

Present: Committee Members Mary Jo Holmes, Michael Nygren, Joshua Yokela, Steve Bonaccorsi, Joe Miccile, Gene Cordes, and Jonathan Starr; Fire Chief Richard Butler; Fire Rescue member Joe Parisi; Librarian Eric Abney; Town Administrator Heidi Carlson; Recording Secretary Shawn Perreault; and School Board Member Greg Fraize (8:30 pm).

1. Call to Order: Chair Holmes called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm in the basement meeting room at the Fremont Town Hall. All rose for the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Appointments

The Committee began by meeting with Fire Chief Rich Butler to review the 2020 Fire Rescue Department (4220) budget. Chief Butler opened the discussion with a line by line review of the Department's budget submission.

The Administrative line for Chief wages has been increased due to paperwork and the increased administrative oversight of the EMS on call duty as well as the conversion to a wage based compensation program. The former Points Plan compensation plan doesn't include the Chief.

Since starting the on call coverage on April 1, 2019, no overnight calls have gone unanswered. This is working very well. The increase in the line item is due to a full year vs. partial year funded in 2019. Chief Butler would like to change the compensation to hourly wages. Cordes stated that the points plan is a 12 month cycle. If we do this, we would pick up 14 months in the being due to the Points Plan dates. This is more administrative duties for Chief Butler. Nygren questioned if each employee had a separate wage scale. Chief Butler and Carlson confirmed there would be different pay scales based on years employed, experience/certifications, and rank. Holmes questioned when they wanted it to roll out. Chief Butler stated the numbers won't change, the Point system will go away and become a wage scale. Cordes stated there are still a lot of details to work out. Nygren questioned why we won't start on the first of the year? This led to discussion that will be followed up at the Board of Selectmen level with the Department leadership.

Dues and Membership has increased due to increase in number of members. EMS and Fire Training has increased again due to the new members that need to be trained. There are still some members that have to complete training. The Department reimburses the members for the mileage they drive to the training at .50 cents per mile (this is a new rate effective 09/01/2019 and the first mileage reimbursement increase the Town has seen in 20+ years). Three new members are still awaiting training. The Fire training locations change for the classroom time, and the drill yard work is held in Concord at the Fire Academy.

EMS equipment increased due to increase in members. Firefighter gear is approximately \$3,000 per person to outfit. Members are also required to pass a physical before they can do any field training.

Tires on Engine 1 had to be replaced. Chief Butler stated that one of their base radios was put in at the same time as the Police base radio, which has recently had to be replaced. Chief Butler has a contract to get a new one and may put it in as a Warrant Article. He has waited to buy new radios until the last minute in case the base radio went down. The budget also includes a new expense for a cell phone for use in the rescue truck, and will also hold the app for Twiage, which is a new EMS communication tool to enter all the patient information and send a direct link to Exeter Hospital. This is proposed to be a FirstNet phone, which is a public safety network having first priority over normal cell phone use.

The Special Detail line is all from the Grassdrags. Nygren asked about what happens if the Fire Department is left with the default budget in terms of wages (points/compensation), and Chief Butler feels that if the Department is left with the default budget, they will make it work. Carlson stated that the call

volume and the total number of hours has been fairly consistent over the years. Deputy Chief Nichols went back three years and the plan they came up with rank, years in service with the wages works within the funding. The goal is the pool of money would be enough money. She feels that if there is a wage employees can count on, there will be more consistency, and that there will be an increase in response. General discussion continued regarding the pay structure. The Points Plan \$70,000 that is in the budget now will be spent as of the end of the points year, 10/31/19. Some planning needs to be done to consider the conversion to hourly wages.

Since we have started the night shift, there haven't been any missed evening calls, and only 6 nights were uncovered, but no missed calls on those nights. The Chief needs to add the missed calls data for the day time hours, which do have missed calls. Yokela asked about the daytime coverage plan. Butler and Carlson explained that two proposals had initially been brought forward for funding in 2019 and that the evening EMS coverage was chosen to try and fund, as Raymond Ambulance provides contract coverage during the day when they have a staffed crew. At some point the daytime response from Fremont also needs to be addressed.

Holmes asked about remaining funds in the budget for the current year and he indicated it is all committed. He discussed pending purchases. Holmes asked about grants and the Chief said that one of their new potential members has some grant-writing experience and contacts.

There was a recap of what the MRI study accomplished, and how use of the consultants is continued in this budget, for quarterly meetings as needed. Cordes stated the Board put money in because there might be the need to revisit this.

Nygren corrected a typo in the default Chief Wages line of \$25,000, it should say \$21,000.

