

Approved 12/09/2020

Present: Committee Members: Chair: Mary Jo Holmes, Josh Yokela, Michael Nygren, Jon Benson, Steve Bonaccorsi, Pat Martel, Selectmen's Representative Gene Cordes, School Board Representative: Gordon Muench, School Members: Superintendent: Allyn Hutton (via Zoom), Business Admin: Sue Penny (via Zoom), Recording Secretary: Shawn Perreault, FCTV, Greg Fraize.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Holmes at 7:00 pm on the first floor of the Fremont Town Hall. The Pledge was recited.

Appointments: School Administration – participating remotely

Chair Holmes opened the meeting to the School Board. Hutton stated that Penny received questions from Holmes and replied via email. No other questions were received. Holmes sent about 13 questions in total, which will be attached to these minutes along with the answers. Holmes shared her questions and the School's answers with the Committee. Penny clarified the Food Service budget and the way Sanborn High school was handling our food at this time. Penny stated that our district did not qualify for the food waiver. School board secretary position, this is now a contracted position. This saves some money because we only pay for the contracted hourly rate. SAU accounting software was also taken out as this was a one-time expense. Private Tuition is down due to the decrease in out of district placements. Hutton reminded the board that the Highs number is a place holder only, the final number will be in on December 15. She informed the Committee that they are waiting for the Sanborn School Board to vote, there seem to be some items people would like to see added back in. Penny stated the capital cost did go down last year. Hutton stated the capital cost did go up a little and adjustments were made because part of the school is being used by the Middle school. Penny stated course reimbursement was decreased because the new hire did not want to take classes. All the course reimbursement lines are zero this year, because all staff declined taking classes this year. They ask staff every year, only budgeting for courses when staff members want to take them. A discussion was held on the student to teacher ratio. Hutton agrees that the enrollment is down, but they do not know what the future will hold. They have to plan for everything. Due to the Covid, they do not have the space to have the kids 6 feet away and a staff member in the room. They are planning and making adjustments where needed for several options. Hutton recommends to maintain current staffing levels. Penny stated these are not all classroom teachers. There are reading teachers, math specialist, etc. Further discussion was held.

Martel stated it is the salaries and the benefits that drive the budget up. The high school savings helped this budget. Hutton stated it is important to maintain the staff. The students deserve the quality education. Martel continued to go over lines that helped lower the budget. Penny clarified numbers on items like Healthcare. Holmes stated there might be a time to look at cutting staff. Hutton stated last year there was a teacher position that was eliminated. Further discussion was held on the staff changes from different years. Hutton reminded the Committee that Special Ed position are IEP driven and required by law. Hutton stated that when a staff need was found, they worked at cutting in other places and lines to help offset any increases. Holmes asked how the Committee could explain the School giving back so much money to the Taxpayers. Penny went over the reasons, such as COVID causing bus usage to decrease. Muench reminded the Committee that comparing this year and last is not a fair comparison because of COVID. He used the Food Services as an example, where seeing the program not being used, there was efforts made to cut that cost/debt. Further discussion was held on how COVID effects plans and the building. Hybrid learning is not saving that much money. You still need the building, the staff, etc. Penny stated the money being returned to the Town is only 2-3% of the overall budget, so they are spending about 98% of the budget. Yokela stated as long as we can explain it the reasons behind the return, he doesn't feel the Tax payers would have a problem. Further discussion was held.

Yokela asked if he could have a copy of the Speech textbook the School wants to buy, line 124. It is about Social thinking. Penny will contact the teacher and get it to him. Benson, line 55 in the blue, asked

Approved 12/09/2020

for clarification on the numbers jumping on students going into high school vs. coming out. Penny clarified the increase could be kids moving in or services increasing. Further discussion was held.

Benson, line 74, Athletic and Extra Curricular, wanted to know if this was coaches. Penny stated line 70 is coaches and line 74 is used if the position is hired outside of the School. The positions are usually filled by teachers who get the stipend and the school pays NH retirement. Teachers are offered the positions first. Benson, line 237, the Consulting services, what is the \$20,000 based on? Penny stated this was an absolute estimate based on consulting firm hired a couple of years ago and the hours that were used. Cordes asked Penny if she could go back and compare the last three years where money was returned at the end of the year and include the reasons. He asked Penny if there was a way of going back a few years and giving the reasons behind the return. Penny stated that she usually starts the Committee meetings that way, so she feels she can do this. Cordes asked for three years. Holmes stated this year, 2019 and 2018. Penny will supply that. Nygren asked if there was any yearly functions that always show a return? Hutton stated they receive more unanticipated funds, but that is extremely hard to project. Penny stated in prior years it was the GMR from the High School that really effected the budget. Also, Special Ed used to budget for ghost students, which is not done any more, due to the trust fund. Further discussion was held. Holmes asked Penny if any more CARES bills came in? Penny stated it doesn't look like the computers will come in on time to be paid from the CARES Supplemental, which covers items/expense in hand on December 30th. They still have the CARES grant that can be used for the computers and ends sometime in 2021.

