

APPROVED 10/22/2009

These minutes have been amended and re-written with input from all Selectmen and are shown here in their final form.

At 6:10 pm Chairman Gates called the Board's meeting to order in the basement meeting room of the Fremont Town Hall. Present were Selectmen Greta St Germain, Brett Hunter, and Donald Gates Jr; and Town Administrator Heidi Carlson.

Board members continued reviewing and working on recommendations for 2010 budgets.

There was discussion about keeping the fourth full-time police officer position open (unfilled) and what the savings would be for 2010, considering that the Town would continue to use part-time police officers instead.

There was discussion about pay raises and the Board was having difficulty with budgets that have been submitted to include raises. The Board discussed furloughs and what type of savings there would be for reduction in full-time staff and part-time staff. The anticipated savings of a one week furlough for the five full-time (non-police) personnel was about \$3,500 annually. There was then discussion about what services would suffer. Hunter stated he did not want to see any change to services and felt the \$3,500 savings and loss of service was not worthwhile to pursue at this time.

Gates suggested to the other Board members, perhaps for consideration next year, that they tell Departments to submit two budgets, the one you want (the "wish list" budget) and another one that incorporates what you want with resultant cuts to cover the increases for the things you really want to do.

Gates stated that the responsible submission is a flat or less budget, and if you want additional things, show the Board where you can make the cuts.

There was discussion about State revenues going down and what that would do to impact the tax rate in future years. Any combination of a loss of revenues or increase in appropriations of \$425,000 (approximately) raises the tax rate by \$1.00 per thousand.

There was also lengthy discussion about the school portion of the tax rate and how to have the school officials get costs down and to be more affordable and accountable to the Fremont taxpayer.

4210 Police Department

Selectmen began reviewing the Police budget and made recommendations and comments as follows. Items changed are explained as follows:

4210-101 Clerical Wages \$26,565 – reduced to remove the 3% cost of living increase in the Board's recommendation.

4210-103 Telephone \$3,840 – further discussion on the bundle billing and getting an estimate from Comcast for the Town's telephone services.

4210-105 Postage \$400

4210-107 Office Supplies \$2,000

4210-108 Internet Service \$1,284 – currently through Comcast and includes all of the safety services at the Safety Complex.

4210-109 Printing \$650

4210-111 Equipment \$5,358 – reduced by \$350 by reducing the miscellaneous replacement/repair amount in half. It was submitted as a \$700 request.

4210-113 Computer Programs \$5,835 - Carlson said that Chief Janvrin had received an update from IMC just this week regarding the cost for the computer program maintenance and support and he said it was higher than what had been budgeted.

4210-201 Firearms Training \$3296 - reduced to remove the 3% cost of living increase in the Board's recommendation.

4210-202 Firearms Supplies \$2,500

4210-203 In-Service Training \$2,532 – reduced to remove the 3% cost of living increase; as well as to recommend only 12 hours per year for in-service training per officer (1 hour per month) in the Board's recommendation. Chief Janvrin's request includes 24 hours per officer per year and the annual Police Standards and Training requirement is 8 hours per officer per year. There was lengthy discussion about training and what the Town pays for.

4210-204 In-Service Supplies \$500

4210-205 First Aid Training \$843

4210-207 New Officer Training \$4,208 – reduced to reflect no 3% cost of living increase.

4210-209 Firearms Range \$500

4210-301 Patrol Wages \$213,194 – There was discussion about the two weeks of holiday pay done at year end. The Board decided this was a discussion for planning in another budget year. All wages reflect the Board's recommendation without a 3% cost of living increase. It also includes only nine months of a new officer being hired. The Board discussed the plan for hiring a fourth full-time officer, which for the immediate future, would be to train someone to take the place of Sergeant Larochelle when he is deployed in August 2010. The Board's final decision included budgeting for 9 months of a new officer salary at \$25,272 (reduced by 25% from the request of \$36,504).

4210-303 Call Out Wages \$3,000

4210-307 Investigation Wages \$36,005 recommended by Selectmen at the 2009 default amount to include no 3% cost of living increase.

4210-309 Mileage 0 – no funding requested in this line item.

4210-311 Prosecution \$12,420 – this is a contract service through the Rockingham County Attorney's Office.

4210-401 Uniforms & Safety Equipment \$6,600

4210-403 Communications \$1,912

There was discussion about \$25 per month for the cell phone reimbursement in comparison to \$15 for other departments.

