

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm in the Town Hall main floor meeting room and began with the Pledge of Allegiance. Present were Committee Members Mary Jo Holmes, Gordon Muench, Brian McGinn, Pat Martel, Steve Bonaccorsi, Gene Cordes, Josh Yokela (arrived a little late); and School District Business Manager Nathan Castle, Superintendent Ellen Halliday, Recording Secretary Shawn Perreault, and Greg Fraize from FCTV doing the recording.

To update viewers, the Chair announced: We are still having technical difficulties in the FCTV Control Room so meetings are being taped and will be uploaded to Vimeo as soon as possible. Tech service hopes to have the issues corrected next week so that we can be live again for the evening meeting on Tuesday November 9th. Updates are being posted on the FCTV Bulletin Board and the homepage news section of the website. Fraize added that this meeting will be replayed on Channel 13.

Fremont School District / School Board and Administration 2022-2023 budget presentation

Holmes opened by introducing the School members. Castle passed out the School budget binder to the Committee members. Halliday will be going through the Power Point presented to the Committee. She stated their doors are always open and if anyone wants to review them in person, please come in. Also, please email any questions. Halliday stated they were hoping to be closer to a normal school year, but there are still issues. They are working with the staff trying their best to cover situations as they arrive. COVID is still an unknown factor in this year's the budget process. Halliday proceeded through the presentation.

Halliday stated that the School set the following priorities: Student health and safety needs at the top; mitigation strategies that are necessary continue to have a financial impact, academic and social emotional planning must be robust to meet students where they are and move them forward, costs of goods, services and labor have all risen. The process starts with the Staff looking at all their Departments and making recommendation on needs, class size, special ed and facility needs. The School District then reviews it, makes their own cuts, recommendations and makes sure mistakes weren't made. The two groups meet and then make a final proposal. This proposal is then brought to the School Board who reviews it and makes further changes or recommendations. School Staff and Administration then go back and rework until it is approved by the School Board. The follow are items that MUST be anticipated: New staff salaries and benefit being proposed in the new contract (insurance increased by 2.5%), Sanborn High school tuition (1.7% was used in this budget, however, the November 1 number they gave was 3.5%; but the GMR will not be out until 12/15), increase needs/cost of due to health and safety needs (State grants were received to cover a portion of these costs), staffing levels to support special education needs required by law (increase in out of district placement has increased costs), the cost of the new staff contract Warrant Article if it passes.

Halliday reviewed projects that have been complete, such as an arsenic water filtration system, replacement of doors and windows, additional room ventilators and more. She then informed the Committee that the District received: 1) Esser II allocated \$144,300 to Ellis school which is connected to learning and safety needs effected by COVID. This program will be in place until 9/2023. 2) Arp Esser III allocated \$324,400 to Ellis school which is connected to learning and safety needs effected by COVID. This program will be in place until 9/2024. These funds have been used to purchase more Chromebook, dividers, playground equipment, tables/chairs, summer programs and more. The Committee was informed the Math Interventionist position approved last year was not filled and has been eliminated. The new math program purchased this year, Ready Math, includes a lot of training and the District felt this would fulfill the material the District was looking to get from the interventionist position.

Overall the anticipated increases are: contracted salaries, health insurance, Sanborn Tuition (offset by enrollment of approximately 15 less students in grade 9 next year), regular transportation (District as a new contract which increased the costs), water treatment costs and out of district placement for special ed. Anticipated decreases are: teacher turn-over/new hires (lower salary than prior teacher that held that position. There will be 1 teacher potentially retiring this year.), Sanborn Tuition (off set by enrollment) and dental insurance. Taking everything into consideration, the School District is recommending a School budget of \$12,394,536.78. This is an increase to last year's budget of \$151,985.78 or 1.2%.

Halliday then moved onto the Warrant Articles the School Board is placing on the ballot in March for voters: 1. Elections for open seat/positions. 2. Teacher contract, which is a 1 year contract. 3. The right to hold one special meeting if Article 2 fails. 4. The operating budget. If there is unspent monies in the fund balance, the School District will be asking voters to support the following transfers: Special Education Trust Fund up to \$100,000; Maintenance Trust Fund up to \$100,000; and Technology Trust Fund up to \$50,000.