The Committee and Chief Butler discussed the current status and ages of the Fire Department's current vehicles. There is a Capital Reserve Fund for this. Each vehicle you look at has idling time that needs to be taken into account. Nygren suggested if a vehicle needs to be replaced in the future, it might be better to do the Warrant Article and pay for it at once, like we did with the last truck. It might have a greater chance of passing the Town vote. There is currently approximately \$150,000 in the Capital Reserve Fund, and a Warrant Article will be proposed for 2020 to add another \$50,000.

Holmes stated the Committee would probably not be voting on this budget tonight. If they have questions they will contact Chief Butler or Carlson. Chief Butler and Parisi left the meeting at approximately 7:35 pm.

Eric Abney next met with the Committee to review some lingering questions on the Library (4550) budget

Holmes stated when the Committee went to vote on the budget, they had more questions and tabled it pending Abney being able to return. With regard to replacing the door and not putting in gutters, Abney explained that the door is rotted because the wood goes all the way down to the ground, which was code back when it was installed. The water off the roof has nothing to do with the problem. There are no gutters anywhere on the building. The Library is designed to have the water run to the front of the building and then run to the drainage in the parking lot. The gutters could be placed in the front. They could put up a diverter over the back door if needed.

There was discussion about pruning trees on that side of the building to let more light and air to the cold/darker side of the building. Abney would like to ask the Road Agent for his opinion, there are also some rocks that would come down if the trees are removed, which could be a safety issue. There has only

been one response to the RFP for replacing the door. Nygren suggested the Home Advisors sites as a possibility to find Contractors willing to do small jobs, noting that many of the contractors on the site are insured. Cordes this might not be crucial, but it needs to be done and thinks the diversion is a great idea. Holmes questioned if the budget would increase due to the door. Abney stated he put bid price received and didn't see it going above that amount.

With no further discussion, a motion was made by Nygren and seconded by Cordes to recommend \$154,643 for the Library budget. The vote passed 7-0-0.

Holmes thanked Abney for returning to answer questions, and Abney left the meeting at approximately 8:00 pm.

3. Approve Meeting Minutes of October 9, 2019

Motion made by Cordes to approve the minutes of October 9, 2019 with amendments/clarifications discussed. Nygren seconded and the motion passed 6-0-1 (Starr).

4. Review draft *Rules of Procedure*

Holmes stated she has not looked at rules and asked how the rest of the Committee was doing on them. Nygren made a motion to table the review to the next meeting. Cordes seconded. Motion passed 6-1 (Yokela)-0.

5. School Budget if any follow-up: Holmes reported talking with Sue Penny and informed her she (Penny) didn't need to attend this evening. She was hoping that Muench would be able to provide an update, but he was not able to make the meeting tonight.

6. Town budgets to be reviewed for recommendation (running list):

4195 Cemeteries: Carlson, Nygren and Perreault were here to answer any questions on the budget. Carlson advised that Bruce White retired at the end of the season, and a new hire has worked in cemeteries before and is working out great. Carlson discussed the Sexton's ongoing work, the staffing for the mowing hours, lawn maintenance and the Superintendent's responsibilities.

Carlson had done some trending and hours averages looking at the past 3-5 years of data, and tried to make the management a separate line and used the historic information to come up with this budget. Carlson explained the increase in electric this year was due to a repair to the well pump. Carlson stated the project line is something that was added a few years ago to deal with the bigger work that needs to be done at Village and Leavitt. She advised that Trustees were currently working on two different ideas including finishing the expansion of Leavitt or there is a possibility of a land donation on South Road, which the Trustees would open as a second cemetery option. There will be more discussion on expansion and a lot of details to work out before the Trustees have any answers.

Cordes questioned the perpetual care funds that we have received. Carlson stated that only interest on these funds is expendable, and with low interest rates, doesn't meet the needs to care for the lots. Carlson will check with Pat Martel, the Trust Funds Bookkeeper to see what is available. Perreault also informed the Committee that these funds are tightly regulated by the State on what can and cannot be done with them. We need to be really careful using any perpetual care funds.

Yokela asked for a more detailed review of what projects have and have not been done. Carlson reviewed what has been done and what the Trustees would like to do in the future. With no further discussion,

Cordes made a motion to recommend \$24,772 for Cemeteries. Miccile seconded and the motion passed 6-0-1 (Nygren).

4196 Insurance: Carlson stated the insurance covers the Town Property and Liability and the Police Liability policy. They look at payroll and have a worksheet the company uses to breakdown the renewal fees. In 2019 the Town used the \$500 deductible on the water damage in the Library. There is also some water damage at the field shed, which has not been fixed. When the Town faces litigation, the company will often defend us and pays the attorney fees. Holmes noted the insurance is up about \$3,000. Carlson further stated that there are additional coverages for cyber attacks, as well as increases in the Town's payroll and covered activities. Cordes made a motion to recommend \$64,848 for Insurance. Nygren seconded and the motion passed 7-0-0.

