

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm by Holmes in the Town Hall first floor meeting room and started with the Pledge of Allegiance. Present were Committee Members Mary Jo Holmes, Pat Martel, Steve Bonaccorsi, Gene Cordes, Josh Yokela, Brian McGinn, Jon Benson, and Gordon Muench; School Superintendent Ellen Halliday, School Business Manager Nathan Castle, and Secretary Shawn Perreault.

Fremont School District / School Board and Administration (School District Budget Review continued)

Castle stated that he originally had a 1.7% increase on the proposed budget for Sanborn tuition; he increased it to 3.5% because that is the number Sanborn gave him. The other adjustment was to the total number of students. It went from 169 estimated to the actual number of students, which are 160 the majority of which was in grade 9. This brought the overall budget from \$151,000 over last year's budget to about \$37,000 over. The changes to the default budget were the same, which are contractual, but the overall overage on the proposed default budget is about \$10,000 over the proposed budget.

The Budget Committee and SAU Office reviewed the questions that were sent into Castle after the last meeting. They discussed the answers in detail, questions and answers are attached to these minutes. Holmes asked Castle if there was anything that can be adjusted in line 2600 and take the funds from the Maintenance Trust fund. Castle stated there weren't any real big projects going on. The water and arsenic projects had to come out of the regular budget by law; this is not something that falls under the rules of the Maintenance. Halliday stated that this year they had to find the money in the current budget, now it is budgeted because it will have to be done every year. Holmes wondered if they could have taken the initial \$15,000 from the Trust because it was an unknown cost. Muench stated that because the State informed the School it would not pass it had to be fixed and it is now part of the budget. He stated that because it will be a reoccurring charge, it wouldn't be a Trust Fund expense. The Trust is more for the one and done projects, such as the roof or boiler expenses. Muench stated that the Trust Fund is to avoid a bond. Holmes questioned the number of buses going to Sanborn, she counted six. Halliday stated some of it is due to the COVID requirements, location of students in town and time the kids spend on the bus are taken into account. They are always looking at how to maximize savings. Further discussion was held on numbers per bus and the COVID protocol.

Next the Enrollment Projection report was looked at and Halliday stated in her research she found that for every 20 students you had you need one teacher. Right now we have an average of 15-16 which was the same as FY13. She feels that Ellis is doing a good job in looking at the student/teacher ratio and increasing/decreasing teachers as necessary. Halliday does this on a yearly basis too. Muench also stated that the increase/reduction of teachers tend to follow the classes of the younger grades, because the older grades share teachers it is easier to spread them out. Halliday stated that because there are teachers that teach more than one grade, it makes it a lot easier for the District to handle the changes. Muench stated the State average class size is 16 students. Halliday stated we are 37 students over last year. Further discussion was held on the policies and the State requirements that were provided to the Committee.

Halliday stated that last year they increased by one (1) Special Ed teacher, which will remain. They are always looking at special education because it changes depending on the needs of current students. She continued to review the Enrollment Projection Report with the Committee. Muench reminded the Committee they are waiting for the Special Education Review Report to come back too. He also reminded the Committee that if the special education needs are not met, we are breaking the law. Further discussion was held.

Halliday stated that if Ellis was only an elementary school it could probably function with only a principal, however, the middle school students have a lot of different developmental needs and

requirements. The District and School does well separating the two schools and the older kids work well with the younger kids, but it is different.

Holmes is happy to see the budget coming down, but she is trying to avoid having another large amount come back to the Town. Muench stated if we budget to close we will be in trouble. There are a lot of items you can't plan for. He feels the current budget percentage is a safe place. Holmes is concerned that with the people seeing such a high number coming back they will question the amount the School really needs.

Muench stated it's not a large amount coming back when you compare it to the whole budget, it's about 5%. Castle understands the concerns about the large amounts coming back to the District. He agrees it shouldn't be that high, but they need time to see how things work out, what the trends will be before they are comfortable making additional cuts.

Castle didn't have the history of how the budgets came in for the District, so he did a five (5) year average. There have been a lot of new people in the positions that normally would have had the needed history. Halliday stated she is very comfortable with the proposed budget.

The High School Case Manager comes in and works .4 hours and that is all she does for us.

The Physical therapist started at .4 and is now at .5 this year and next year she will go to .6.

Benson asked about the money proposed for athletics. He asked if the District reached out to the FAA to get their coaches. Halliday stated they start by looking within first because it is in the contract the staff have first right of refusal and they know the kids and the rules, but they have advertised outside as well. The Athletic Director is also paid out of this line. Further discussion was held on how the coaching works.

Josh Yokela arrived at 7:32 pm.

Holmes notes that there were two different officiating lines for the games staff member vs. non staff member. Castle stated that the line can be zero because the \$1.00 is to hold an entire function. If they need to they can transfer money. They haven't used staff members to ref games in a long time.

