

The meeting came to order at 6:00 pm at the Fremont Town Hall, main floor meeting room. Present were members Jack Downing, Steve Harms, Leon Holmes Jr, Mark Pitkin and Greta St Germain; and guest Wayne Robinson, Brentwood Road Agent/Police Chief.

Robinson had been invited to attend the meeting to share with the Committee some information about how the Brentwood Highway Department has evolved, specifically in the transition from contracted equipment hire to Town-owned equipment and personnel.

St.Germain thanked Robinson for accepting the invitation and introduced the Committee. Discussion began with Robinson sharing some demographics of the Town of Brentwood such as 4,200 residents, 62 miles of road; number of plow trucks used in the winter four; trucks assigned to 15 miles each truck, with two 550's used for clean up.

With Brentwood's Highway Department there are two full time employees plus four seasonal drivers for their winter plowing. These drivers have been consistent for several years.

A seasonal winter driver is paid \$16.24 per hour. He shared that they went through 900 tons of mixed material sand/salt (Morton's) purchased through a vendor he has used for the past several years. Their budget is approximately \$74,000 for sand and salt alone.

Robinson shared that his role with the Town is multi-dimensional as the Road Agent, Police Chief and also in charge of mowing cemeteries and the recreation ball fields twice a week. He said it is not rare to see him personally on top of a mower during the summer months. Normally, his summer months average 28 weeks from April 1st to November 1st. Seasonal help is brought in to assist with mowing and raking.

The Committee asked about current equipment. Robinson shared that they have one back hoe that was purchased new 11 years ago; this along with a 6 wheel dump truck were the two pieces of equipment Brentwood began to build their fleet with. He went on to share that owning the equipment is the best-case scenario for any town. Pitkin expressed his concern with his pay structure and the direction in which Fremont should proceed.

It was shared that Brentwood has inserted equipment payments as a line item directly into the Highway budget as past practice. However, he believes this year that will change due to accounting changes; this will allow their town to continually meet the equipment needs and keep equipment on a realistic replacement schedule.

The Committee asked for the cost that Brentwood incurred to reclaim North Road. This was \$75,000 complete for two coats of pavement, plus additional cost for drainage and 7 loads of gravel.

Robinson shared that annually a warrant article has been placed before the town's people for hot top in the amount of \$250,000 and has consistently passed in past years; this has allowed him to reclaim 2 miles annually. The Committee shared Fremont's current struggles and the need to play catch up with our road conditions.

This amount of \$250,000 is above and beyond his \$403,000 operating budget for the Highway Department. On average Brentwood has added \$50,000 into their equipment fund annually.

Another fund Robinson mentioned was a Bridge fund that has approximately \$20,000 added annually. Fremont does not have such a fund and the Committee felt this should also be addressed. Leon Holmes Jr will research and submit a bridge report for the next FHSC Committee meeting.

Robinson stated that his challenge annually is to present his needs and rationale to the Towns people, who consistently support Robinson's requests. He also commended the Brentwood Selectmen for supporting the needs to upgrade and maintain the infrastructure of the town. However he is not sure how the budget and additional budget request will be received in the current economy. Brentwood is not currently an SB2 Town.

The 3 warrant articles that remain consistent with Brentwood are:

- \$20,000 for Bridge Fund
- \$250,000 for hot top
- \$50,000 for equipment upgrades

Brentwood also has a Summer Budget that is approximately \$294,000 for two full time employees and three part time employees paid at the rate of \$11.42 per hour.

St. Germain asked Robinson about his role as Police Chief and amount of employees for that Department. Currently Brentwood has six full-time Police officers and four part-time. He has felt this was sufficient for the size of his town. The starting rate for part-time policemen is \$17.22 per hour. In addition there was discussion about his police vehicles. Brentwood purchases a new cruiser annually and normally retires the old vehicle with over 100,000 miles on it.

General discussion continued as the Committee shared Fremont's growing struggles and budget constraints.

Robinson was thanked for his time and he left the meeting at 8:10 pm.

Members then turned to a review of the two proposals received for the highway shed renovation project, which was put out to bid in October. Two bids were received by the November 9, 2010 deadline. Committee members reviewed these proposals and a two-page summary of the information prepared by Thom Roy.

There was discussion about the cost of the proposal, leading Pitkin to offer that he was willing to donate some resources and time to the project to get it to come in at a number below the amount in the Capital Reserve Fund that the Town could support.

There was discussion about the items that the Town's labor force (Pitkin and Holmes Jr) could do. This led to a list of items to be removed from the proposals, and sent back to the two vendors for reconsideration and an updated number.

The items to be removed include:

- ❖ Insulation of the bay floor
- ❖ Lighting package in the bay area
- ❖ Kitchen

- ❖ Flooring in the bathroom area
- ❖ All site preparation and site work
- ❖ Installation of the septic system
- ❖ Removal of the hot top in the existing bay area

It was felt that all of these items could be completed by Town staff at lower prices than those includes in the proposals. Pitkin offered to discount his services to save the Town some of these additional expenses as he supports the need for this remodeling of the Town shed.

Members did not get the chance to review minutes for October 25, 2010. These will be reviewed at the next scheduled Highway Study Committee meeting on December 27, 2010 at 6:00 pm.

The meeting adjourned 8:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Greta St. Germain