4220 Fire Rescue: Yokela made a motion to table the Fire Rescue budget until December 4th's meeting, seconded by Miccile. Motion passed 5-2 (Bonaccorsi, Cordes) – 0.

4415 Health: Carlson stated this was a very small budget, detailing out the Health Officer and Deputy roles and responsibilities. The Deputy was given a stipend for the first time in the current budget. The Deputy has been a great addition and she has a lot of experience. Last week the Building Inspector resigned (who is currently the HO). Some of these responsibilities are public health, but some play into the building aspect. The training was increase due to having two active people in these roles. The other increase is the water testing. The State of NH has adopted the PFOA testing levels and the Town has included testing at two municipal sites. Cordes made a motion to recommend \$1,435 for Health. Miccile seconded and the motion passed 6 – 0 – 1 (Starr).

4520 Parks & Recreation: Carlson laid out some of the rationale for the Committee, including the differences from the current year due to no camp this year. She explained that the revenue would be left in to offset the expense to make a lesser tax impact of the camp portion of the budget.

The Commission is looking to hold camp again in 2020, proposing an eight (8) week program instead of five or six as has been past practice in years when it was held. This plans two field trips per week. The camp is conditioned on having staff hired by the end of 2019 in order that the camp runs in summer 2020. In response to questions, Carlson explained that she is generally the supervisor for the staffing of the camp positions because the Rec Commission is 5 volunteer positions, and they meet once a month. This is the reason the Selectmen were supportive of having the staff in place now, and Cordes stated we need to have strong leadership. Holmes questioned if the number of program weeks increased to eight what would interest be in the camp, and would it increase participation numbers. Carlson stated the Commission is interested in having more of the camp held at the fields and also want to buy a tent and propose a Warrant Article for a pavilion.

Starr asked about the numbers, and who is pushing this. It is being supported by the Parks & Recreation Commission. Members asked if camp ever paid for itself and Carlson informed them only in few years has it has been 100% funded by the program revenue. The Town's goal has traditionally been to at least half fund, and more toward 75% fund it. Nygren asked if there was deadline to fill the Director position and Carlson stated that if not hired by 12/31/2019 the Selectmen were going to plan to pull funding from the proposed budget request. Bonaccorsi asked if there is a way of asking the parents what their interest is. Nygren agreed we really should have the numbers for participation to see if it is worth running. Carlson will ask the Commission to begin looking further in to this. Holmes asked about members from the Commission being present and Carlson said she was just laying out the beginning information to see what questions there might be, and that the Commission is happy to come in and meet with the Budget Committee. Holmes would like to have them come back to answer some additional questions and provide data from parents on enrollment.

Carlson asked about how long the Committee thinks they want with the SAU Administration and School Board to review the school budget. Holmes said she informed Sue Penny that the school budget is due to the Budget Committee on November 6th. She is not sure if they will be presenting it that night. Greg Fraize had recently joined the meeting and he said that the School Board meeting tomorrow night is the start of the budget book review by the School Board. They are then looking for public input and then bring it to the Budget Committee. Sue Penny informed Holmes that she will have the budget to the Budget Committee on November 6.

The Committee confirmed that they wanted all of the November meetings for discussion of the school budget. Greg Fraize stated Sue Penny will send Holmes the School Board's budget schedule.

Carlson will have the Parks & Rec Commission come in at least by December. They are meeting next week. Nygren asked about enrollment for prior years and Carlson indicated some of that is on the budget worksheet. He doesn't feel someone will want to be in charge for an 8 week program because they still need to plan, so it would be 10 weeks of work.

The Public Budget Hearing is January 15, 2020 which will give the Committee still three meetings in November, three in December, and one in January to review remaining items.

4610 Conservation Commission: Carlson circulated historical information on the various Conservation savings accounts for Committee review.

Updated summary expense and revenue reports were distributed for members to review, as well as some of the salary information requested. The Highway Department budget (first draft) was also circulated and the Road Agent will be in next week.

Holmes asked the Committee to please review before the next meeting.

The next meeting will be held at 7:00 pm on Wednesday October 30, 2019 in the Town Hall Basement Meeting Room.

8. Adjourn: Yokela made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:58 pm, seconded by Starr. Motion passed 7 Yes; 0 No; 0 Abstain.

Respectfully submitted,

Shawn Perreault
Recording Secretary