4210-405 Equipment Replacement & Upgrade \$500

4210-407 First Aid Equipment \$500

4210-409 Investigation Equipment \$1,000

4210-411 OHRV Equipment \$250

4210-501 Fuel Primary Patrol \$9,145

4210-503 Fuel Backup Patrol \$2,750

4210-505 Fuel SUV \$825

4210-507 Fuel Unmarked \$1,500

4210-508 Fuel DARE Car \$415

4210-509 Fuel OHRV's \$415

4210-511 Fuel All Other \$75

At 7:28 pm Cindy and Randy Grasso and Diane Rossi came into the meeting.

4210-601 Maintenance Primary Patrol \$2,500

4210-603 Maintenance Backup Patrol \$1,000

4210-605 Maintenance SUV \$500

4210-607 Maintenance Unmarked \$1,000

4210-609 Maintenance DARE Car \$ 250

4210-611 Maintenance Unit 7 OHRV \$600
4210-613 Maintenance Unit 8 OHRV \$600
4210-615 Maintenance All Other & Labor \$3,000

There was discussion about the increased cost of maintenance on this unit given its age (8 years); and the potential problems of overall maintenance on an aging cruiser fleet. Given this, all of the maintenance lines were all left as submitted by the Chief and recommended by the Board.

There was discussion about the OHRV units, which were purchased on a grant, and the increased maintenance issues. The Town may ultimately have to fund some of these future costs.

With all of the changes, Hunter summed the budget lines as recommended to \$359,017; and this recommended budget is without a 3% increase in pay and other items reduced by the Board.

Gates moved to recommend \$359,017 for the Police Department budget. St Germain seconded and the vote was approved 3-0.

Randy and Cindy Grasso came up to the table and were introduced to the newer Selectmen.

The Grasso's came to talk to the Board about the section of Beede Hill Road near their home. Gates said that they had reviewed the emails from the Grasso's regarding this matter.

Randy said that when it was done, they did not think anything of it, until they went to sleep, it sounded like a jet going down the runway and is even worse with passing trucks. They feel the noise of passing traffic is unlivable, unbearable. The Grasso's said they were glad the Highway Department was working on this portion of Beede Road, because of the poor condition and they thought the shim (binder coarse) was just the beginning step to a final layer of pavement.

They mentioned that some of the roadway had sunk in from the truck traffic and the Highway Department had fixed the frost heaves from the previous winter. Randy mentioned that a couple of years ago the Highway Department put a short binder coarse on one side of Beede Hill Road (going north); and they thought this meant final paving was coming.

It was explained that the shim coat is done to level it out, and it is usually paved after that.

Gates explained that in going back to a default budget we are working with what we have, and the Road Agent fixed that section of the roadway based on his review of areas he thought needed work.

Randy said it was smoother before it was shimmed. The shimming is a binder coat that doesn't really stick and it takes a long time to melt and "stick."

Randy said that when you drive over the shimmed portion in your car you can hear it, but to be in their house, they can't even hear their TV. In response to a question, they said they are the only home in that stretch of roadway. Gates said that we are running out of time this year to get it done, and if we were to do something this year it would need to be done prior to the 15th of December because paving plants will shut down for the season.

Gates said the Board would have a conversation with Holmes when he is in later this evening, so we will have a better idea of what the different options may be at this time. Gates said that we have done a band aid approach to a lot of things this year, given our budget constraints. We also have budget issues of winter for the months ahead, which are pending. Gates said he does not know what it would cost to

correct it, but can have the conversation with the Road Agent. If there were a dozen houses there, it may be easier to get a better idea of how others felt about it, and how it may affect others.

Randy said he thought a binder coat is meant to be paved over within a certain amount of time. Gates said that you want to have a little bit of crown to the road for safety reasons.

Randy said that he felt it was almost a waste of money, as it may have to be redone before the roadway is paved. He did say that it was a different lane than the last time, and it meets up where Epping did some recent paving work.

St Germain said that the Town is out of money in that line item, but Gates said that the Board and Road Agent needed to look at the budget to see if there are other areas where the money could be appropriated from, in order to provide a remedy.

It was stated that this road has a great deal of traffic from many other locations (such as the Town of Epping) and surrounding businesses. Fremont does not see the benefit and the revenue from these businesses to allow for road maintenance and road improvements. The heavy truck traffic contributes to the breakdown of the road.

The Board said they would have that conversation with the Road Agent later this evening and look at finances and get back to them to let them know what we can do.

Gates said as we put together our warrant for this year, we are going to do more to get people aware of what is going on and what is important for the Town to fund for repair of our roads and other maintenance items. We should be rebuilding at least 2 miles of road per year as the average road lasts 20 years and if we cannot keep up with that, the roads will eventually fall apart.

