

Present: Committee Members Chair Mary Jo Holmes, Josh Yokela, Michael Nygren, Jon Benson, Steve Bonaccorsi, Pat Martel, Selectmen's Rep Gene Cordes, School Board Rep Gordon Muench, Town Administrator Heidi Carlson, and Secretary Shawn Perreault.

Meeting was called to order by Chair Holmes at 6:30 pm in the basement meeting room of the Fremont Town Hall. All rose for the Pledge of Allegiance. There were no scheduled appointments.

Motion made by Cordes to approve the October 14, 2020 meeting minutes as written, seconded by Holmes. Motion passed 5 Yes – 0 No - 1 Abstain (Martel).

The Committee had updated expense sheets for any Town Budgets which do not have a recommendation from the Committee. They began in line item order to review.

**4191 Planning & Zoning:** Chair Holmes stated budget was up about \$3,000. Holmes asked Carlson why the professional services went up? Carlson stated they did talk about it when Leanne was presenting the budget, and that she would prefer any questions be directed to Leanne to get as thorough information as possible. Further discussion was held on prior discussion concerning this budget. Nygren stated he was OK with the money for the Stormwater Regulations, but not everything else. He feels they can just change the dates on the Master Plan instead of updating it. Holmes stated that if Leanne Miner would like to be here for the discussion, the budget will be tabled. Budget was tabled.

**4194 General Government Buildings:** Nygren asked Carlson what the reductions were. Carlson stated that there was a reduction of \$4,500 for the shed roof (this was a one-time expense). The Selectmen increased a few lines they felt were too tight. The roof cost was \$5,100 instead of the \$4,500 planned. The Selectmen's number needs to be revoked as it was mistakenly left in the proposed budget again. The Meetinghouse is \$100 reduction, because the hours for mowing were less. Carlson stated that they purchase a couple new computers every year but are having trouble with some current ones, and they have not yet been ordered. We had some project work not done due to Covid.

Motion made to recommend \$99,183 for Department 4194 by Cordes second by Muench. Motion passed 7 Yes – 0 No – 0 Abstain.

Bonaccorsi arrived at 6:37 pm.

**4210 Police Department:** Chair Holmes feels this budget should be tabled and reviewed at a later day. Nygren asked Carlson for update on the hiring event held recently. Carlson stated the turnout was good, she believes 24 people applied, 12 took written test and the physical test, 8 of the 12 passed both sections and were scheduled for interviews. The budget was tabled.

**4240 Building Inspection:** Holmes stated budget is up about \$1,000. Nygren asked if Bob Meade was still working with the Larry, the current Building Inspector. Carlson stated he was, and the budget leaves an hour or so per week if Bob needs to come in. On average, Bob is not quite here an hour per week on average. Larry is working more hours than prior inspectors because the demand has been up as people are home to do projects and there is a lot of new construction going on. Larry has the time to put in. Carlson reviewed the latest new construction areas in Town. Larry is working a consistent 30 hours. Carlson stated she does not separate any training hours from regular hours. However, due to Covid, there has been far less available training, outside of webinars. Holmes asked about safety inspection, this line is left open in case a consultant is needed for things like foster care inspections. Cordes stated the revenues cover the costs within the budget line.

Motion made by Muench to recommend \$38,897 for Department 4240, seconded by Martel. Motion passed 7 Yes – 0 No – 0 Abstain.

**4312 Highway Department:** This budget was tabled.

Carlson will ask Leanne to be here next week for the Planning Board. She owes the Board a couple of other budgets that cannot be done until some of the others are voted. She will not be here next week and asked the Committee if there was anyone else they needed to see again. If so, she will schedule them for next week.

**4323 / 4324 Solid Waste:** Carlson stated she submitted the charts to show where the history is of tonnage for recycling and solid waste. The numbers are up, but we should be able to finish the budget this year. There will be some left due to only having one Bulky Day event. The contract is a flat increase plus the number of new houses. The tonnage was calculated based on historical average. Due to Covid, numbers are up because people are home more. She estimated and has budgeted for two bulky days for 2021. Jon Benson asked if the Bulk recycling is the Bulky Day. Carlson confirmed and stated that most dumpsters were filled, and they had four electronic bins get filled too. There was further discussion regarding how Bulky Day went, what was seen and tonnage.

Cordes made a motion to recommended \$315,510 for Department 4323, seconded by Muench. Motion passed by 8 Yes – 0 No – 0 Abstain.

Yokela arrived at 6:53 pm.

Motion made by Cordes to recommend \$127,715 for Department 4324, seconded by Muench. Motion passed 7 Yes - 1 No (Yokela) – 0 Abstain.

