

The meeting was called to order by Holmes at 7:00 pm in the basement meeting room at the Fremont Town Hall and started with the Pledge of Allegiance. Present were Committee Members Mary Jo Holmes, Pat Martel, Jon Benson, Brian McGinn, Gene Cordes, Gordon Muench, and Josh Yokela; and Recording Secretary Shawn Perreault.

Holmes moved to approve the meeting minutes of 01 December 2021 as presented. Muench seconded. Motion passed by a vote of 6-0. (Yokela not yet present).

The Committee reviewed the Town's current expense and revenue summary reports, as of this date.

Cordes stated we are getting close to the end of the year. At this time the Select Board looks at what funds remain and if we can purchase anything now and remove further appropriation from the 2022 budget. These decisions are finalized closer to the end of the year.

McGinn asked about the negative budget lines. Cordes stated that is when the budget is overspent in that department. An example would be paving of the Safety Complex lot. This is a bottom line budget. McGinn asked how it gets paid for if it's overspent. Yokela explained if the government buildings needs to over spend, they go to the Select Board with the need and the Select Board approves it. However, