

FREMONT BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
Fremont Public Library, Fremont, NH 03044
November 8, 2017
7PM

PUBLIC FORUM ON THE FY19 SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET
6:00 – 7:00 PM AT THE FREMONT PUBLIC LIBRARY, FREMONT, NH

Present were: School Board members Jennifer Brown, Greg Fraize, Susan Levine, Angela O'Connell and Brittany Thompson, Superintendent Allyn Hutton, Business Administrator Susan Penny. Members of the public included: Budget Committee Members Mary Anderson, Pat Martel, Gene Cordes, Joe Miccile, Kathy Miccile, Josh Yokela, and Mary Jo Holmes; School Principal Andy Haas, Assistant Principal Brigid Connelly, IT Director Carla Smith, and Special Services Director Melissa McKeon; Jeff Rowell and Sara Lundquist, and Susan Perry, Recording Secretary.

Superintendent Allyn Hutton introduced herself and thanked Ellis staff and the Fremont community for the warm welcome since her arrival in July 2017. She especially appreciated the assistance of Road Agent Leon Holmes Jr who helped determine road conditions during the recent storm and first school cancelation of the school year.

Ms. Hutton gave a presentation on the proposed FY19 school district budget. There was collaborative work done between staff and administration to come up with a budget supporting the following goals set by the School Board: 1) support staff in developing quality assessments and using student performance data to inform instruction; 2) strive to provide quality learning opportunities for staff; 3) provide quality facilities that support Pre K-8 students learning and safety, in a fiscally responsible manner; and 4) expand and improve its communication with the greater Fremont community. The past three years' spending history was studied that resulted in about \$28,000 of budget adjustments. There was mention of contractual increases that include salaries (4%), benefits (2.7%), transportation (1.5 – 2%) and Sanborn Tuition (estimate of 2% increase based on actual number of students). Budget reductions include: new staff hires, Microsoft licensing, legal services, conversion to propane, and department expendables. Efforts to reduce costs include: seeking State infrastructure grants to help with building needs; applying for e-rate support; copier bid; supply reductions; annually reviewing effectiveness of new initiatives; and working with Sanborn District on combined purchasing/professional development.

The budget presented reflects a .71% increase from the current year. Proposed increases include: a full-time math specialist (anticipated \$89,000 – Masters, step 10 plus benefits) and a part-time reading specialist (anticipated \$35,000 – Masters, step 10 with no benefits), to help increase student performance in math and reading. There was review of historical data for Fremont (preschool – grade 8) in the following areas: budget cost, per pupil cost (\$13,966 vs. the State average of \$15,034 in FY16), student to teacher ratio (12.3 vs. State average of 11.8 in 2017), and comparison of expenditures in (it was noted that Fremont spent 57% on regular education as opposed to the State average of 41%).

There was discussion about the maintenance trust fund and the tuition trust fund, acknowledging past confusion and the importance of moving forward in a collaborative way that benefits education as well as taxpayers. Two options were presented related to the expendable trust funds. Allocations do not require additional tax dollars.

OPTION A: Allocate \$50,000 to tuition and \$25,000 to maintenance, \$25,000 to technology

OPTION B: Allocate \$25,000 to maintenance, \$25,000 to technology and \$50,000 to unanticipated special education needs

People can send budget thoughts/suggestions to Ms. Hutton. The school budget will be presented to the Budget Committee on November 15, 2017. The hope is to have an educationally sound and fiscally responsible school budget.

REGULAR BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
7:00 PM AT FREMONT PUBLIC LIBRARY, FREMONT, NH

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Mary Anderson called the November 8, 2017 Budget Committee meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance at 7:05 PM at the Fremont Public Library. Present were: Budget Committee Chair Mary Anderson, Vice Chair Pat Martel, Members Gene Cordes, Mary Jo Holmes, Joe Miccile, Kathy Miccile, and Josh Yokela; Town Administrator Heidi Carlson, Selectmen's Clerk Kathy Clement, FCTV Operator Bruce White, and Recording Secretary Susan Perry.

