

FREMONT BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
Fremont Town Hall, Fremont, NH 03044
October 18, 2017
7PM

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Mary Anderson called the October 18, 2017 Budget Committee meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance at 7:00 PM at the Fremont Town Hall. Present were: Budget Committee Chair Mary Anderson, Vice Chair Pat Martel, Gene Cordes, Mary Jo Holmes, Joe Miccile, and Josh Yokela; Town Administrator Heidi Carlson, and Secretary Susan Perry.

7 PM 4220 - FIRE RESCUE DEPARTMENT – CHIEF OFFICERS RICHARD BUTLER, JOE NICHOLS, and KEVIN ZUKAS
WARRANT ARTICLE – FIRE TRUCK CAPITAL RESERVES

There was review of the Fire Rescue Department proposed budget (4220) and the Warrant Article for Fire Truck Capital Reserve. Highlights included:

- The Fire Chief line was originally a salaried position but now it depends on how much time is put in, and is paid hourly.
- The LOSAP Plan matrix is based on the number of eligible people (money is needed in this line to cover everyone).
- Officer & Coordinator stipends are paid at the end of the year.
- After meeting with the Selectmen, a compromise was made regarding weekend duty pay: \$250/weekend (60 hours broken into three people/shifts from Friday 5 PM to Monday 5 AM): 13 weeks (one quarter) at the current rate of \$100 plus 39 weekends at \$250. It was mentioned that a consultant will be interviewing the Department, residents, etc., and the results will serve as a tool for long-range planning as regards paid fire fighters vs. volunteers. Money will try to be found in the budget for the study. There seems to be a trend for full-time firefighters (Chester, Hampstead, etc.).
- The line for books/PR/subscriptions looks barely spent because invoices have not been received yet.
- The new & replacement fire equipment line is overspent due to needing to replacing an old thermal imaging camera.
- There was a credit of \$5,000 for the return of old equipment, thus the EMS Supply line is not spent as that credit is worked off.
- There is an increase in the protective gear & uniforms line due to uniform sets coming due for replacement (the life cycle of gear is 10 years and the cost is \$3,000 per set. There was a suggestion of using EMS funds towards gear.
- The fuel & oil line varies with call volume and locations, as well as price.
- Vehicles will be maintained in the next month due to the inspection dates, so invoices have not been received yet.
- There was a suggestion to try to use unexpended money first.
- There were concerns about underspent lines.
- There was a discussion about the communications line: the Department got a half-price deal from Motorola for mobile radios (\$2,260 per radio: 4 out of FY17 and 4 out of FY18); the portable radios need to be upgraded to be compatible with the upgrades being done by Rockingham Dispatch (\$4,200/ea.) Information was provided about radio date of purchase, usage, cost, and repair/replace reasoning. The Budget Committee will postpone making a recommendation until this data plus information on periodic truck maintenance vs. truck repairs is reviewed.
- Chief Butler mentioned a possible Warrant Article for the repacking on the pump on Tank 1. Mr. Cordes said that the Selectmen will try to find the money for this in the budget.

After the Chief Officers left, discussion continued and the Committee asked for an updated information sheet (to the once provided last year, on the status of radios and purchases made in the past 3 years (to cover 2015 to present to update the older document).

APPROVE MINUTES FROM OCTOBER 11, 2017

Ms. Anderson clarified that bond payments would allow the Town to have level funding in the budget.

Mary Jo Holmes made a motion to approve the minutes of October 11, 2017. Pat Martel seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0-1 (Joe Miccile, abstention).

SCHOOL BUDGET UPDATES/INFORMATION

The Budget Committee will post a meeting to be tentatively held at 8PM on November 8, 2017, to follow the public forum at the Fremont Library on the school budget.

There was discussion about the following topics: the return of the unexpected fund balance of \$651,765; the necessary building work that was successfully done at Ellis; class sizes; declining enrollment; tuition reserve fund usage (out-of-district or just for Sanborn); the high school tuition cost; and the (high) percentage of identified students.

TOWN BUDGET UPDATES/INFORMATION

There was review of the electricity bid process just competed today by the Town and School District (done through the Selectmen's Office). The rate accepted is 36 months at 0.08272. The current price is 0.0973. There are no penalties for increases or decreases in usage.

4196 INSURANCE

There was an update on the insurance line. The Town received the invoice for 2018 in a lower amount of \$55,206 (down from the original estimate of \$67,887). The Board of Selectmen will vote on this tomorrow.

Mary Jo Holmes recommended (reapproved) \$56,725 in line 4196 Insurance. Joe Miccile seconded the motion. Motion passed 6:0.

There was discussion about the highway budget, which will be reviewed again at the October 28th meeting. Topics of discussion included: part-time vs. full-time position; the high cost of benefits; and prioritizing roadwork. Mr. Cordes will review these with the Selectmen.

There was discussion about the police department budget, including the following topics: merit pay/raises based on performance; paying higher wages vs. incentives; longevity; concern about raise increases inconsistent with those of other Town employees.

It was recommended that Departments prioritize budgetary items.

OTHER NEXT MEETING DATE: OCTOBER 25, 2017 – Fremont Town Hall, Main Floor Meeting Room

ADJOURNMENT *At 9:05 PM, Mary Jo Holmes made a motion to adjourn. Gene Cordes seconded the motion. Motion passed 6:0.*

Respectfully submitted by,
Susan Perry, Secretary