

FREMONT BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
Fremont Town Hall
295 Main Street
Fremont, NH 03044
September 25, 2013
7:00 PM

I. CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Charles Kimball called the September 24, 2013 Budget Committee meeting to order at 7:00 pm on the main floor of Fremont Town Hall.

Present were: Budget Committee Members Gene Cordes, Charles Kimball, Joe Micelle, Mike Nygren, and Ida Keane (filling in for Greg Fraize as School Board Representative); Town Administrator Heidi Carlson, and Recording Secretary Susan Perry.

Members of the public included Fremont School Superintendent Betsey Cox-Buteau.

Mike Nygren motioned to table the minutes of September 16, 2013. Gene Cordes seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0.

II. SCHOOL BOARD: UNANTICIPATED FUNDS DISCUSSION (CONT'D)

Ida Keane referred to the School Board's request last week for the Budget Committee's approval of a special meeting to accept Title 1 grant funds for Ellis as a Focus School. Since then, the Superintendent had spoken with their attorney about an alternative way to accept these funds. This qualifies under RSA 32:11 to apply for over expenditure. The Budget Committee had done something similar to this last year for an EdJobs grant that was not put into the budget by error by the Business Administrator last year (forgot to put in the revenue line). The Budget Committee had allowed this and it did not affect taxes. This letter would go to the Commissioner of Education upon endorsement of the Budget Committee. Once complete, this process will allow the District to accept \$32,000 in focus school funds and \$4,700 that is required to be set aside in the regular Title I funds for focus school initiatives because Ellis is a focus school. Ms. Keane read the draft letter and clarified that the School Board was asking the Budget Committee to vote to allow the School Board to petition the Commissioner to overspend the budget for up to \$40,000. There was no legal cost, save the letter that was drafted by Counsel. The Department of Revenue would be notified when the Commissioner signs the letter.

Ms. Carlson mentioned a concern about the letter saying "up to \$40,000" (how citizens would know if the School Department received less than that amount). Dr. Cox-Buteau said that this should not affect the tax rate and that the District had nothing budgeted for the Focus School program that was mandatory for the District. The Federal government gave a block grant to New Hampshire and allotted \$32,000 to Fremont to access through grants. The District needs to state how the money will be spent and all money has to be used this year.

Dr. Cox-Buteau clarified that the DRA will allow Ms. Carlson to put \$40,000 (re. setting the tax rate) once the Commissioner signs it. She said she would send the MS-24 to Ms. Carlson so she could be sure it increases by \$40,000.

Mr. Nygren was concerned about not being able to see that money would be available and not affect the tax rate. Ms. Keane explained the need to go this route because of the failed vote on the Warrant Article allowing the District's use of unanticipated funding.

Gene Cordes motioned that the Budget Committee support the School District's petitioning of the Commissioner of Education, with the understanding that whatever unanticipated expenses need to be offset (net residual on the tax rate). Ida Keane seconded the motion. Motion passed: 3 aye: 1 nay (M. Nygren): 1 abstain (J. Micelle).

Information about the two-year staffing comparisons would be emailed to the Budget Committee members.

III. LIBRARY BUGET (4550) TRUSTEES JOHN HENNELLY, ERIC ABNEY, CHERYL ROWELL, LIBRARIAN BETHANY BRACE

It was mentioned that, due to illness of the person who has done maintenance for the library, there might be delay in maintenance until they find another person to help. There was no specific cost for projects. Any project over \$5,000 would need to go to bid. Mr. Cordes said that the Trustees knew that some items needed to be addressed, such as exterior maintenance, so money was moved around.

Ms. Keane asked what the library was not getting since the Books and Media line was decreased. Librarian Bethany Brace replied that she had not done some book or DVD deals. Ms. Brace said that at least \$13,000 was necessary to have in the media line (for e-books, etc.)

Answering Mike Nygren, Eric Abney reported that it took about 82 hours a week to run the library (2 people there at a time), plus 12 hours/week for administration (equaling about 94 hours/week on average). Mr. Nygren had concern about the staffing numbers vs. the hours the library was open and the tasks that were done. He referenced the work done at Town Hall. Ms. Brace replied that 50 people on average visit the library per day, which was more than the Town Hall.

The oil price was locked in at \$3.36. A chlorinator was installed this year and water sampling has been clean since then. There had been bacteria build up in the pipes due to lack of water usage.

Mr. Abney mentioned that they had polled patrons to determine what they wanted to have at the library (cook books, etc.) so upgrades were made to accommodate people's requests.

Joe Micelle recommended the Board of Selectmen's budget recommendation of \$105,879 in 4550: LIBRARY. Ida Keane seconded the motion. Motion passed 4:1 (M. Nygren)

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

- a. APPROVE MINUTES FOR MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 16, 2013 (TABLED)

b. TOWN BUDGETS

4153 LEGAL EXPENSES

There were two pending Fairpoint assessment cases.

Gene Cordes recommended the Board of Selectmen's budget recommendation of \$20,000 in 4153: JUDICIAL & LEGAL EXPENSE. Mike Nygren seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0.

4415 HEALTH

Mike Nygren recommended the Board of Selectmen's budget recommendation of \$660 in 4415: HEALTH. Gene Cordes seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0.

V. OTHER

There was brief discussion about the Town Clerk/Tax Collector joint position and budget.

Mr. Micelle noted that, due to a change in his employment hours, he would need to resign from the Budget Committee.

VI. NEXT MEETING DATE: WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 2, 2013

4520 PARKS & RECREATION AT 7PM

4220 FIRE RESCUE DEPARTMENT AT 7:30 PM

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Mike Nygren motioned to adjourn at 8:03 PM. Joe Micelle seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0.

Respectfully submitted by,

Susan Perry

Budget Committee Secretary