

Approved 12/18/2019

Present: Budget Committee members Mary Jo Holmes, Michael Nygren, Joshua Yokela, Steve Bonaccorsi, Joe Miccile, Gene Cordes, Gordon Muench, and Pat Martel; Road Agent Leon Holmes Jr, Greg Fraize, Town Administrator Heidi Carlson and Recording Secretary Shawn Perreault.

Chair Holmes called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm in the basement meeting room at the Fremont Town Hall. All rose for the Pledge of Allegiance

Motion made by Holmes to table approval of minutes approval until the next meeting, seconded by Cordes. Motion passed 7-0-0.

### **Town Budgets**

#### **4312 Highway Department**

A Highway Department Operating budget and Paving Expense analysis (by year) comparing years 2012 to 2020 was distributed. Carlson explained the document and that these are all actual appropriations (not actual spent); and it includes the proposals for 2020. There was discussion about the substance of the document, including Warrant Articles, operating budgets, and the various types of revenue.

The reverse side of the document detailed out Capital Reserve items for Highway Equipment and Bridges. There was lengthy discussion about the operating budget and various Warrant Articles, how the funding dollars fluctuate, and how the Town appropriates money for each of these sources.

There was discussion about having a set sum of money annually set aside for paving. The history of road work, through the past three Road Agents was discussed in general terms.

The fundamental discussion continued about the operating budget as opposed to Warrant Articles for road work. There was also a preliminary discussion about bonding such work. Holmes Jr explained that residents are calling on specific roads, like Ann Lane, asking how many times they are going to repair them before they redo them. Noting that he is a tax payer too, he understands but has to do his job and make sure the roads are safe and the needs are presented. He said he always keeps taxpayers in mind.

There was discussion about removing one of the proposed roads from the operating budget to reduce the overall total. Holmes Jr said that he has been planning all this out and really wants to leave the budget as is and doesn't want to take either out.

Nygren made a motion to recommend \$605,529 for the Highway Department, seconded by Cordes. Motion passed 5 Yes - 2 No (Miccile, Yokela), 1 Abstain (Holmes). It is noted that this is the total original request by the Department, and the Selectmen's recommendation.

Holmes Jr asked how the Committee thought the Town should fund the roads and there were varying opinions, including that it was not the Committee's place to decide that. There was further consideration of a bond issue for it, which some thought the Selectmen should look into. Carlson indicated this was a discussion that needed more time, and a discussion of the options and pros/cons. Further discussion was held.

Holmes reiterated that approximately \$410,000 in new appropriation dollars would increase tax rate by \$1.00 per \$1,000.

Discussion moved to the bridge expenses and Carlson explained that Fremont becomes eligible for some reimbursement funding as of 07/01/2020 and more information needs to be obtained on how long that

Approved 12/18/2019

stays in the pipeline. We do not yet have enough accomplished on the design engineering to be able to move forward. There was other general discussion about bridges the Town still needs to complete, including Scribner.

There was discussion about placing money in Capital Reserve Funds, and that it needs to be replaced after it is spent, but that it is a good way to save. Holmes Jr said his goal is to get a number they want to spend on roads every year, to make it easier to plan. Roads are never caught up, once you go through the entire cycle of upgrading them, we start over as the general life span of new construction is 20 years. With 40 miles of roads it is a constant cycle, and that is if we were keeping up.

Holmes asked if the Committee wanted to review the Highway warrant articles while Leon is still here. Members agreed to do that. It was done with the currently labeled draft as follows:

Warrant Article F Highway Equipment CRF – Motion made to recommend the Highway Equipment CRF of \$25,000 was made by Cordes, seconded Miccile. Motion passed 7 Yes – 0 No – 1 Abstain (Holmes).

Warrant Article G Chester Road reconstruction – Motion made to recommend Chester Road improvements of \$134,528 was made by Cordes, seconded Bonaccorsi. Motion passed 7 Yes – 0 No – 1 Abstain (Holmes).

Warrant Article H Emergency Weather Expendable Trust Fund – Motion made to recommend creation of a new Weather Emergency ETF of \$25,000 was made by Cordes, seconded by Muench. Motion passed 5 Yes – 2 No (Yokela, Nygren), 1 Abstain (Holmes).

Warrant Article I Bridge CRF – Motion made by Cordes to recommend the Bridge Capital Reserve Fund of \$100,000. Muench seconded. Motion passed 6 Yes – 1 No (Nygren) – 1 Abstain (Holmes).

#### **4520 Parks & Recreation**

Cordes and Carlson explained further information on camp. It is not 100% ready to go but there are several very good resume submissions. Carlson has not been able to connect with Nicole to confirm the Parks & Rec Commission's action on the resumes. The Committee decided to hold off on a recommendation. There was discussion about the length of the program and costs savings to return it to a six week program versus the newly proposed eight week program. There were varying opinions, and some audience comments as well. Nygren will send around information on some proposed changes for discussion at a future meeting.

