

**FREMONT BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Fremont Town Hall, Fremont, NH 03044**  
**October 25, 2017 7PM**

**FINAL**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Mary Anderson called the October 25, 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, Jenn Brown, Mary Jo Holmes, Joe Miccile, and Josh Yokela, Town Administrator Heidi Carlson, and Secretary Susan Perry.

**7 PM 4610 – CONSERVATION COMMISSION: CHAIR LEANNE MINER AND MEMBER CINDY CRANE**

There was review of the Conservation Commission proposed budget (4610). Highlights included:

- There were introductions and a brief overview of the Commission as stewards for the land and natural resources in Fremont.
- It was mentioned that wetlands need to be kept clean without disrupting the flow of water into the aquifer.
- The importance of education and training was expressed, as well as recruitment and retention of membership.
- The Commission meets once a month and collaborates with various organizations such as the Forest Society, ERLAC, Southeast Land Trust and others.
- The budget residual is important: otherwise, work could not be done. Consultants cost \$2,000 - \$3,000 each and plans take time. When the Commission procures land to conserve, an appraisal is needed (about \$5,000), the cost of which is shared with the owner.
- The balance of the budget residual as of 7/31/17 is \$2,260.31. This is the only Town budget that may keep the year-end balance.
- There was recognition of the Commission's efforts for education. It was noted that people need to know the value of the land in order to appreciate it.
- There was discussion about the bond authorization as a liability to the Town.
- Federal grants will be used for two properties that are in process. It was noted that the process is transparent; the Smith property was paid for with a \$100,000 grant plus a bond and it took a long time.
- There was discussion about the land use change tax and funding to do signage, etc. The bigger costs are for consultants, legal fees, appraisers, etc.
- A suggestion was made for the Conservation Commission to budget for projects instead of using end of year funds so tax payers can choose what projects they want to pay for.
- In the past, Scouts have helped with trail signage, etc.; however, the number of Scouts in town have declined.
- There was discussion about how to advertise (Facebook, Website, cable television, etc.)
- The clerical cost is dependent on the employee's availability and is necessary to support the volunteers/resources.
- The photographs cost is project-related.
- The Conservation Improvement line goes to residual funds at the end of the year.
- There was discussion about the Conservation Projects line. Projects help make sure land is accessible for people to enjoy. Signs, kiosks, etc. are necessary on trails. The Website needs to be updated. The Commission tries to take advantage of grants when available. They are in the process of developing an interpretive trail in town.
- The Budget Committee reduced the clerical request from \$1,000 to \$800. Other recommendations that were made include: \$0.00 for the postage line; \$0.00 for the copies/office supplies line; \$0.00 for the photographs line; \$70 for the document purchase line (a plan is to have a library of reference documents in the new space); \$350 in the training/seminars line; \$530 in the membership dues line; \$0.00 in the Conservation improvement line; and \$250 in the Conservation projects line. The total is \$2,000.

*Jennifer Brown recommended \$2,000 as the budget for line 4610 Conservation Commission. Joe Miccile seconded the motion. Motion passed 6:1 (nay, Cordes – Selectman)*

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**APPROVE MINUTES FROM OCTOBER 18, 2017**

*Gene Cordes made a motion to approve the minutes of October 18, 2017. Pat Martel seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0-1 (Jennifer Brown, abstention).*

**SCHOOL BUDGET UPDATES/INFORMATION**

Ms. Anderson hoped for a flat School District budget and she said will be meeting with Superintendent Hutton next week.

**TOWN BUDGET UPDATES/INFORMATION**

If all budgets were approved as they are (not including the school budget), the budget increase would be \$420,000. Mr. Cordes reported that the Selectmen would like to meet with the Road Agent again (about the Red Brook Road Warrant Article); meet with the Police Department regarding the performance stipend; and with the Fire Department regarding an update on radios/portables. The Budget Committee decided to hold off on revisiting these budgets until next week.

**4194 GENERAL GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS**

Ms. Carlson spoke about the increase in IT services (maintenance and backups) that cost \$1200/month with Daystar (this includes all seats). She expressed interest in finding a consultant to help with the language of specifications for an IT services bid. Currently, remote help is favored, as it is included in the monthly price (vs. technicians coming out to the site).

The Town Hall maintenance wage line is based on actual usage. Ms. Carlson noted that the school district gave Town Hall free oil when the tank at Ellis failed. This refers to the lower number in the 2017 Spent column of the budget. The Budget Committee reviewed the \$1.88/gallon locked-in price (until June 30, 2018) and reduced the department request of \$8,000 to \$7,500. The HW Bld. Propane line request of \$2,000 was reduced to \$1,500. The Tax Deed Properties line was reduced from \$200 to \$1. These changes yield a budget total of \$92,549.

*Mary Jo Holmes recommended \$92,549 for line 4194 General Government Buildings. Jennifer Brown seconded the motion. Motion passed 7:0.*

**4155 PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION (HOLD)**

The increase in the Medical Insurance line includes the full-time police officer (\$24,500) and 8 months of the full-time highway position \$21,000, pro-rated). The dental and disability/life insurance lines also include these two positions (if they pass). There was considerable discussion about the portion of insurance that the town pays. Ms. Anderson suggested that the Selectmen review employee contributions made by the Town, noting, though high, it is justified since Town wages are low. Where this budget depends on if the Highway Department expands to a full-time employee, the Committee put a hold on its recommendation.

**4210 POLICE (HOLD)**

**4220 FIRE RESCUE (HOLD)**

**4240 BUILDING INSPECTION**

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It was noted that the Building Inspector resigned so a new person needs to be hired. The Selectmen have held off on any decision about software, and kept the staffing at the present level.

*Mary Jo Holmes recommended the Board of Selectmen's recommendation of \$37,520 in line 4240 Building Inspection. Gene Cordes seconded the motion. Motion passed 7:0.*

4312 HIGHWAY (HOLD)

4445 VENDOR PAYMENTS

There was review of social service agency letters. One Sky Community Services is a new request and will be on as a Warrant Article.

*Jennifer Brown recommended \$26,872 in line 4445 Vendor Payments. Mary Jo Holmes seconded the motion. Motion passed 6:1 (J. Yokela, nay).*

Distributed documents included: Town Meeting Warrant Articles, Town budget spreadsheet dated 10/25/2017, updated budgets dated 10/25/17 for: Fire Rescue (including information on the radios), Highway Department, Conservation Commission, and Building Inspection (dated 10/23/17), and information provided by Mr. Yokela regarding Police Department wage/hour data from various towns.

Ms. Carlson mentioned that veterans have asked to put a Warrant Article on for consideration, known as the "All Veterans" tax credit, that will make more veterans eligible for a tax credit. This would open the pool and it can be phased in. Another is an elderly exemption Warrant Article (there may be unqualified people due to the way the article is written currently).

**NEXT MEETING DATE: NOVEMBER 1, 2017 – Fremont Town Hall, Main Floor Meeting Room**

**ADJOURNMENT**

*At 8:55 PM, Mary Jo Holmes made a motion to adjourn. Gene Cordes seconded the motion. Motion passed 7:0.*

Respectfully submitted by,

Susan Perry, Secretary