

Approved 10/23/2019

Present: Committee Members Mary Jo Holmes, Gordon Muench, Michael Nygren, Joshua Yokela, Steve Bonaccorsi, Joe Miccile and Gene Cordes; Town Administrator Heidi Carlson, Land Use AA Leanne Miner and Recording Secretary Shawn Perreault.

Chair Holmes called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm in the basement meeting room at the Fremont Town Hall. All rose for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes

Yokela made a motion to accept the Meeting Minutes of September 25, 2019 with amendments, seconded by Cordes Motion passed 7-0-0.

Review draft *Rules of Procedure*

Holmes asked if the Committee could bring the Rules of Procedure up at the next meeting. Cordes made a motion to table the Rules of Procedure until the next meeting, seconded by Muench. Motion passed 6-1 (Yokela).

School Budget

Sue Penny emailed Holmes to ask if she was needed at the meeting. Holmes indicated Penny did not need to attend. Penny indicated she did have all of the Committee's questions and is still working on getting the answers. Cordes asked if the Committee should give her a deadline of the next meeting to have the answers to the Budget Committee. The Committee members agreed and Holmes will inform Penny.

Town Budgets

4130 Selectmen's Office: Cordes stated that the Selectmen have been looking at the Town Administrator salary and agree they are not paying Heidi enough, given what data they have seen regarding comparable towns. They have spoken to Heidi and she knows the Town is trying to keep cost down. However, the Selectmen would like to increase her salary to \$72,000 for the 2020 calendar year, which is in the budget pro-rated for $\frac{3}{4}$ of the year. Yokela asked for information about what the other Towns Administrators do, concerned that if we lost Heidi we would need three people to replace her. He is interested in the scope of work Heidi does compared to what the Town Administrators from the other Towns do; as well as how many people the other towns have working with their Town Admins compared to Fremont's set up. Cordes will provide Yokela with the information he requested.

Moving to the rest of the Selectmen's Office budget, Carlson doesn't feel there is anything in the budget that is a drastic change from last year. There is approximately \$1,000 estimated for the newest version of Quickbooks software, as the license is only good for 3 years (due in 2020 for upgrade). The Newsletter is only sent once a year with the Warrant prior to Deliberative Session. Yokela asked how many people are subscribing to the online newsletter and Carlson will try and find out.

Carlson indicated 2% wage increases are included for the other two part-time clerical staff members in the Selectmen's Office. Cordes wanted the Committee to know that when Heidi does take vacations and the other two people cover the office during those absences and are able to deal with everything that has come up. Carlson indicated that Jeanne Nygren's position has been upgraded to Administrative Assistant and that has a pay rate consistent with the Police Department AA, given Jeanne's years of experience and increased job description duties.

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With no further discussion, Miccile made a motion to recommend \$126,041 for Executive – Selectmen's Office. Bonaccorsi seconded and the motion passed 6-0-1 with Nygren abstaining.

4140 Town Clerk Tax Collector: Nygren referred to some research he did, citing Selectmen's Minutes discussions at the time when the 3 hour increase in the clerical hours was requested by the Town Clerk for additional overlap. He noted Selectmen's Meeting Minutes dated October and November of 2016 wherein the Board approved the additional requested hours so long as it enhanced public availability. Bonaccorsi asked Carlson if the hours have changed much from the past and if people are complaining. Carlson told the Committee that the complaints come when the Clerk's Office is not open, hearing someone's disappointment if they come in to find the office closed. Nygren stated he is not arguing about service, we have a one person office most of the time and have 3 people doing it. He feels the service isn't going suffer because it's almost always one person in the office at a time. He is thinking of the money to be saved. Bonaccorsi is worried about the Deputy not having the training needed and if they go with Nygren's proposal we will be creating an unwanted situation of employee turnover.

Yokela feels the scheduling is the Clerk's job and he believes the position is open in the elections this year. He feels having the flexibility of the different options to spend the money is good to have available and not try to manage it on this specific budget because the voting effects only the bottom line. Yokela also feels the Selectmen have the power to still put the amount requested in the Clerical line because it is a general bottom line budget. Holmes would like to hold off on this budget to do more research. She is not prepared to vote on it right now. Cordes feels they have already spent a lot of time talking about it and stated when different Boards of Selectmen got involved in the past, they went through a lot of people for the Town Clerk position. He wants to see consistency and knowledge. When we don't have the coverage we need, especially for vacations, we have had to contract with other Towns for coverage, it doesn't always go well and costs us more. Bonaccorsi made a motion to recommend \$64,630 for the Town Clerk Tax Collector. Muench seconded and the motion passed 4 Yes, 2 No (Nygren, Holmes), and 1 Abstention (Miccile).