DISCUSSION ABOUT SCHOOL BUDGET FORUM

The Board discussed the school budget forum that was held tonight prior to this meeting. Appreciation was given to Fremont Cable Television staff for helping with the recording and broadcasting of the forum and meeting.

There was discussion about what information the Budget Committee wanted to see in the school budget “books”. Within each line item, the Committee would like to see: adopted budget for last year, revised budget with transfers and expenditures, this year’s budget, and the proposed budget for next year. There was concern about the budget increase (though not exorbitant), the decrease in enrollment, low class sizes, and confusion regarding if a math specialist was already budgeted for last year or not. The effort taken by the Superintendent to apply for grants was applauded.

MINUTES: NOVEMBER 1, 2017

Mary Jo Holmes made a motion to approve the minutes of November 1, 2017. Josh Yokela seconded the motion. Motion passed 7:0.

TOWN BUDGETS

4312 – HIGHWAY – TABLE UNTIL NOVEMBER 15, 2017

The total Highway budget is up about \$23,000 of which about \$12,000 is attributed to the increase in hours from 32/week to 40/week. The budget request appeared to be thoughtful and it was noted that projects were not able to be done during the years when the Town did not get much passed. Pros and cons of using a bond to help get caught up on road work was discussed. It was noted that there is about \$40,000 left in the budget as of now until the end of the year. There has been discussion with Mr. Holmes about what projects could be done/encumbered by the end of the year. There was discussion about planning for full-time Town positions (as opposed to part-time), with consideration of benefit package costs, applicant attraction, and employee retention. The Town’s tax rate and taxpayer affordability were of concern. Ms. Carlson spoke about her awareness each day on the tax burden to residents as well as the positions of the town employees (choices made, love of the job, insurance cost paid for by the town as a benefit, etc.).

Gene Cordes recommended the Board of Selectmen’s recommendation of \$575,079 for the Highway budget (4312). Pat Martel seconded the motion. Motion did not pass: 3 aye:3 nay (J. Yokela, J. Miccile, K. Miccile):1 abstention (M. Holmes).

It was noted that Jennifer Brown was absent tonight and that could be the tie-breaking vote. Another vote will take place at the November 15th meeting.

4155 – PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION: TABLE UNTIL NOVEMBER 15, 2017

WARRANT ARTICLES

It was clarified that the amount of the One Sky Community Services Warrant Article could be amended at the Deliberative Session, but could be recommended by the Selectmen/Budget Committee. Past practice is to put forth the requested amount by the particular agency. The Selectmen have had extensive discussion about the road improvement articles, noting the importance of Beede Hill Road in particular. No decisions have been made to remove either article from the Warrant at this point. It is important for residents to know what is needed for them to decide. Ms. Carlson noted that headway has been made with replacing the generator at the Safety Complex with encumbered money from last year plus \$35,000-\$40,000 out of the Capital Reserve Fund for Emergency Management Equipment. The Selectmen voted to remove the 2018 Warrant Article adding \$25,000 to the Emergency Management fund since the majority of Town generator projects will be completed, and movement on joining with the School District regarding a generator is not imminent, and needs significant planning. It was noted that Superintendent Hutton has included a \$180,000 request for a generator for the school in the grant for which she has applied and on which she is awaiting information.

The Town Historian has spoken to the Selectmen about placing \$15,000 in Article K (the Historic Museum Renovation CRF), instead of the \$25,000 since more time is needed to discuss a new project.

It is anticipated that the pending fire truck repairs will be done out of this year’s operating budget.

NEXT MEETING DATES: NOVEMBER 15, 2017 (Town Hall Basement Room – Recorded Live) and NOVEMBER 29, 2017

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:20 PM, Gene Cordes made a motion to adjourn. Joe Miccile seconded the motion. Motion passed 7:0.

Respectfully submitted by,
Susan Perry, Secretary