The monies proposed for Capital Reserve Funds were not funded this year, and that will affect the Town's long-term saving process. Gates said, the Grasso's and their neighbors, and all residents, need to get the information and get out and vote. There was discussion about educating the people so there was more understanding about the process so we would be allowed to get things done.

Gates further said that the Town Meeting Warrant generally identifies the roads that need to be done go on a warrant article and that people can consider it individually. There has been some consideration of how to move forward in a future year as part of the operating budget.

There was further discussion about the budget and revenues received from the NH Highway Block Grant and how that reimburses the Town's general fund to offset highway maintenance expenses.

Gates, in closing, said there are no guarantees for this year, but something could also be put on a warrant article for next year. He urged people to understand what needs to be done within the Town.

The Grasso's left the meeting at 7:48 pm.

At 7:50 pm Gates moved to enter non-public session pursuant to NH RSA 91-A:3 II (c) to discuss a matter which if discussed in public would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person, other than a member of the body itself. St Germain seconded and the vote was approved 3-0.

A motion was made by Gates to come out of non-public session at 7:58 pm. Hunter seconded and the vote was unanimously approved 3-0.

Motion was then made by Gates to abate \$1,150 on parcel 01-074 for the 2006 tax lien. Hunter seconded and the vote was unanimously approved 3-0. The Board will sign an abatement form next week.

Diane Rossi left the meeting at this time and Martin Ferwerda came into the meeting.

Ferwerda submitted a recent letter from the Fremont Planning Board, an engineering update report from L C Engineering, and the prior year Agreement with the Board of Selectmen. Gates read through the letter dated 10/08/09 from the Planning Board to the Board of Selectmen with regard to renewing the Gravel Excavation at Governor's Forest:

At last night's Planning Board meeting the members unanimously voted to renew the Excavation Permit for Governor's Forest, Map 3 Lot 002, with an expiration date of October 7, 2010, and with the following conditions:

- 1. That a \$70,000 excavation reclamation bond be secured and received prior to October 9, 2009.*
- 2. The roadway for Linda Lane Phase C and Linda Lane Phase D-2 be completed by December 1, 2009. If it is not completed by that time it will need to be bonded to the amount of \$137,900, as calculated by the Town Engineer, less any work completed.*
- 3. All engineering costs are to be paid in full by November 5, 2009.*
- 4. Hours of operation are from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm Monday – Friday with no excavation operation on weekends.*
- 5. Noise reduction on Saturday.*
- 6. No blasting on the weekends.*
- 7. One week's written notice to abutters and to the Town prior to blasting.*

Ferwerda's current Irrevocable Letter of Credit expires October 11, 2009. He said he would not have the letter renewed on time given that it is October 8th today and Monday is a holiday. In response to a question, Ferwerda did say that he would get this all wrapped up in a more timely fashion than was done last year.

As Gates read through the Planning Board's conditional approval items, Ferwerda made reference to some of the items that the Selectmen have never required in the past. There was discussion about the guidance received by the Planning Board, and securing the Town's interests as well as those of the site development.

Ferwerda said it is his intent to have the road hot topped by Thanksgiving, thus alleviating the need for the requirement on some of the bonding. He said this would be the best option.

Ferwerda reviewed the old Selectmen's agreement and suggested the same agreement as last year, be prepared. The Board will review a draft and send it out to Ferwerda for signature.

Ferwerda dropped off an envelope, which he indicated was payment of engineering fees.

Ferwerda stated again that it is still his plan to finish the project as the site plan is laid out. He said they do cut grass and provide for snow plowing within the development.

Hunter moved to agree with the Planning Board recommendation. St Germain seconded and the vote was approved 3-0.

Ferwerda argued that the Board of Selectmen controls mobile home parks and that the provision is no longer within the Zoning Ordinance.

At 8:15 pm Ferwerda left the meeting.

Guerwood Holmes came into the meeting at 8:20 pm.

Guerwood apologized to the Board for not being here at the meeting a few weeks ago, saying that he stayed home because he was afraid he would be upset by things that were going on, and was afraid he would blow up. Gates explained that the Board is trying to understand what is being done and that no questions asked should be internalized as a personal attack. He said the Board is trying to know better what is going on and have more of a transparent communication with all Departments. He said the Board might also have some other ideas to generate with regard to projects or current happenings. Holmes further stated that he sent an email to Carlson, which was never received by her, and believes it could have gone to another address in the building in error.