4191 Planning & Zoning: Leanne Miner came forward to review the Land Use Budgets. Yokela asked if the Planning Board got the scope of work back from the planner and had they decided how much work the Board was going to do now and next year. Miner circulated an updated sheet of forecasted spending through year end and amended the request for next year down by approximately \$1,000 for the master Plan work. She didn't get a detailed scope of work from the Planner, but used the information to put forth what she feels should be done. Miccile questioned whether the Selectmen should be the ones reducing this line instead of the Budget Committee. Yokela asked if there was a reason why the Committee shouldn't wait for more specific plans for use of the Master Plan money and Miner said she doesn't feel there is any need to wait. She feels the \$9,000 will meet the needs of the Board for Master Plan updates next year.

Nygren questioned the matching grant that is reflected in the default budget. Carlson explained that the line will be removed moving forward as no more TBG is available, but that the default considers what was approved for expenditure in the present year.

There was continued discussion about whether the Town votes on the Master Plan and it was detailed that the Planning Board votes to accept it during a required Public Hearing, and the Town's input comes in various ways throughout the hearing and public information process currently ongoing. She feels they will spend more this year than next year and the Sub Committees will need to reach out to the Townspeople more. A public survey will be needed. Carlson stated in the past 5-6 years there have been no updates to the Master Plan whereas the Board previously worked on a couple of chapters every year. We are playing catch up. Nygren asked how successful we have been with the plan and Miner said one of the goals of this revision is to make it a more usable and working document.

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With no further discussion, Cordes made a motion to recommend a revised total of \$51,788 for Planning and Zoning. Muench seconded and the motion passed 6 Yes, 1 No (Nygren).

4610 Conservation Commission: Miner stated the Commission has plans to spend the rest of the budget even though it shows \$1,200 left at the present time. She detailed out the poster frames for the mapping, additional conferences, and more way-finder signs. Nygren questioned the Clerical line. Miner stated she wants to leave this line to cover the meetings and minutes, and because she doesn't have time to do all of the needed website updating. Yokela asked about the budget residual amount. Carlson said she would put together the annual chart updated, but did not think any funds were returned to the Budget Residual Fund in 2018.

With no further discussion, Miccile made a motion to recommend \$6,665 for the Conservation Commission. Cordes seconded and the motion passed 6 Yes, 1 No (Yokela).

4199 Town Report: Carlson stated this was put out to bid in September. This is the lowest of the bids and is the same company used in the past couple of years. Bonaccorsi made a motion to recommend \$2,900 for Town Report. Muench seconded and the motion passed 7-0-0.

4210 Police: Holmes stated that the Chief came in and presented the budget. There will also be a Warrant Article for a new full time police officer that is not reflected in this budget. Cordes feels he can assure the Committee that if there is any residual operating funds in 2019 that the Selectmen will consider putting it toward some of the proposed 2020 expenses such that they can be removed from this budget, and mentioned the lease payment on the base radio replacement and the body cameras.

Holmes feels this is a good point and the Committee can wait and have more current information before making a recommendation. Yokela would rather hold the vote until after the school budget. Yokela made a motion to table this budget until the December 4th Budget Committee Meeting. This was seconded by Miccile and the motion passed 5 Yes, 2 abstentions (Bonaccorsi, Cordes)

4323/4324 Solid Waste Collection and Disposal: Carlson said this is the first full year of the new contract rate. The contract began May 1, 2019. Recycling processing is a new cost for us. A chart was presented with the current processing fees by month for the calendar year to date, as well as presented a lot of the data and information from Waste Management on how the numbers are calculated. The recycle processing fees have to do with the recycling market, and an estimate has been put together for 2020 based on the data year to date and tonnage.

Miccile brought up the fact that under the new contract the Town now has to pay for the dumpsters they get for Bulky Day. Carlson confirmed the Town now pays for the extra dumpsters twice a year, which is about 300.00/dumpster and we use 12-14 dumpsters per event. This was previously included in the hauling contract with Waste Management, another sign of the changing market. These costs are shown in the Bulk Recycling portion of the budget. Holmes asked her to go over the budget one more time and wondered if we recycle more, would the cost go down? Carlson stated if it did, it wouldn't right away. Yokela asked what if the Town just tipped all of our recycling as trash, and using the 400 tons a year that is recycled, we are paying approximately \$20,000 extra next year (estimated) to recycle instead of dump all of that in a landfill.