Yokela asked if there was money put in accounts this year that was due to a Warrant Article on the 2021 ballot. Castle stated there was \$180,000 put in the Maintenance Trust Fund. Questioned what was put into the special ed budget, Yokela recalls the board wanted the balance to be \$300,000, so they were going to do it over two years. Further discussion was held on what might happen. Castle stated there was \$100,000 that went into the Special Ed Trust Fund. Holmes recalls it was to bring it up to a certain cap, to know if something happens we would be OK. The current balance in the Special Education Trust Fund is \$200,000, if \$100,000 approved this year that will bring it to the \$300,000 cap the School Board was looking to achieve. Muench explained further what can happen for a student with special ed requirements moving into town. Muench explained that the School Board is trying to make sure all the Trust Funds are at balances that will protect the Town in the event of an unforeseen expense. Further discussion on how the Trust funds work was held. The Committee and viewers were reminded this money will only be taken from unused fund balance.

Fraize explained the way the Tech Trust fund has been used, the servers and switches. Yokela stated there is a new law that was passed where you can join with other towns. Castle and Halliday were not aware of it, Yokela found the information and stated it was Bill SB147, Chapter 186:D under Special Education and was effective 10/10/2021. Castle and Halliday will look into this further and see if it helps us.

Castle took over the presentation and discussed the overall budget information in greater detail. He stated that a few reports were combined with the new software. If something is missing, please contact him. (List tabs included). The Revenue report is not yet available. He is waiting for the State on a few numbers. Castle went through the explanation summary and explained how/why a line increased or decreased and members of the Budget Committee asked for any clarification needed.

Holmes inquired about line 1100/regular education and questioned why Pinkerton was listed. Halliday and Castle explained this is for a student that was best placed there instead of Sanborn. This is a regular student not a special ed line, they provide their own transportation. Halliday wanted to be clear, that this falls in the rules of law not by any local rule. Students must meet certain criteria to take be given this option. There are a total of 4 students at Pinkerton and they had budgeted for 2 last year.

McGinn questioned the increase in the nurse's salary, stating it appeared to be a very large increase and seems a lot for a small town to pay. Muench stated they have looked into taking the nurse out of the teacher contract because it doesn't fit. There were several reasons this makes sense. The nurse's line McGinn was looking at is for everything, salary, supplies, training, etc. The nurse was confined to 80%

payment of a step because she doesn't have the qualification a teacher is required to have. She can't meet the step requirements to get the full amount. Taking her out of the teacher contract will also save her from paying union dues. Halliday stated there are two types of steps in the teacher contract: time and levels of educations. The nurse cannot move up based on levels of education. Further discussion was held.

Martel asked if the nurse is not part of the teacher contract do they still pay into the retirement fund? Castle stated, yes. Martel requested a budget report of what has been spent to date. Castle will provide the information to the Committee. Bonaccorsi wanted to know if the consulting services has been eliminated. Muench stated this was designed for a one time use and was used to review of the Special Ed Department.

Holmes stated that because this is the first time the Committee is reviewing the School Budget, if anyone has questions they can forward them to either Holmes, Muench or Castle, but in a timely manner. Halliday and Castle agree to this procedure, stating it takes longer if they have a question at a meeting and then have to find and return with the answer. Holmes also asked to be copied on all questions sent directly to Muench or Castle. Castle stated his email is NCastle@sau83.org. Castle will answer all questions at the following meeting.

Holmes thanked the School Administration staff, who left the meeting at 8:21 pm.

Motion to approve meeting minutes of 27 October 2021 was made by Bonaccorsi. Muench seconded and the motion passed with a vote of 7-0.

Other Business

The Public Budget Hearing is posted for Wednesday January 12, 2022 at 7:00 pm at the Ellis School Gym. The snow date will be the following evening, January 13, 2022 at 7:00 pm at the Ellis School Gym.

Deliberative Sessions have been set for Saturday February 5, 2022 beginning at 9:00 am at the Ellis School Gym. Both the Town and School sessions are posted for 9:00 am. School will begin at 9:00 am to be immediately followed by the Town Session. The snow date for both meetings is Saturday February 12, 2022.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday November 10, 2021 at 7:00 pm in the basement meeting room to continue with School District budget review.

Motion to adjourn was made by Bonaccorsi at 8:25 pm. Muench seconded. Motion passed with a vote of 7-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Shawn Perreault
Recording Secretary