Gates said that that they had meet the Grasso's earlier this evening and maybe there are areas we need to discuss from time to time regarding any projects or plans before they are initiated. Gates said the Board needs to know what Holmes is thinking about with regard to projects and plans. He said it was not a slight in any way, of the efforts of Holmes or the Department, and that we have made a lot of progress and changes over the years.

Holmes said that for the last 23 years, our Highway Department has grown and runs smoothly and all of a sudden there are a lot of questions being brought up. He said he feels that people know what he and the Department is doing, by seeing him out there every day.

Gates said the Board answers to the taxpayers and Holmes answers to the Board, and that the questions have to do with the type of projects that are planned and the Selectmen are getting into more detail of each of the Departments, to better understand and for better overall transparency of the Town and all of its activities.

Holmes said that from day to day he does not always know what they might be doing, they may start on what may be an hour project; and it turns into a whole day, or even a second day. Things happen and need to be addressed. He said there are no more big projects scheduled, no paving and no road building going on, and that they tend to the day to day maintenance of Town roads and it covers a wide variety of things.

Holmes said that he knows that St Germain had done some research on a backhoe and asked where that came from. Gates said that the Budget Committee has asked about it for the past two years. Holmes acknowledged that it is something that has been tossed around for several years and that someone needs to do additional research. Holmes was anticipating the Budget Committee or Selectmen would form a study committee.

Holmes said that today he did a lot work on researching it, and it might be cheaper and it might be more expensive. He said that no one asked him about it.

Holmes said that when he is here to meet with the Board that he is not allocated enough time. He felt the Board needed to schedule more time for him. Gates said that there is always time on the agenda at 7:00 pm for Department Heads.

Holmes said that he feels angry about the process and that he was not consulted about the backhoe issue. In response, St Germain said she has crunched the numbers with an accountant. She said there is a Capital Reserve Fund for this purpose as well.

Holmes presented some information about when he began as the Road Agent; he passed these sheets of paper around for all to review. The first sheet included the following information:

When I was elected Road Agent in 1986 or 87, I had two backhoes, one loader, and one six wheel dump truck. There were only about 18 miles of road and in the winter when I was doing a private job septic system or house lot, I would have to leave the job and go get ready for snow. What a pain that was. That was because I was a private excavator and Road Agent.

As the Town grew, I had to either give up doing private excavating or give up Road Agent. So I chose to be just Road Agent.

It slowly became a full-time Road Agent with no benefits. So, here I am just about a full-time Road Agent with no benefits. Why did I do this? Maybe it's because I love this Town.

He began then by discussing his research and information on the purchase of his backhoe. He indicated a cost (new) of \$83,000 and offered the following as the operational costs and income on such a machine.

EXPENSES		
Cost of new backhoe		\$83,000
Trade in of old equipment		-\$32,000
Payment Plan on balance		\$51,000
	Annual	
Financed over 5 years with estimated interest	\$12,500	
Cost for Fuel	\$3,000	
Cost for Insurances	\$5,000	
Cost of Tires	\$2,000	
Grease, change oil, engine, etc maintenance	\$300	
Wear & Tear, normal breakdowns, change Transmission oil, rear end, etc	\$2,000	
Depreciation per year	\$10,000	
Income Tax and Social Security	\$20,000	
TOTAL COSTS	\$54,900	
INCOME		
Assume 24 hours worked per week for 32 weeks/annually at \$65/hour	\$49,920	
TOTAL INCOME	\$49,920	
OPERATING PROFIT / LOSS	-\$4,980	LOSS
No benefits paid		

He then presented a similar listing for a Town-Owned Loader / Backhoe:

EXPENSES		
Cost of new backhoe		\$82,000
Financed / Payment annually	\$12,000	
Cost for Fuel	\$3,000	
Cost for Insurances	\$5,000	
Cost of Tires	\$2,000	
Grease, change oil, engine, etc maintenance	\$300	
Wear & Tear, normal breakdowns, change Transmission oil, rear end, etc	\$2,000	
Depreciation per year	\$10,000	

Operator 24 hours x 32 weeks at \$25/hour	\$19,200	
Social Security	\$2,000	
Benefits	\$5,000	
Winter Operator	\$10,000	
TOTAL COSTS	\$70,500	

Holmes pointed out that in terms of working on Town equipment, they have no tools, not even a wrench to change a tire, no grease gun, no compressor for air and painting, no welder, no place to wash salt off, no place to put vehicles or equipment under cover. He said that most Towns demand a place to wash vehicles with grease, salt, etc on a concrete slab, which is drained into a tank and pumped periodically. Right now the Town’s one-ton dump truck and Guerwood’s backhoe are washed in his yard. There is no water at the Highway shed. Holmes also said that there should be a porta-toilet at the site for use by the Town’s employee.