There was lengthy discussion about the changing recycling market and the importance of keeping the recycle stream "clean" so loads are not contaminated with non-recyclables, such as plastic bags. Cordes stated the Selectman have talked about it and they have spent a lot of money informing people about recycling, asking them to recycle all they can and they don't want to go backwards even though it costs us

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more right now. Cordes made a motion to recommend \$306,406 in the Solid Waste Collection budget. Muench seconded and the motion passed 6 Yes, 1 No (Yokela).

Carlson indicated that the 53B contracted tipping fee is estimated using the current rate (valid through 6/30/20) with an allowance for the estimated rate for the 7/1/20 to 6/30/21 rate. The Town belongs to the SRRDD 53B regional solid waste district, who is nearing the end of a five year tipping fee contract, and that is currently being negotiated for a five year extension. There was further discussion about recycling and trash disposal options, including landfills, recycling facilities and incinerators. There was some discussion about the Turnkey Landfill and the gas pipeline it delivers to the UNH campus, as a “waste to energy” option.

With no further discussion, Cordes made a motion to recommend \$122,243 for Solid Waste disposal. Miccile seconded and the motion passed 6 Yes, 1 No (Yokela).

4414 ACO: Holmes asked the Board about looking at this budget separate from the Police budget, which all felt was appropriate. The Chief is working on trading the vehicle in and is meeting with Selectmen tomorrow. It is used to haul the ATV trailer too. Cordes indicated they are considering using some of the OHRV Revolving Fund for this purpose to reduce the burden to taxpayers (that fund is generated by Town Ordinance fines). Carlson stated the Chief is working to make a proposal for the pending vehicle replacement without affecting this budget.

With no further discussion, Miccile made a motion to recommend \$10,968 for Animal Control. Bonaccorsi seconded and the motion passed 7-0-0.

4550 Library: Holmes stated Eric Abney had come to the Committee to present the budget and talked about the changes. He was very straight forward with the budget. Nygren feels that unless they put in gutters there is no point in making the requested repairs. He stated that the repairs are needed due to water damage, which will only be corrected by putting in the gutters. Holmes asked if Nygren would like this information before voting. Yokela informed the Committee they were also dealing with a door that is not a standard size. Nygren wants the figures for the gutters before voting on the budget.

As an HVAC vendor himself, Muench recommended against buying the door and other parts and trying to hire someone to install everything. You end up not having warranties or affecting the warranties offered. There was lengthy discussion about necessary repairs, and how it is difficult to find contractors for the smaller jobs currently out there to be done in various town buildings. Holmes asked Carlson to take the Committee’s request back to Eric Abney. No further action was taken.

New Budgets circulated for future discussion

4195 Cemeteries: The Committee discussed the need to invite the Trustees and members for the Cemetery budget to the next meeting to present and answer any questions the Committee may have on their budget request. The Committee is going to review the presented budget and let Carlson know if they need them present. Once Carlson hears from the Committee, she will notify the Cemetery Trustees of the Budget Committees needs. With Nygren (a Cemetery Trustee); Perreault (the Cemetery Sexton); and Carlson who is familiar with the budget, it was felt that an adequate presentation could be made.

Any Other business

Holmes stated that Miccile brought a school survey mailing with him tonight. Muench stated it was mailed and it is online. He stated the surveys that get mailed back in will be entered manually. He has seen mixed feelings, but the Board knew they had to start somewhere, and this is a starting point.

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Bonaccorsi asked how the Committee would be put together and Muench stated the School Board would like to see the Committee made up of a School Board member, citizens with and without children; and teachers.

Muench reported that of those mailed, 19 have been mailed back and 100 have been answered online as of right now. Carlson stated it was a bulk mailing using the Town's permit, and should have hit 1,866 households. Because it is bulk, it is not treated like first class mail and not everyone may have received their survey yet. Carlson indicated a drop box is upstairs in the Town Hall, there is one at the Fremont Public Library, and at Ellis, and that copies can be printed from the website as well as picked up at the various drop box locations. Two were retrieved for the member of the Committee who did not get one in the mail yet. Carlson will get up an FCTV slide and indicated that the Ellis School is a link from the Town website as well. Surveys are due back by Tuesday October 15th and everyone is encouraged to participate.

Adjourn

Miccile made a motion to adjourn at 8:42 pm. Cordes seconded and the vote was unanimously approved 7-0. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday October 23, 2019 at 7:00 pm and Carlson will have additional departments present that night.

Respectfully submitted,

Shawn Perreault
Recording Secretary