mr. Cordes will inquire about putting a note on the town webpage to advise the public to address correspondence to either Heidi Carlson (for the Town) or Jennifer Brown (for the School District).

\*\* Ms. Anderson will notify Heidi Carlson to unpost the December 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting.

**IV. NEXT MEETING DATE: JANUARY 6, 2016 at 7PM (main floor): review of final school items.**

- Final Town Warrant to date for review (save for any petition articles)
- Annual Town Report, due the first week of January
- January 6, 2016: review of final school items
- January 12<sup>th</sup> (snow date January 13<sup>th</sup>): Public Hearing, 7 PM at the Library
- January 12<sup>th</sup>: Petition Warrant Articles are due to Selectmen’s Office by noon; School District Articles are due to SAU83 Office by 4PM
- January 30<sup>th</sup> (snow date February 1<sup>st</sup>): School Deliberative Session (9 AM)
- February 2<sup>nd</sup>: Town Deliberative Session (snow date February 3<sup>rd</sup>)

**V. ADJOURNMENT**

*At 9 PM, Jennifer Brown made a motion to adjourn. Gene Cordes seconded the motion. Motion passed 7:0.*

Respectfully submitted by Susan Perry, Secretary