Holmes said that he felt the Town needed a building with tools before the Town purchased a backhoe, and that the Town needs about three six wheeler dump trucks before a backhoe.

He listed out the current contracted six wheel trucks, and their ages, ranging from a 1983 to a 1986. He said these trucks are all independently owned, registered, insured and inspected, in general, for use only in the winter months plowing snow for the Town. If there is snow, they make money, and use them four or five months of the year, but they really don’t make a lot of money especially if they break down.

St.Germain stated that this is the same for other towns that contract out there snow plowing

It was suggested that road mileages in comparison to other towns should also be considered, and Holmes said maybe it was time for a paid, full-time Road Agent.

There was discussion about one of the things that does not feel right to the Board, having someone else (aside from the Town’s full-time employee) hired to drive the Town’s one-ton truck. Gates said that we have one full-time town employee and said it would make more sense if he drove that vehicle.

St Germain said that the statutes would offer additional guidance about what is appropriate and what the Board’s duties are in regard to the overall financial operation of the Town. She said we want to conform to the laws of the State of NH.

St Germain said we are all working for the taxpayers. Holmes said that they (the taxpayers) know how the Highway Department works. He said there is a small group of people that do not like him, and you are “falling into their hands.”

St Germain said that Holmes appeared to have no regard for the Board’s time and did not show up for the scheduled meeting. Holmes said he had explained that and said to her that he could not deal with the way she works.

A verbal confrontation broke out when Mr. Holmes claimed that the Board penalized his budget because he failed to show up on September 24th, which the Board had scheduled as a time to meet with him.

Mr. Holmes verbally attacked St.Germain and accused her of asking too many questions claiming that she is out to destroy the town. Insults continued whereas Mr. Holmes directly spoke to Chairman Gates and Selectmen Hunter and instructed them to speak up against St.Germain, stating that she is going to ruin the Town.

Gates explained to Holmes that St.Germain has taken her elected position very seriously and that he has not witnessed any of her questions as out of line or in appropriate. Gates explained to Holmes the previous boards may have been a bit lacks in enforcing state RSA's or setting policies and he understands that change is difficult for people.

Again a heated discussion occurred as Mr. Holmes stated that in his 23 Years as Road Agent no one has ever questioned his work. St.Germain responded by stating that she has taken an Oath of Office therefore has an obligation to the taxpayers just as Mr. Holmes does for accountability and transparency and that is the over all goal of the Board.

St.Germain stated that on several occasions she had requested Holmes to be present inline with all other department Heads to discuss the overall Town affairs, and that this is only the second time Mr. Holmes has been present since she has been in office to discuss the Highway Department's affairs and plans. St.Germain went on to state that the Selectmen have the financial obligation to oversee spending in all budgets including the Highway Department and that large expenditures should be discussed prior the incurred charge by the Board and the Department Head as they (the Board of Selectmen) are the "watch dogs" of all budgets.

Mr. Holmes accused the Board of going behind his back in researching the cost of purchasing highway equipment. Holmes claimed that purchasing a backhoe was not the answer and that a committee should be formed to research the expense. Gates stated that St.Germain had apologized for the salesman's actions previously and was not aware that he had contacted Mr. Holmes for information.

Discussion continued as Mr. Holmes passed hand written papers around to discuss the overall income and expense information from use of his backhoe. Gates mentioned that residents have claimed that Mr. Holmes is out doing "busy work" at the expense of the Town and that the Board of Selectmen would like to know prior to this work being done. Holmes claimed that he just did not know where he would be from day to day. Hunter stated that we would ask for more open communication to the work intent and the Board agreed to Hunter's request.

Discussion went on concerning the use of Mr. Holmes's backhoe in relation to the Town purchasing their own, Mr. Holmes stated that he makes approximately \$50,000 per year but he maintains the equipment at his own expense. Gates stated that the Town could take the approach that if we purchased our own equipment that the Town could have it paid off within two years.

Discussion went on to reference roadside mowing. Holmes had passed around additional notes showing the cost of insurance that Leon Holmes Jr pays for in the amount of \$850 per year just to use the tractor for the roadside mowing near the end of summer. Holmes said that this is an added expense to the minimal money Holmes Jr makes doing the work. St Germain questioned why we are paying our full-time Highway person an additional wage while he is on town time. Gates stated that it never felt right when the decision was made in previous years. This is not an additional wage, but a rental rate for the hired tractor used doing the work. The way this has been done has changed over the years.