Yokela questioned the District's policy on class size and requests from the School Board regarding going below the 18-24 recommended number. There was a discussion on when the exemption was needed; it was unclear if it was over the number or under the number. Yokela found an error on the enrollment projection report and corrections were discussed. Holmes stated that this school policy was last updated in 2015 and probably should be looked at again and clarified.

The Unanticipated Grants FY21 Report was reviewed. Castle stated he went through the grants and put the amount the School was awarded, what was spent to date and what would be left. Castle stated he didn't include Esser III because they have two years to spend that one, but will add that. Castle stated the District got \$324,000 in Esser III money and we spent \$113,000 this year. Halliday stated there might be around another \$20,000 more in Esser III we could spend this year.

Bonaccorsi asked if the Esser money has been taken into account for next year's budget. Halliday stated that the Esser money has to be something that is not in the budget and Covid related. Halliday gave an example of the Front sign and the new playground equipment that was bought this year. Martel asked is Esser can be used for the computers? Halliday stated they can, but you can't use the Esser funds to

replace computers that are out of date. Halliday stated that you can purchase teacher laptops, but everything has to be approved to use the Esser funds. Halliday is looking to upgrade a computer that is not ready to be replaced. Cordes asked where the guidelines for spending the Esser fund are. Halliday stated that there are people at the NH DOE that do this, but the people change a lot and the guidelines can be interrupted differently. Halliday stated she is trying to not spend Esser III because we have two more years with this money. Castle stated they are planning to spend it but not before they need to spend it. Further discussion was held.

Holmes asked how the District does with receiving Catastrophic Aid. Castle stated that the School got double the amount they anticipated. He stated it usually doesn't come in until after the fiscal year. Halliday stated it is based on a formula and uses 12 months. Holmes stated this is another reason that the amount given back to the Town can be so high.

Halliday is going to redo the Enrollment Projection report with the corrections.

The Lego Club is starting up again was discussed along with the \$4,000 that was placed in the budget for it.

Holmes asked Cordes to have Carlson come to the Budget Committee meeting on December 1st to go over more Town budgets. Holmes would like to wrap the Town up between the 1st and the 8th.

Holmes reminded the Committee to send all question regarding the school to Castle in a timely manner.

Halliday and Castle left the meeting at 8:26 pm.

Motion was made to approve the meeting minutes of 10 November 2021 as amended by Bonaccorsi, seconded by Muench. Motion passed with a vote of 8-0.

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.

Motion to adjourn was made by Cordes, seconded by Bonaccorsi. Meeting was adjourned at 8:30.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday December 15, 2021 at 7:00 pm in the first floor meeting room at the Fremont Town Hall to continue with School District and/or Town budget review.

Respectfully submitted,

Shawn Perreault
Recording Secretary

Budget Committee Questions for November 17, 2021

Have the FY23 projected revenues been prepared yet? **Almost. I do have the same spreadsheet that has been used in the past. I am waiting for a document from the DRA to plug in a couple of numbers.**

Regarding the FY22 grant revenues in the amount of \$285,000 - I am wondering if the \$100,000 transfer to the SPED Expendable Trust Fund is included in the \$285,000 and that would make the amount from federal grants the balance of \$185,000. Do you have a breakdown of the FY22 grant revenues? (see attached) **The SPED Expendable Trust Fund is a separate warrant article and is included in the operating budget only if it is passes in March. Because we have to "gross appropriate" I need to include grant expenses that we might incur during the year. This tends to be a guess as we will not know for sure what we will be getting in grant monies until, sometimes, June at the latest. I tried to keep it simple and just level funded that line from FY 22 to compare apples to apples with the rest of the budget. Because it is a separate fund, whatever that number is, it is offset with grant revenues. The breakdown: IDEA \$114,000; Title I \$40,000; Title II \$10,000; ESSER 2 \$121,000.**

Secondly - how many FTEs are in the line 10.2600.5118.10 Salaries-Custodial? **There are 2 full-time FTEs, 1 .3 FTE, and 2 .6 FTEs.**

The FY22 budget proposed 3.66 FTEs for a total of \$166,700 and the monthly expense report that Nate handed to me last week (attached) shows the FY22 Salaries-Custodial line in an amount of \$188,469.63 - an approx \$22,000 increase. And now the FY23 Proposed shows an additional increase to this department 2600 Operation of Plant. **In FY 22 the District budgeted for 3.66 FTEs (3 full-time and 1 at .66). Reorganization occurred that resulted in 2 full time FTEs, 2 .6 FTEs and 1 .3 FTE. A re-class budget entry was created on 7/7/21 that resulted in an \$18,637 increase on that line. The additional increase from FY 23 is due to the support staff CBA which results in an increase of about 2.4%**

How many students are signing up for the Education Savings Account? **There are currently no students enrolled in the ESA.**