

FREMONT BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
Fremont Town Hall
295 Main Street
Fremont, NH 03044
November 30, 2016
7:00 PM

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Mary Anderson called the November 30, 2016 Budget Committee meeting to order at 7:00 PM on the first floor of Fremont Town Hall. Present were: Budget Committee Chair Mary Anderson, Mark Kidd, Gene Cordes, Mary Jo Holmes, Mike Nygren, Pat Martel, and Joe Miccile, School Board representative Jennifer Brown, School Superintendent Betsey Cox-Buteau and Financial Administrator Susan Penny.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: NOVEMBER 16, 2016

Mary Jo Holmes made a motion to approve the minutes of November 16, 2016 as amended. Gene Cordes seconded the motion. Motion passed 8:0.

III. SCHOOL BUDGET REVIEW FY2017-18

The Committee reviewed the following FY18 budget adjustments that the School Board made last night:

Tuition Public HS – Sanborn Reg. Ed.	(\$71,795.58)	Reduce Sanborn increase from 4.4% to 2.5%
Supplies Reg. Ed.	(\$1,500)	Reduction of supplies
Tuition Public HS – Sanborn SPED	(\$4,715.75)	Reduce Sanborn increase from 4.7% to 2.8%
Tuition Private & Other – Elementary	(\$38,880.00)	Reduce for potential placement
Property Maintenance/Mowing	(\$7,000.00)	Reduce for snow removal (based on history)
Insurance Property and Liability	(\$4,614.00)	Reduce to GMR for P&L Insurance (received 11-21-16)
Total	(\$128,505.34)	(which is lower than the amount of \$128,482 for which the Budget Committee was striving)

Ms. Anderson asked about the \$230,000 grant revenue anticipated for next year; Ms. Penny explained that she lumped them together (e.g. IDEA, Title IA, Focus School, etc.). There was an anticipated amount of \$50,000 in catastrophic aid; it is capped at the State level and the Department of Revenue notified Ms. Penny that the anticipated revenue should be lowered.

There was discussion about the idea of sharing aides (Para-educators); usually aides are shared unless IEPs call for one-on-one aides.

There was no money in line 2140-5330 Evaluations because this was in a grant in previous years.

Legal costs are based on average use; in FY18 there will be support staff negotiations (and potential FEA CBA if it is not passed this year). The FEA contract should be released by Monday. There was discussion about the benefit of bringing in new staff who provide new energy and ideas.

Edivate is the supervision software that is used for teacher evaluations, done by the Principal, Assistant Principal and Special Education Building Coordinator. Ms. Penny will ask if this is an annual cost (\$5,100) or not.

There was budgetary review of the custodian line, where there was a small reduction, and the property maintenance line where it was noted that fertilizer, etc. work was historically not done by the school custodians.

There was discussion about catastrophic aid, which increased from \$82,000 in 2015-16 to \$192,000 this year to \$242,000 next year. There was questioning about the 16.85% increase in the Superintendent line; it was reported that the School Board has had guidance from the NHSBA regarding part-time vs. full-time Superintendent position options and having appropriate salary for an experienced candidate that fits the District. There is a possibility of reducing the line in the hiring process, but it is unsure at this point; savings could go back to the taxpayers. The School Board was also concerned that if the line is undercut too far, duties will fall on the principal and affect the TSEP plan, etc. and the school will not move forward as it has been towards student achievement. A varied group of staff and taxpayers make up the Superintendent Search Committee.

Regarding the increase in the Financial Assistant position, there was a budget transfer done, as there is a temporary person in the position now; there is benefit to having a salaried person with the new law to avoid having to pay time and a half.

Ms. Holmes presented information from the 2004 annual report which showed 451 students (gr. 1-8) and 177 students in high school and the budget was about \$6million. There was concern about the double increase in about 12 years (much of which due to Sanborn tuition costs).

Mr. Nygren spoke about the cost of Chromebooks and wondered about the benefit, as he felt that if students do not have them at home, they are not helpful (worth the cost). Mr. Fraize noted that it is more than just a browser and that it relies on Google. Ms. Brown spoke of the benefit of teaching Ellis students about technology so they are computer-literate and as prepared as their cohorts to enter high school (Sanborn and other local Districts use Chromebooks). STEM is also a critical piece of the District's Strategic Plan and technology education is a part of that.

Mr. Miccile spoke about there being good efforts at Ellis but that the trend has been a continuous high education cost without relative achievement. Mr. Cordes felt that part of successful student achievement is the investment in/engagement of education by educators and families. Ms. Brown said the school has been driving this initiative as well. Mr. Miccile was concerned that other districts like Chester is achieving in education with the same programs as Fremont but Fremont is not (achieving). Ms. Anderson agreed that the budgets increase each year but progress is not seen in testing scores, etc. Ms. Brown posed that the changes in building administration has not helped keep things on track (climate, readiness to learn). It was noted that parents pay the high taxes on the schools that their children attend. Mr. Miccile said that numbers are dropping across the state and people are opting out of public education so it affects potentially who is remaining in public schools.

There was discussion about the building budget and internet; Ms. Brown said that the district is trying to do things on a rotation to be fiscally responsible. Ms. Penny noted that they are trying to do as much building work as possible this year vs. FY18. She said it is looking like it will be better to go with natural gas.

There was discussion about the expendable trust fund, which does not have a cap. Ms. Anderson was concerned that there was no cap and she thought the intention of the fund was for Sanborn tuition due to the unreasonable GMR increases, not for out-of-district costs. Ms. Brown noted that the Board has always looked at not spending from the fund. Dr. Cox-Buteau said it is typical to keep the fund between \$250,000-\$300,000, as it protects from having to budget for unanticipated expenses. The Warrant Article would need to be rewritten if the Budget Committee wanted a cap on the fund.

Ms. Anderson thanked the Board for coming in at a zero budget (\$23 under budget); her goal is to come in with approvable town and school budgets.

IV. OTHER

Mr. Nygren asked Mr. Cordes to have the Selectmen consider the following regarding the police department budget: how were savings realized in the budget lines and if the warrant article for radios (trust fund) is necessary since Chief Twiss has transferred money to buy radios (\$19,600).

Mr. Cordes will not be at next week's meeting; Neal Janvrin will be asked to attend and vote in his place.

V. NEXT MEETING DATES: NOVEMBER 30, DECEMBER 7, DECEMBER 14

VI. ADJOURN

Mike Nygren made a motion to adjourn at 8:30 PM. Joe Miccile seconded the motion. Motion passed 8:0.

Respectfully submitted by,
Susan Perry, Secretary