St.Germain referenced the potential of conflict of interest and mentioned nepotism stating that this kind of policy is adopted by other towns to avoid any conflict of interest or appearance of favoritism. Holmes said he never had heard of this word. St Germain went onto to explain to him that it references the hiring and supervising of family members, as it appears to show a clear conflict of interest. Holmes stated that he did not understand what that meant but he would look it up when he got home.

Gates asked Holmes about bidding out snow plowing to see if we are receiving the best price for the Town, Holmes stated that there would most likely be 20 respondents to any bids. Gates made the

statement that he did not realize that there were that many interested parties. Further discussion went on in relation to the hourly rate charged for snow plowing of six wheel contracted trucks at \$65.00 per hour. There was mention of other towns charging less and some towns that charge more.

St Germain stated that the Town of Merrimac, MA was quoted as stating the bid rates for 2009 were \$50 and \$55 per hour.

Holmes did not believe St.Germain's statement and said he would look into it further

(St Germain did not have her notes and on October 14th, the detailed information was submitted as: ¾ ton truck with 8' plow = \$50.00 per hour; and 1 ton truck with 9' plow = \$55.00 per hour).

Gates said that we have been through growing pains as the Department grows, and as the Town has grown. He said it should continue to be more structured and more accountable. Gates said that the Board does not want to micromanage the Department, but that if Holmes were going to be shimming a road, the Board would want to know about it.

With regard to the Grasso's concerns, Holmes said that this is the first time in 23 years that he had heard of a "road noise" and did not know that would happen with the shim work. Gates said that the Grasso's are taxpayers and their concerns need to be heard as well.

Holmes asked what about the person who was going to fall into a crack or have an accident and get hurt because the road was in poor condition.

Gates asked if Holmes had planned to complete the project on that portion of Beede Road, and there was discussion about ½ of it being done. Gates said that perhaps if the Board had been more involved in the idea stages, that maybe there would have been additional thoughts and ideas generated and discussion had, resulting in perhaps a different plan

There was discussion that roadwork in general is the Road Agent's plan, and the Selectmen asked for more information about it ahead of time. Holmes said that maybe the Board should provide direction about every project or direct the work, and there was heated discussion about the Board doing just that, including telling Holmes when to use his truck and when to use his backhoe.

Gates said we need to have better communication between the Board and Highway Department.

St Germain said that reviewing the timesheets are an after-the-fact process, and said the Board would prefer to be made aware prior to going into some of the projects. She said the Board did not have that option because there was no consultation about the work plans.

Holmes said that he chose it because it was an area he felt needed attention. He said that you have to hear out both sides and felt she was not.

St Germain said that it is in the minutes that the Board has discussed having Holmes in on a monthly basis; and that it would be nice to have Holmes come in and discuss different problems as they arise.

Holmes said he had marked 13 trees on North Road and later read in the minutes that the Board questioned the determination if they are dead and that no further action had been taken in that regard.

Discussion then turned to the mowing budget of \$2,000 and that to hire a contractor it would cost \$6,000 to do the work. Currently when this type of work is done, the Town's full-time employee does it during

his workday on a rented tractor. There was discussion about how insurance is important to the worker and to the Town, and discussion about the liability matters.

With regard to putting projects out to bid, Carlson said that there was no bids received on the shed construction project sent out a few weeks ago.

Holmes stated that maybe they, Leon Sr and Leon Jr, should quit plowing for the Town of Fremont. Gates stated that the Town will not be held hostage by that statement. There was discussion about bidding out trucks for plowing; and said the contractors all do a good job and it shouldn't matter that they are relatives or not. He expressed fear that the Department would get screwed up.

Discussion turned to the rates paid for plowing. Currently the Town pays contractors \$65 per hour for a six wheeler with a Town plow and wing on it. A privately owned one-ton truck with a nine-foot plow is \$60 per hour; and a pickup truck with an eight-foot plow is \$55 - \$60 per hour.

Holmes said Chester pays \$85 for six wheel trucks. St Germain said that it is \$55 in the Town of Merrimack MA. (With information located later, these two items were not fully comparable).

Holmes agreed that it was our obligation to do the best for the Town.

Holmes said that was fine, the Town should try it (referring to putting snow removal out to bid). Holmes said he cared about the Town but does not care for the way it is being run right now, and singled out St Germain. St Germain asked to have this all in the minutes and Holmes said yes, that we might need it in court.