**4414 Animal Control:** Carlson stated that the wrong number was used when the vote was taken on this budget earlier. The revenue amount is \$10,500 and that was the number voted by the Committee. She asked the Committee to revote the appropriation to be clear. Muench made a motion to recommend \$10,920 for Department 4414, seconded by Cordes. Motion passed 6 Yes – 1 No (Yokela) – 0 Abstain (Benson had stepped out of the room).

**4415 Health:** Carlson presented the budget and offered some highlights. (Benson returned) Cordes made a motion to recommend \$1,435 for department 4415, seconded by Martel. Motion passed 8 Yes- 0 No – 0 Abstain.

Cordes stated that with Covid these folks have been so helpful, and we would have been struggling more if we did not have them as resources.

**4442 Direct Assistance:** Carlson stated  $\frac{3}{4}$  of this year has been spent. Requests are coming in now as the heating season begins. The Fuel Assistance Program does not begin their grants until December 1<sup>st</sup>. The Town did have some other requests come in, due to Covid and people not qualifying for other available programs. This budget is based on history. Motion made by Muench to recommend for \$20,580 for Department 4442, seconded by Cordes. Motion passed 8 Yes – 0 No – 0 Abstain.

Yokela stated there was no 2% wage increase showing in the narrative. Carlson will fix the narrative as no change was proposed.

**4520 Parks & Recreation:** Holmes asked if there was a full Commission yet and Carlson stated there are currently only two people, so no quorum. Anyone interested is invited to come forward! Carlson said

the budget had been put together much like the current year. This budget does not have any camp proposed, due to Covid as well as not having a full Commission to plan a program. There is no way of knowing what it will look like in 2021. The budget is very similar to the present year. Carlson has been more involved and working closer with Fremont Athletic Association because they use the field the most. While the fields were closed, due to Covid, we took on some additional reseeding and other maintenance.

With this summer's drought, the well could not keep up with the watering. The irrigation system has now been winterized. They have a new hire who is working out well after our prior maintenance man retired at the end of last year. They are currently focusing on maintenance and clean-up. Cordes stated they added some Town events in the budget as well, hoping that 2021 will be more normal. He said we have also added a port-a-potty because it is a public space. This also stops the bathrooms from being damaged, which was happening. Carlson stated she added reseeding for soccer and the Babe Ruth field, working with the FAA. Further discussion was held. Martel asked Carlson for the 2% wage increase report again. She stated it is about \$10,000 or \$11,000 over all Departments except Police.

A motion was made by Bonaccorsi to recommend \$33,972 for Department 4520, seconded by Muench. Motion passed 8 Yes – 0 No – 0 Abstain.

**4550 Library:** Holmes asked Carlson if anything changed. Carlson stated no, just an updated finance report. Nygren wanted to know if the Library was able to use surplus funds to purchase any of the times in their budget for 2021. Carlson is not sure, they had PFOA in the recent water test report, so a water system has been requisitioned by the Trustees. Nygren would like to hold off on this vote until Carlson can find out the answers. Carlson will meet with him and update the Committee. The budget was tabled.

**4130 Executive:** Holmes stated this budget is up about \$4,000. Cordes stated the increase is due to the 2% wage increase and the Town Admin salary is up about \$2,500 as part of a multi-year plan to make it more inline with the market. Carlson stated the Committee could take \$300 dollars out of the newsletter by cutting a check at the end of this year for the January edition (for Town Meeting). Carlson cut a few other things back based on usage.

Motion made by Bonaccorsi to recommend \$129,410 for Department 4130, seconded by Cordes. Motion passed 6 Yes – 1 No (Yokela) – 1 Abstain (Nygren). Note: Newsletter line will be reduced by \$300.00.

The Committee would like to have Miner and Cloutier come in to speak with them about their budgets. Carlson stated she is not sure who can attend next week, because there is a lot going on with voting. Nygren asked a follow-up question related to the Highway Department, if Leon Holmes felt comfortable with the paving projects in the budget and not Warrant Articles. Cordes shared the information with the Selectmen. They are not sure about supporting this idea. Cordes will ask the Selectmen for further pros and cons and report back to the board. Cordes asked Carlson to put it on the Selectmen meeting of October 29th to discuss the budget vs. Warrant Articles. Carlson will also discuss further with Holmes Jr.

**4140 Town Clerk:** There was a question about the increase in clerical wages. Carlson did the math and said it is 3 more hours a week and that the wage used is current, without a 2% increase. The Committee would like to meet with Nicole Cloutier and the budget was tabled.

Holmes asked if Twiss will be seeing the Selectmen. Carlson stated there is nothing planned right now. Bonaccorsi stated we need to know if the money for roads and the new officer would be put in the budget or Warrant Article before the Board can vote on those budgets.

Holmes asked Carlson if there were any updates to the current expense report. Carlson will have the printout for them next week. Carlson stated they are still trying to figure out what can be spent out of the

current budget for items in the 2021 budget. She does forecast out but is not ready to say what total will be left. Further discussion was held.

