

**Approved 01/15/2020**

Present were Committee members Mary Jo Holmes, Joe Miccile, Gene Cordes, Steve Bonaccorsi, Michael Nygren, Joshua Yokela and School Board Rep Gordon Muench. SAU Business Administrator Susan Penny was present, along with members of the public Patricia Martel, Emily Phillips, Valerie Millios, School Board members Angela O'Connell, Greg Fraize, Amy Leslie, and Ellis Principal Sharon DeVincent.

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm in the main floor meeting room at the Fremont Town Hall with the Pledge of Allegiance. The meeting is live broadcast on FCTV Channel 13 and will also be rebroadcast on FCTV Channel 22.

**Replacement Member:**

Holmes opened the meeting inviting Pat Martel to the meeting. Martel has expressed interest in the open position vacated by Jonathan Starr's recent resignation. Lisa Marggraf emailed Holmes and stated she decided to wait until the March voting. Marggraf felt at this stage having someone that has experience on the Committee would benefit the Committee more at this point. Cordes made a motion to nominate Pat Martel to be appointed to the Budget Committee to fill Jonathan Starr's seat. Martel will take this seat until March elections, at which time four (4) seats will be open. Motion passed 6 Yes – 0 No – 0 Abstain.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes:**

Cordes made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of November 6, 2019 as amended, seconded by Nygren. Motion passed 6 Yes – 0 No – 1 Abstain (Martel)

Bonaccorsi made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of November 13, 2019 as amended, seconded by Miccile. Motion passed 5 Yes – 0 No – 2 Abstain (Gordon, Martel)

**Fremont School District Budget**

Holmes did not receive any new questions from the Board for Penny. Holmes turned the meeting over to Sue Penny. She started by handing out a copy of the Power Point that was presented (prepared by Superintendent Hutton) at the Public Hearing on November 12<sup>th</sup> regarding the future of our High School Students.

The next handout circulated was revenue projections, including numbers from the State of New Hampshire. This shows the amount of money to be raised by taxation would be about \$210,000, which is down from this current year. Cordes observed that the projections seem to be conservative, down about \$115,000? Penny said this is due to the enrollment being down. Cordes asked why we were no longer getting Kindergarten Aid. Penny said that went away and is now rolled into the money the State gives us. Cordes commented that the Food Service projection is a lot higher than the actuals. Penny said we were short this year by \$310.00. The budget covers the cost of the contract. They will use the revenue raised from students/staff buying lunch to cover this amount. The enrollment number used to calculate this is the number of students as of October 1<sup>st</sup>.

The next handout was an updated Full time equivalent (FTE) salary listing and a comparison of fiscal year 2021 proposal to the fiscal 2019 actual. Penny said this is to make it easier for the Committee to compare the two years (replacing the Purple document from November 13<sup>th</sup> meeting). The 32.5 is this year and the 31.5 is the proposed, due to a teacher retiring and not being replaced, grade to be determined.

Next, Penny provided the updated Trust Fund summaries with interest. Cordes asked if any money was pulled out. Penny indicated the District will be pulling money out of the maintenance fund for the roof, but it has not come out yet. Penny included the projected numbers that will be left.

Holmes asked about a Warrant Article for High School Tuition and the Special Ed Trust Fund. Penny said that Warrant Articles will be discussed when Superintendent Hutton returns. Additionally, \$284,367 is the approximate amount of money to be received from the State in fiscal year 2021 based on the equalized value, which is based on the Free and Reduced numbers. She also stated that they are looking to have a Warrant Article placed on the ballot to have this money put into the Maintenance Trust Fund, because it a one time funding of disparity aid. If the vote doesn't pass, it will create a huge spike in taxes the following year. They would like to use the money to finish repairs on the roof. Holmes asked why the money would not be put into the general fund. Penny said it is possible to do. This would avoid the need to put a Warrant Article out there. School Board member O'Connell added that the School Board wanted the public to see the money as separate. They want to make sure it doesn't look like the School had more money than they do. Also, if the budget doesn't pass we would loss the money. The money doesn't have to be used in a certain line or for a certain item. Further discussion was held.

The next item for discussion was the revised budget of fiscal 2020 compared to the proposed for fiscal 2021 due to the default budget. O'Connell said this is what we are really spending compared to what we are asking for next year. Cordes asked about the increased costs and if they are due to salary increases or other items. Penny explained that Special Education administration is due to increases in benefits. Penny further explained that someone in that function this year that doesn't have benefits will have them next year.