Gates said that St Germain asks a lot of questions; and is taking her responsibilities as a Selectman very seriously and wants to become more informed.

Further angry words were exchanged. All were asked to regroup and return to a civilized discussion, and reminded that this is a public meeting.

St Germain said that she is asking for Holmes to communicate with the Board on more subjects and more frequently. Holmes said he does not like the way she asks the questions.

Gates said that the Board has been remiss in not asking more questions. Hunter said he understands the other Board members concerns as well as Holmes' concerns; and asked Holmes to communicate more with the Board.

It was stated that he has an open invitation to come in on Thursday nights at 7:00 pm during Department Head time, and does not necessarily need an appointment unless he has something that requires more time. Holmes said he would think about it.

Gates said we are stepping into 2010 and we want to move forward. Hunter said, "We need to be on the same page, we need to communicate".

Hunter asked if there was any remedy for the work done thus far on Beede Hill Road. Holmes said it should be overlaid for a section to include the portion by the Grasso's home. Holmes said the shim was just to make it better than it was before.

Holmes felt that it would be more difficult for the Town to get projects done due to the change in voting format to SB2. He mentioned the negative vote on the roller and said there were projects he could get

done with use of a roller. He said if he had it now he could complete a project on Tibbetts Road that needs to be done.

There was discussion about the Board planning to adopt purchasing policies and thresholds of spending, whereas the Selectmen are charged with overseeing the Town's budget.

Holmes then questioned why the Board would cut the summer maintenance budget by \$10,000. Holmes feels this will prohibit the Highway Department from properly maintaining the roads next year. There was discussion about this line item being backhoe rental, and Holmes said it is for rental of other things as well. He mentioned \$1,000 for a blaster last week, and that he would hire a roller if needed, or a dump truck or other hired truck, in addition to the backhoe for summer maintenance work.

Holmes said that summer equipment hire is not just for the backhoe, but could be used for other things, although it mostly may be backhoe rental expenditures. He said the budget is screwed up and it is his fault. He recapped that he initially said he was going to cut it 10% to be a nice guy in consideration of the economy. He then came in and met with Carlson and said he would cut it 5%. He said he then got upset and he told Carlson that he wanted to go to his default budget; and did not come to the meeting when it was to be discussed.

Gates said it is not all about Highway; that all of the other departments are facing reductions this year as well. There was discussion about the default budget and how that works year after year.

People look at the budget and some think that it is busy work, and question why does he get voted in every year. Holmes said there are always going to be a few who don't agree.

Gates said it is up to Holmes to sell the budget and his needs to the Budget Committee and present the necessary information.

Holmes said that we need a building before we can consider buying Town equipment. There was discussion about capital reserve funding in place for future building and equipment needs.

St Germain said her taxes have increased 40% since she moved to this town.

He pointed out that many subdivisions are built and now we need to take care of them. St Germain said there is a recession and Holmes said we still have to maintain roads. Holmes said the voters are not approving hot top anymore, we have not bought equipment; and we are not funding Capital Reserve Funds.

Gates said he would not have a problem revisiting the budget but asked Holmes to revisit it first and decide what he needs. Gates said in looking at Department budgets that they looked at what was spent in 2008; said perhaps they could lighten up on the salt or sand. He said they were looking at what is consistent with what was spent in previous years.

Gates said the Board did not have anyone to discuss it with the night the Highway budget was on the agenda, and did what they thought was right.

Holmes said there is also a need for heat in the highway shed building, and asked if a small portable heater could be purchased. If a propane heater were used, there would have to be a gas hookup as well.

Holmes said the Board would need to look at a tank and pump for fuel if the Town owns equipment. There is additional homework to do on trucks and purchase.

Gates said that the budget is \$300,000 and that is a big number. Holmes said that \$90,000 comes back from NH Highway Block Grant. Holmes said the block grant is supposed to be for rebuilding roads and maintenance and if we are not doing that and it should be going right into pavement. Holmes said that every town around us paved roads this year.

There was discussion about the cost to reconstruct roadways, and specifically mentioned Rogers, Leavitt, and Shirkin as roads that need to be looked at. He said he does not know offhand what it would cost to reconstruct it, but thought we should get an engineer to review it and provide an estimate.

Holmes mentioned Mast Tree Estates and that there are a lot of cracks and has rocks coming up through it. He said that Whittier Drive is also showing signs of wear. St Germain asked what it would cost to reconstruct these roads and Holmes was asked by the Board to put together some estimates for this work to do whatever Holmes thought was the worst.

Holmes apologized to St Germain for his temper and she accepted his apology and there was discussion about how to better communicate all around.