Nothing has been presented relative to the pavilion, and no one from Parks & Rec has attended the more recent Budget Committee meetings.

#### **4155 Personnel Administration**

Carlson distributed the updated budget worksheets and additional information about the workers compensation and legislative changes that will affect the Town's benefits and premium. Carlson walked through the line items detailing the insurances, FICA and Medicare expenses, and the NHRS changes. The health insurance and other benefit coverages are based on current census only. Of note for increases are an increase in the health insurance rate (but down overall based on current census and who takes insurance); and increases to FICA and Medicare for a full year of EMS on-call wages. There are also budgeted 2% wage increases.

Approved 12/18/2019

A motion to recommend \$378,995 for Personnel Administration was made by Miccile, seconded by Bonaccorsi. Motion passed 8 Yes – 0 No – 0 Abstain.

#### **4220 Fire Rescue**

Carlson and Cordes outlined current working progress with the NH Department of Labor and the Town's Attorney on some policy matters as we work on a conversion to hourly pay for the Fire Rescue Department for all activities. It changes the dollars from November and December (6 weeks) that will be paid out on a partial year of "points" to start on hourly pay for the first 2020 payroll, beginning 12/21/2019. There was discussion about the default budget and the current \$70,000 funded for personnel. Concerns were discussed on a budget basis that we will have more people coming out because there is now hourly, but that was the intent of all this work to date, to encourage more participation. There is value to this work. There was general discussion about the evolution of the Point Plan and how it has worked in Fremont, but times are changing and we need to keep up.

Holmes noted that the budget is up about \$59,000. Some of this has to do with the plans, the wages, expired gear, and weekend officers. Nygren observed the Chief's line is up \$9,000. Cordes explained it was lowered in 2019 due to the Budget Committee recommendation. He further explained that we are trending more administrative time to manage the overall personnel and scheduling of the Department. Holmes observed that it seems like a lot of time and asked about compensation. If it is being paid at an hourly rate, it doesn't matter who is doing it, someone will be paid. The current plan is that the Chief will oversee all of these personnel management matters.

Yokela made a motion to recommend \$312,551 for the Fire Rescue Department, taking out \$11,667 in the compensation line for funds that will be paid out in 2019 payroll dollars. This was seconded by Martel. Motion passed 8 Yes – 0 No – 0 Abstain.

#### **Vendor Payment Request**

Carlson distributed the Social Service Agency requests. These are agencies that help members of our town in a variety of ways (medical, mental health, elderly services, meals, etc). One agency did not send a request that has been coming every year. CASA is the only change from \$500 to \$1,000 and some additional information on the increase was solicited and circulated for review. Selectmen will see this tomorrow night.

Holmes made a motion to recommend \$29,242 for Vendor Payment Requests, seconded by Nygren. Motion passed 7 Yes – 1 No (Yokela) – 0 Abstain.

Carlson indicated that the Town has a lot of new emails, they are being forwarded, but they are not all getting through. Her new email is [HCarlson@fremont.nh.gov](mailto:HCarlson@fremont.nh.gov). They will be creating a list of all new emails for the website, and an email was generated tonight to send these out to the Committee.

#### **Town Warrant draft to date**

The Committee deferred additional action on the Warrant until more of the Selectmen's recommendations were included.

Approved 12/18/2019

### **Deliberative Session**

There is no update on trying to have the School and Town session on the same date. There are some procedures that need to be clarified, ie: check in twice, what times to start each one. Potentially the snow date would be the following Saturday, but that makes the Town Report deadline very difficult to meet.

### **Fremont School Budget**

Plan is to be ready next week. There have been more questions sent to Sue Penny by the Committee. Greg Fraize informed the Committee that Kingston/Newton numbers came in under their default budget numbers.

### **Review draft *Rules of Procedure***

Holmes said she read them and doesn't feel there is a need for change, but this is a draft only. Muench, Nygren and Bonaccorsi don't feel there is a need for them. Holmes feels guidelines would be good to have, Robert's Rules. Miccile doesn't feel there's been any issues in the past. It was suggested that this be considered again on an as needed basis.

Holmes moved to remove Rules of Procedure from future agendas, seconded by Bonaccorsi. Motion passed 7 Yes – 0 -No – 1 Abstain (Martel).

At 8:45 pm a motion was made to adjourn by Cordes, seconded by Bonaccorsi. Motion passed 7 Yes – 1 No (Yokela) – 0 Abstain.

The next meeting will be held at 7:00 pm on Wednesday December 18, 2019 in the Town Hall Main Floor Meeting Room.

Respectfully submitted,

Shawn Perreault  
Recording Secretary