

FREMONT BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING

**Fremont Town Hall
295 Main Street
Fremont, NH 03044
December 14, 2016**

7:00 PM

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Mary Anderson called the December 14, 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, Police Chief Jon Twiss, Lieutenant Peter Morelli, and Selectmen Neal Janvrin and Roger Barham.

II. APPOINTMENTS: 7PM CHIEF TWISS AND SELECTMEN RE. POLICE DEPARTMENT OPERATING BUDGET

Chief Twiss said that he met with the Capital Improvement Committee last year to discuss the needs of the Police Department. A high priority need is the portables (walkie talkies) which cost about \$3,000 each and of which about 5 are 15 years old and others are over 20 years old and are unservicable. He hoped to use any surplus from 2016 to purchase some portables. He said that the Department is in a default budget this year. As of May 2016, there were four full-time officers doing patrol duty. There were savings in the following areas: 40 hour/week was reduced to 36 hours/week for a surplus of \$8,000 in part-time hours; unused vacation time (95 hours this year for a savings of \$3,200); and some surplus from sick time savings (about \$3,200). He explained that in 2016 there were not as many death investigations, which take a long time and there was a mild winter so there were less calls for multiple accidents, etc. (not as much of a need to call in extra officers). He did not expect to see as much savings as there were. In the 2017 budget, he reduced the part-time hours from 48 to 30. Other savings included: \$4,648 from the cruiser equipment line (lease payment was less than expected); \$5,000 from the fuel line (default; new cruisers have better gas mileage); \$3,000 from OHRV fund; and \$19,700 from the patrol wage lines. The total savings of \$32,348 was used to purchase the portables.

There was discussion about officers carrying over vacation days and how that could cause a problem in being short on patrol coverage the following year. Chief Twiss spoke about the unpredictability of the police profession and that there is nowhere to account for extended periods of time if an officer gets injured. Mr. Cordes will speak to Heidi Carlson about carrying vacation pay into the next fiscal year. The Committee felt that communication is a safety issue; every officer will now have a portable which should be good for ten years.

Mr. Cordes felt it was beneficial to address deferred issues at the end of the year if there is the ability to do so. He felt that the Police Department was in a good position to make good choices such as this. Mr. Nygren addressed the issue of the \$40,000 increase in the budget; Chief Twiss said that was accountable to the fourth full-time officer.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: DECEMBER 7, 2016

Mary Jo Holmes made a motion to approve the minutes of December 7, 2016 as amended. Joe Miccile seconded the motion. Motion passed 7:0:1 (abstention from G. Cordes).

III. SCHOOL BUDGET REVIEW FY2017-18

Ms. Brown reported that the School Board had a regular meeting last night. Ms. Penny had adjusted the default budget to reflect the full-time Financial Assistant position that was voted on by the School Board this fall; this is contractual. Ms. Anderson felt that this position was not budgeted in the 2016-2017 fiscal school year and she wondered why it would be in the default. Ms. Brown said that the position became vacant when the prior assistant resigned. The Board voted to make the position full-time in October 2016. Mr. Nygren wondered where the money would come from to fund a full-time position if the money was not there to begin with. He said funds would need to be transferred from somewhere else for the increase in salary, benefits, etc. over the prior position. Ms. Brown agreed that a public transfer would be necessary for the full-time position. Ms. Brown will ask Ms. Penny if the Financial Assistant position should be in the default budget as a full-time or part-time position.

Ms. Brown noted that the School Board had also discussed the Budget Committee's request that a further \$50,000 be reduced from the school budget. The overall feeling was of disappointment that the Budget Committee tasked them with the job of bringing a zero budget, which the School Board did, but then changed and asked for the further \$50,000 reduction. The Board discussed options and talked about the teacher contract as well as the taxpayer's needs. Ms. Anderson understood the School Board's disappointment but said that there needed to be a starting point; she appreciates the School Board's work. Ms. Brown mentioned that the School Board has tried to be sympathetic to the Town's needs, noting that it will be returning \$400,000. Ms. Anderson had concern with the \$600,000 surplus this year.

A Warrant Article had been added to allow for a special meeting if the CBA does not pass.

Dr. Cox-Buteau had been in contact with counsel who helped with the language of the Warrant Articles. The attorney had concerns with calling out Sanborn in the tuition trust fund Warrant Article, noting that if Fremont is somehow not in a contract with Sanborn, the funds could not be accessed. The attorney mentioned that the School Board must draft its Warrant Articles and are not bound to the Budget Committee's recommendation. The trust fund is a safeguard and the School Board decided to leave the tuition trust fund article as it was written for the best interest of the District and the voters. It was noted that a second tuition trust fund article might cause confusion with the voters (one for out of district tuition and one for Sanborn tuition).

Mr. Nygren mentioned that if the CBA does not pass, salaries would freeze; he wondered about contractual insurance and if teachers can change plans during open season. If the CBA does not pass there would not be the savings in health etc. (\$100,000). It was suggested that the School Board make sure voters know about the savings if the CBA passes. Ms. Brown said that the Board will be sending out a voting guide; Mr. Cordes suggested adding a summary of the changes. Ms. Brown noted that this CBA is less in tax impact than the previous contract.

There was a discussion about the fact that the Budget Committee had voted on the prior default budget at the last meeting (\$12,498,997), not the updated figure as presented tonight (\$12,554,143). The difference is an increase of \$56,000 which relates with the full-time Financial Administrator position. Ms. Anderson said that the default budget is supposed to be this year's adopted budget and any contractual items. Mr. Cordes said that the public record reflects that the Budget Committee voted on the prior default number, not what is in the recent Warrant Article 4.

Mary Jo Holmes made a motion to rescind the Budget Committee's vote on Warrant Article 4 until the default budget is clarified (at the public hearing on January 11th) Gene Cordes seconded the motion. Motion passed 8:0.

Jennifer Brown made a motion to recommend School District Warrant Article 3 (special meeting if CBA does not pass). Gene Cordes seconded the motion. Motion failed 4:4:0 (W.A. 3 was not recommended by the Budget Committee).

Jennifer Brown made a motion to recommend School District Warrant Article 6 (\$100,000 to the tuition trust fund). Gene Cordes seconded the motion. Motion failed 3:5:0 (W.A. 6 was not recommended by the Budget Committee).

IV. OTHER

The Economic Development Forum was held today and the next meeting will be on January 9, 2017.

It was noted that the "Budget Committee Recommendation 2017" column in the Budget Reports spreadsheet should have the recommendations listed (there are zeros as placeholders there now).

V. NEXT MEETING DATE: JANUARY 11, 2016 at 6:30 before the deliberative sessions at 7 PM in the Library

VI. ADJOURN

Neal Janvrin made a motion to adjourn at 8:35 PM. Joe Miccile seconded the motion. Motion passed 8:0.

Respectfully submitted by, Susan Perry, Secretary