Holmes added that he works for nothing sometimes too. He volunteers his time and the backhoe at virtually every Bulky Day event, in addition to doing other things in Town.

Selectmen said that people are doing a good job and they only want to improve communication with the Board; and no one is questioning his ability or what he does.

Holmes said that shoulders are a big maintenance issue. There was discussion about the future needs of the Town, roads, and the Highway Department.

A final discussion item was that the burn pile would need to be inspected after Bulky Day. Gates said he would go by and do the inspection. Hunter agreed he could look at it as well. It was explained to St Germain that the Town's policy with regard to burning the brush pile at that site was it had to be inspected by at least one Selectman and the Fire Chief or his designee prior to being burned.

Holmes left the meeting at approximately 10:00 pm.

OLD BUSINESS

1. The minutes for meetings of 17 September 2009 and 30 September 2009 were available for review. St Germain moved to approve the minutes of 30 September 2009 with the amendments as proposed. Gates seconded. The vote was 2-0-1 with Hunter abstaining. Hunter then moved to approve the minutes of 17 September 2009. Gates seconded and the vote was approved 2-0-1 with St Germain abstaining.
2. Carlson provided an update on adoption of the blind exemption in Fremont. Further research had found that Town Meeting voters in March 1986 adopted the Blind Exemption. Therefore no additional question needs to be placed on the 2010 Warrant.
3. After some discussion, the Veteran's Day Open House was set for 5:00 to 7:00 pm on Wednesday November 11, 2009 at the Fremont Town Hall.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Hunter moved to approve the accounts payable manifest \$36,968.34 for the current week dated 09 October 2009. Gates seconded and the vote was unanimously approved 3-0.

2. Selectmen reviewed the folder of incoming correspondence.
3. Selectmen reviewed and signed outgoing correspondence to Wal-Mart Distribution Facility regarding the Energy Committee grant application; and a North Road stone wall insurance status summary letter which will be forwarded to all parties involved including the Town's Attorney and the NH Insurance Department.
4. Bids were due today on the Parks & Recreation RFP for a 12 x 20 shed. The only proposal received is the original one submitted by the Parks & Recreation Commission for one made by Sheds USA through Home Depot. There is another sale currently going on and the Town can get a 10% sale price, making the total proposal \$5,248.13. The Board indicated the Commission should proceed with that purchase to get the work done this calendar year.
5. The Health Officer has reported that a second EEE positive test was reported on 10/05/09 for a sample taken on 09/29/09. He has requested that the Board consider a second spraying, which is included in our contract.

The Health Officer page has been updated for new information on H1N1 vaccination planning and the State's newly updated H1N1 Vaccine Distribution Plan.

The Board discussed a second spraying and there were mixed feelings about whether it needed to be done again given the cold nights. Mike Morrison will be contacted again for more information and his thoughts on the matter.

6. Selectmen reviewed and signed a Yield Tax Warrant \$ 906.90 for parcel 02-131 owned by Byron Walker.
7. Selectmen reviewed the tree trimming/removal RFP for Village Cemetery. The Board had no further changes, so this will move forward.
8. Selectmen began to review the Conservation Commission's publication entitled "A Citizen's Guide to Protecting Fremont's Water Resources" documents for mailing. It was a lengthy document and Carlson will email out the PDF version sent to her so that a more thorough proofreading can be completed. The Board thought the publication had a great deal of good information in it, but had concerns about areas where residents were instructed to vote a certain way, or where it outlined necessary things, versus just presented facts for people to consider.

Copies will be distributed for all to review over the coming week.

9. St Germain asked to revisit the Town Clerk budget now that the full Board was back. There was again discussion about the increase in hours of the Deputy Town Clerk position for the budget of 2010. It is noted that the Clerk's hours have decreased, but there is an increase of four hours per week for the Deputy. Selectmen stressed several times that this was no reflection on the work or workers in the office, but discussed their difficulty supporting an increase in the economic climate, and questioned how to measure the workload.

There was discussion about the overall office hours, which are not proposed to change.

St Germain moved to recommend 26 hours in the budget for the Deputy and 34 hours for the Town Clerk. Gates seconded and the vote was approved 3-0.

NEXT WEEK

The next regular Board meeting will be held on Thursday October 15, 2009 at 6:00 pm. The Budget Committee meets on Wednesday October 14, 2009.

With no further business to come before the Board, motion was made by Hunter and seconded by St Germain to adjourn the meeting at 11:40 pm. The vote was unanimously approved 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Heidi Carlson
Town Administrator