

The meeting came to order at 7:02 pm at the Fremont Town Hall in the first-floor meeting room. The Pledge was recited.

Present at the meeting were Committee Members: Mary Jo Holmes, Chair; Michael Nygren, Jon Benson, Steve Bonaccorsi, Pat Martel, Selectmen's Representative Gene Cordes, Recording Secretary Shawn Perreault, Greg Fraize, FCTV; and member of the public Keith Stanton. Attending remotely through Zoom were Budget Committee Members Gordon Muench and Joshua Yokela and School Administrators Allyn Hutton and Sue Penny.

Motion made by Cordes to table the Meeting Minutes of December 9, 2020 until the next meeting, seconded by Nygren. Motion passed by vote of 8 Yes – 0 No – 0 Abstain.

**Review School Budget items:** GMR information was received from Sanborn on December 9<sup>th</sup>, the rate was \$269.00/student less than the current year. The placeholder was reduced. Budget for high school is now \$132,939.58, the overall School District budget is now \$12,113,330.00.

Article 5 of the School's Warrant Articles was adjusted from \$150,000 from fund balance to \$100,000. The plan is to ask the Town for \$100,000 this year and another \$100,000 next year. The School Board felt with everything going on, this would be a more responsible thing to do. The goal is to get the Special Education Expendable Trust fund up to around \$300,000.

This makes the **default** budget \$12,089,294.

Holmes asked if there was talk of reducing staff. Hutton stated no, they need all the staff they have under the current situation. Fremont has less students. Martel asked why the Sanborn budget decreased. Hutton stated that the number per student was too high, the Middle School is now at the High School and there are reduced programs and staffing. Enrollment has also decreased for them, which will increase the cost per student. Fraize stated Kingston seems to have flat lined their budget. Martel asked if there might be a huge increase next year, Hutton stated that there is no way to know. Kingston is aware we are looking at where to send students in 2026, when the current contract with Sanborn expires. Cordes asked if the capital cost went down per student, Penny stated no. Cordes asked if they added the Middle School and spread the capital cost out per student to include them, why did it not go down further. Penny feels that it probably is due to the decrease in number of High School students. Cordes did not understand if they are spreading it out over more students why ours went up. Penny stated this year we saw a drastic decrease and what we are seeing is a decrease enrollment in all grades. Capital cost is fixed even if there are less students in the building. Last year was the first year the Middle School was part of the High School numbers, so that was when we saw the decrease. Cordes stated he thought this was the first year for the Middle School, so now he understands the numbers. Further decision was held.

Cordes asked what our enrollment for Sanborn students were for next year. Penny stated 182 students: 42 Freshmen, 42 Sophomores, 42 Juniors and 56 Seniors. There are about 54 students graduating, however, some Seniors will not be leaving.

Stanton asked the Budget Committee and School Members to give him the amount of money, total amount, of what we paid to Sanborn. He would like all the costs, not just the tuition. He feels they are leaving out the capital costs. Holmes asked Hutton and Penny if the Sanborn number on the proposed budget includes Capital costs. Penny stated it does. Stanton wants all the money that was spent on the contract with Sanborn. Muench did speak with Penny, he would like something in writing from Stanton stating exactly what he is looking for. Muench understood he just wanted the checks made out to Sanborn after speaking with him during the last Budget Committee Meeting. Yokela asked him to clarify what he was looking for. Penny stated she sent him a vendor print out regarding Sanborn and she made a

spreadsheet for him, which included all the refunds. Penny gave him all costs up until last Thursday and has provided this information to Stanton twice. Stanton stated he wants the total amount of money Fremont School has given the Sanborn District that are related to the Tuition Contract. Penny stated \$47,233,000 is the last number, Stanton doesn't see the capital costs. Bonaccorsi and Penny stated that capital costs are included in the number (tuition, capital = total per student). Cost per student over the number of years. Stanton stated we have Special Education and Regular Education. Bonaccorsi stated it is about \$9,000 additional for Special Education. Further discussion was held trying to explain it.

Stanton stated the bottom line from Fremont and Sanborn does not match? Bonaccorsi recommends Stanton ask Kingston how much money they have received per student from Fremont. Holmes stated she feels Fremont has provided him with an answer on more than one occasion, they cannot speak for Sanborn. Nygren suggested Stanton contact the State Department of Ed for the numbers, if he feels he is not getting what he needs. He further stated knowing how our Manager works, this information is accurate. This Board has no way to get those numbers for you from Sanborn. Further discussion was held. Penny offered to meet with Stanton to go over the spreadsheets.

Martel asked why the State Education grant is down? Penny stated it was due to enrollment numbers, reduced lunch numbers, equalized evaluation (ours went up, which causes the grant to decrease). Penny will forward the formula to the board along with what the State is estimating we will receive, but they only guarantee you get 95% of that number. Holmes asked why the Catastrophic Aid always goes down? Penny stated when the students that get it move on the number goes down.