Holmes asked if there were any other budgets that could be looked at. Carlson stepped out to get the expense/revenue report and a few other budgets.

**4610 Conservation:** Bonaccorsi made a motion to recommend \$3,494 for Department 4610, seconded by Muench. Martel asked if they could update the Master plan using funds from this budget to lower the planning budget? Cordes stated that does not change this budget. Motion passed 7 Yes – 1 No (Yokela) – 0 Abstain.

Bonaccorsi asked Muench for a School Board update. Muench stated they did get the transfer numbers; which are due Monday. They were hoping to have the number Friday to be able to work over the weekend, but they doubt it will happen. This is only an estimate, but still the estimate usually is not close to final numbers. Sanborn High is back to in-person 5 days a week, with Wednesday being a half day. Ellis is going well but has had some staffing issues due to quarantine. Subs are hard to find, due to bigger districts offering up to \$200 a day and Ellis offering \$70. Further discussion was held.

Bonaccorsi asked if Muench thought we would see a cost decrease because of remote learning. Muench stated no, because the building was still open and maintained and staff was still being paid. Jon Benson asked about buses. Muench stated they are still using the same number of buses. A lot of families are driving, which helped not add buses because number of students allowed per bus was decreased, due to Covid. Muench stated the School Board would be seeing Ellis and Sanborn budget all at once. The Budget Committee will be seeing the School budget on November 18<sup>th</sup>.

Carlson returned with the summary expense report, the summary revenue and expense reports, and a few more budgets. She does not have the updated rate. The Town's assessed valuation is up about \$120M from the revaluation. The revenue is from two weeks ago. Further discussion was held.

**4313 Bridges:** This is the annual inspection cost to maintain the warranty on the Sandown Road Bridget Overflow fixed in 2019. Yokela made a motion to recommend \$1,500 for Department 4313, seconded by Muench. Motion passed 8 Yes- 0 No – 0 Abstain.

**4316 Street Lights:** Muench made a motion to recommend \$7,000 for Department 4316, seconded by Cordes. Yokela asked why is it up? Carlson stated we picked up an extra light and the overall increase is due to contracted rates. Motion passed 8 Yes – 0 No – 0 Abstain.

**4152 Reappraisal of Property:** Holmes stated this budget is the same as last year. Carlson stated that was correct. Right now, it shows as overspent, however, once the Selectmen take the money out of the Capital Reserve Fund, we will be back on track. Carlson reminded everyone about the process of removing money from Capital Reserve until it was exhausted, and how the cyclical contract worked, avoiding a large spike in the fifth year, for each revaluation. Bonaccorsi made a motion to recommend \$44,080 for Department 4152, seconded by Yokela. Motion passed 8 Yes – 0 No – 0 Abstain.

Holmes asked the Committee members to review all outstanding budgets this weekend. Carlson asked to have any questions sent to her by Sunday given next week is tied up with voting issues Monday and Tuesday. Holmes would like to vote on as many budgets as possible next week. Holmes stated we are waiting for the Selectmen to see which direction they want to go with Warrant Articles vs. operating budget. Yokela asked why the Committee was waiting for them before voting. Bonaccorsi stated they are waiting to see if Leon Holmes and the Selectmen come up with the direction they want to go. Yokela stated it should be in the budget because it is an ongoing expense and having it in the budget allows for

better planning every year. Yokela does not know why the Committee is waiting. Nygren is trying to make the Deliberative Session clear and be sure the Road Agent comfortable with the Committee's decision. Martel stated she feels a motion should be made; the money should be in the budget. Cordes asked the Committee to keep in mind this is a bottom-line budget and does not require the funds to be spent a certain way. Whereas Warrant Article money can only be spent as the Warrant Article states. If there is a large increase in the operating budget, you run the risk of the whole budget not getting passed. Further discussion was held.

Holmes stated next week the Committee should be ready to vote on the Highway budget. She stated to Carlson that if L. Holmes Jr would like to come back, please invite him. Carlson will let L. Holmes know. Cordes stated there are certain expenses year after year and it makes sense to have them in the operating budget. Yokela feels if it is a new expense, such as the police officer, it should be put on a Warrant Article. However, just changing the name of the roads, they are spending about the same amount every year. Bonaccorsi feels it is the same we need the road, and we need an officer. This should be part of the budget and not a Warrant Article. Cordes stated that Yokela is saying that we spend X on roads every year, so put it in the budget. However, the police officer is a new expense and should be a Warrant Article because the following years it becomes part of the budget.

At 8:25 pm Bonaccorsi made a motion to adjourn. Cordes seconded. Motion passed 8 Yes – 0 No – 0 Abstain.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday November 4, 2020 at 6:30 pm in the Town Hall First Floor Meeting Room.

Respectfully submitted,

Shawn Perreault  
Recording Secretary