Martel asked when the staff contract expires. Hutton stated that is 2021. This year is Support Staff. Hutton stated that they are done with negotiation and will be voting on it this week. Holmes asked the Committee how they felt about the \$150,000 the School was requesting by warrant article to be transferred into the Special Ed Trust? Hutton stated they feel having \$300,000 in the Special Ed Trust would be a good place to be. Penny stated it is based on a surprise, of someone moving in with very high needs, such as out of district placements. Further discussion was held on the numbers. Hutton stated they wanted to put money in, but also be reasonable and still be able to give back to the taxpayers, which is why they are not asking for the entire \$200,000 needed to reach the \$300,000. Martel asked if the Support Staff contract includes health benefits and retirements? Penny stated yes, but not all staff members qualify for retirement. Right now, four staff members would qualify for retirement. Hutton stated Warrant Articles will be ready soon. Holmes asked if they were going to place special meeting Warrant Articles in case the Warrant Articles fail. Hutton reminded the Committee that she will have the firm number on Sanborn on December 15th. She would like to come back to the Committee at the December 16th meeting when they have all the numbers. Yokela stated his focus was on the default budget, there is only a \$24,000 difference. The budget shouldn't be below the default, so there is very little room.

Cordes suggested that if the School District Warrant Articles are approved they could send them over to the Committee to review. Cordes stated the warrant articles should be wrapped up tomorrow.

Hutton asked if the Committee needed anything else, Martel requested the estimated revenue. Penny stated they should have it next week. The Committee requested the school warrant articles, returned fund comparison and estimated revenue next week and then they will send any questions to Penny.

Holmes requested the Town's warrant articles, updated revenue and expenses for the December 9th meeting. Nygren would like to see if we have any shortfalls from the Town taxpayers. Cordes agrees it is always helpful looking back, how is this year going to affect any revenue shortfall. Are we budgeting like we have the money, but we don't have the money? Further discussion was held. Yokela would like the 2% wage increase breakdown.

Approved 12/09/2020

Motion made by Cordes to approve meeting minutes of November 18, 2020 as amended, seconded by Nygren. Motion passed 8 Yes – 0 No – 1 Abstain (Bonaccorsi).

Other Town Budgets: November expense report (summary) which includes forecasts in the month of December for committed items (PO's, normal monthly expenses, etc) in many departments.

Any other business: Carlson submitted information to the Committee to review from Fremont Town Counsel regarding the Committee's questions on the split Warrant Article recommendation vote: *"The abstention does not count as either an affirmative or negative vote and does not change the recommendation. The Budget Committee's vote in the example below is a vote to recommend the article. If the vote was 3-3 with 2 abstentions, the article is neither recommended or not recommended. With split votes, the best way to record them on the warrant is to just state the vote totals."*

Holmes stated the Committee was in agreement that they will look at the documents the School sends at the next meeting and then meet with the School again on December 16th.

Cordes made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Bonaccorsi. Meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 09 December 2020 at 7:00 pm in the Town Hall Basement Meeting Room.

Respectfully submitted,

Shawn Perreault
Recording Secretary

Attachment: Questions/Answers from Mary Jo Holmes (Q) to Sue Penny (A)

Q: If you are returning \$434,069 is that after you take out the \$200,000.00 or before?

A: The \$434,069 was what was returned after the \$200,000 transfer to the Maintenance Trust Fund.

Q: What is the Psychology line so high I thought you hired a social worker last year?

A: Psychology is a different service from the social worker - this function is used for psychological tests and evaluations - these tests are mandated by IEP's. This function has not increased from last year.

Q: Supplies regular ed were cut \$6,000; usually teachers need more in this line?

A: The teaching supply line is usually higher. We are spending differently this year due to COVID. We will most likely have unused supplies that will not need to be purchased in FY22.

Q: 2130 Nurse \$47,250 salary but Budget Summary comparison states \$83,825.00?

A: Nursing - The budget summary number of \$83,825 includes all expenses in that function including her salary. Other expenses are FICA, NHRS, health, dental, and life insurances also supplies, repairs for equipment, etc.

Q: Tuition other HS \$66,937 - Did we lose a student?

A: Tuition Other HS \$66,937 - I am not sure which line you are referring to; there is an overall decrease in out of district placements.

Q: Food service is up but you explained contract can you explain again? (68,745)

Approved 12/09/2020

A: The food service budget is the same as last year \$172,500 - The general fund did have to subsidize the food service fund last year (approximately \$5,600). Expenses exceeded revenues last year. This was primarily caused by the shutdown in March due to COVID. In previous years there have been losses but never quite this deep.

Q: School Board Secretary employee \$3,000?

A: The School Board Secretary position is now a contracted service position rather than an employee performing the function.

Q: 2225-5313 Consultant Computers \$5,000 you don't need?

A: A consultant is not needed for the computer tech department this year

Q: 2320-5750 Capital Software SAU?

A: The capital software is on one-time purchase for this (FY21) year.

Q: 2330 Consulting services from 0-\$20,000?

A: Consulting services for Special Education Administration will be needed to audit and study the way our Special Education is being run. We are hoping to gain insight that may end up with savings for the department.

Q: 1200-5564 Down \$261,267?

A: 1200 5564 - 30 (tuition private and other sped) - this line is down to a change in out of district placements.

Q: 1100-5561 H S Tuition is this based on enrolled now (\$145,000)?

A: The Sanborn HS line is based on the projected enrollment for next year. There are projected to be 11 fewer students for regular education and 2 fewer for special education.

Q: 2330-5240 Sped Course Reimbursement \$6,594 Don't need?

A: There is not a need for course reimbursement in the line 10-2330-5240-10. We have a new employee in the role.