With regard to the Superintendent's office, Penny explained that some of the changes are salary adjustments for all the non-CBA personnel, about \$20,000. Plant operations increased due to some of the repairs to the building, and pipes that might need to be repaired. They are keeping an eye on a few things. Martel asked for clarification on the default vs the proposed budget. Penny said it's how things should have looked. The default budget made it hard to look at, so they looked at actual. The budget was frozen due to the roof repair.

DOE – NH School and District Profiles Handout: Miccile explained this is a program on the DOE website to compare up to three schools. He compared Fremont, Brentwood and Chester. Penny indicated that Brentwood is only K-5 and Fremont is K-8. The best comparison is Chester because they are also K-8. Penny further explained that the numbers on the website is total money spent including grant funds. If you compare Fremont and Chester, they also have a bond. There is \$93,000 more than us and are servicing 90 students more than us. O'Connell said the 90 addition students have an impact on things like classroom number and number of teachers, which can make a difference. Muench added that we are close to surrounding towns. It's hard comparing property taxes with higher home costs. It is also hard to compare because many towns are co-ops. Amy Leslie works there and was asked about Chester's set up – 3 teachers per grades, the building is only 21 years old, middle school upstairs and elementary downstairs, big gym. Muench mentioned the bus contract, wondering if other towns will see an increase when their bus contracts come up. They were told increase was due to licensing changes. Also, there are not a lot of options for the special need buses as there was in prior years. Further discussion was held.

Miccile mentioned a conversation with a friend about his wife's health insurance as a teacher in Massachusetts. They have a Health Trust. The teachers contribute into the fund and it is managed by a group. They go in with other districts. Martel added they did that in Haverhill, a self-insured trust fund. Penny said the District uses a similar plan with pooled insurance through Health Trust. The teachers put in about 2%, which saved money. The percent depends which plan they choose. The District pays about

the same with either plan. O'Connell said the Board is interested at looking into bidding out a combined contract with another Town for buses. Further discussion was held on different options.

### **Public Hearing**

Holmes wanted to be sure the Committee has enough time with the meetings remaining, which is four meetings until the Public Budget Hearing. Penny asked if the Committee needed any more information from the District. Holmes reiterated that if anyone has questions, looking at the book, please copy the Committee on the question and email it directly to Sue Penny. She can reply all with the answer as long as no discussions are held. Penny said they hope to have the Warrant Articles for the School completed by December 11<sup>th</sup>. Holmes said the Town will be back on December 4<sup>th</sup>, giving the Committee two more weeks to look over the outstanding Town budgets and vote.

The Committee will plan to come back to the School Budget on December 18<sup>th</sup>. The Committee confirmed date for Public Hearing of Wednesday January 15, 2020 at 7:00 pm in the Town Hall Basement Meeting Room. Petitions are due on Tuesday January 14, 2020.

### **Town Budgets Remaining**

Police, Fire, Highway, Parks & Recreation and Personnel Administration will be the next budgets reviewed at the meetings of December 4 and 11; returning to the School budget on December 18.

### **Deliberative Session:**

Holmes – asked the School Board if they would be interested in having the session on the same date. If it occurs on the same day, the start time would be posted and then it would say the school will immediately follow, if all the logistics can be worked out. Cordes agrees it would be a great idea. Miccile feels the Town goes on too long and if they are the same day and on a Saturday it will benefit everyone. We will have a snow date posted as well. Cordes thought it was easier for people if you are asking them to come out one day. The School Board members are interested in this and will discuss further at their meeting on November 21. The Budget Committee was in favor of the combined session on Saturday February 1, 2020.

Josh Yokela arrived at the meeting at 8:20 pm.

Holmes thanked everyone from the School Board for coming.

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

Muench made a motion to table the Rules of Procedure draft. Nygren seconded. The motion passed 6 Yes – 1 No (Yokela) – 1 Abstain (Martel)

At 8:26 pm a motion to adjourn was made by Nygren, seconded by Bonaccorsi. Motion passed 8 Yes – 0 No – 0 Abstain.

The next meeting will be held at 7:00 pm on Wednesday, December 4, 2019 in the Town Hall Main Floor Meeting Room.

Respectfully submitted,

Shawn Perreault  
Recording Secretary