**Article 2** – Yokela asked what changes were made to the support staff, what is the \$30,000 increase attributed to? Penny and Hutton stated there is an increase to salary, benefits are the same. Hutton believes the biggest change was the salaries. Holmes asked how many support staff we have? Penny stated about 20-21 people. Yokela asked if the contract addresses the pandemic, if quarantine vs remote vs in-person learning was addressed? Hutton stated they did not address any of that on advice of counsel. This is a fluid situation. Quarantine is something they are required to do; they are not allowed to put in anything that contradicts State/Federal guidelines. Muench stated he cannot say enough about the school and everything they have done during this situation. Our school is one the only ones in the area to have this rate of success. Cordes made a motion to recommend the Ellis Support Staff Agreement, seconded by Nygren. Motion passed to recommend the Collective Bargaining Agreement with a vote of 8 Yes – 0 No – 0 Abstain.

**Article 3** – To hold one special meeting if Article 2 fails. Motion was made by Bonaccorsi to recommend authorizing one special meeting if Article 2 fails, seconded by Martel. Motion passed to recommend by a vote of 5 Yes – 3 No (Yokela, Martel, Benson) – 0 Abstain.

**Article 4** – School's Operating Budget: There was a lot of discussion regarding the placeholders for the consulting lines. Bonaccorsi was not comfortable with the number that was being proposed. The funds were not spent last year, he feels asking for an even higher amount cannot be justified. Hutton, Penny and Muench all stated that this is important to have and the amount is very reasonable for the work that needs to be done. This money is for the HVAC system and for a Special Education Consultant. Having a consultant is a very important thing to have and will make sure the job, which ever they are working is done correctly. They stated that the roofing consulting we had for the roofing project was invaluable. He was able to monitor the project, inspect the contractors work at key points and found errors that the School would not have seen or known to look for. The consultant made the contractors fix mistakes and saved the warranty from being null and void. Muench stated that as a contractor, he could speak to the price. The systems that are needed are expensive and no contractor is going to give a quote that will be good for a year or more. Most quotes are only good for 30 days. Cost in materials and the nature of a job

can change a lot in a short amount of time. The Special education consulting is very important. Special education is required for students. The School must have what the students require in place or they could be sued. The consultant would be there to make sure IEPs are being met and required resources are in place. Further discussion was held. Cordes made a motion to recommend the operating budget of \$12,089,294, seconded by Martin. Motion passed to recommend with a vote of 8 Yes – 0 No – 0 Abstain.

**Article 5** – Appropriate \$100,000 to the Special Education Expendable Trust Fund from the Fund Balance. Cordes made a motion to recommend the appropriation of \$100,000 to the Special Education Expendable Trust fund from the Fund Balance, seconded by Benson. Motion passed to recommend by vote of 8 Yes – 0 No – 0 Abstain.

**Other:** Yokela requested a copy of the book they want to add to the curriculum again. Penny stated she will have it next week.

Cordes thanked Hutton, Penny, and the School Board for all their work on the budget and all the work they did in working with the Committee.

**Town Budget follow-up:** Carlson left copies of the updated Town expense and revenue sheets. These include many forecasts in the month of December for committed items (PO's, normal monthly expenses, etc.) in most departments.

Police Department operating budget: Chief Twiss provided information in response to Josh's question last week that it is necessary to add 6 hours of training for each person. Two hours each in the following subject areas:

- Implicit bias and culture responsiveness
- Ethics
- De-escalation

Chief Twiss submitted to the Selectmen that to budget for this we should be adding \$1,762 to line # 4210-203. This would increase the Police Department operating budget to \$660,884.

Nygren agrees they need the training and feels the patrol money could cover that. Yokela stated you cannot encumber money that will be spent next year. Cordes stated the money Nygren was referring to will be spent. Yokela stated \$1,762 increase for well-trained officers is not a lot of money. People are concerned about having under trained officers on the streets, which puts the public in danger. Yokela thought adding more like \$5,000 would be necessary. This is the lowest recommended training hours. He feels we should go above and beyond. He disagrees with Nygren regarding police wages, we have already hired two additional people to cover the two that are leaving. Nygren withdrew his disagreement, noting the probational hires.

Motion made by Cordes to add \$1,762 to the department budget of 4210203. This would make the total Police Department budget \$660,884. The motion was seconded by Bonaccorsi. Motion recommended by a vote of 8 Yes – 0 No – 0 Abstain.

DRA has stated that the two Library ETF articles are fine as written, and one will not supersede the other.

**Any other business:** Cordes stated that due to the weather, the trash company will be collecting a day late. Thursday will be Friday and Friday will be Saturday. The next few Friday pick ups will be on Saturday due to the holidays.

**Fremont Budget Committee**  
**Approved 01/06/2021**

**16 December 2020**

Holmes stated the School District budget is complete. There are a few Town Warrant Articles left to review, a couple of Town budgets left and that there will be one Selectman position open on the ballot. There will also be two open positions on the Budget Committee.

Schedule next meeting date: Wednesday January 6, 2021 to prepare for Public Hearing and review any final information.

The Public Hearing is currently scheduled for Wednesday January 13, 2021 at 7:00 pm at Ellis School.

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Cordes, seconded by Bonaccorsi. Meeting adjourned at 8:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Shawn Perreault  
Recording Secretary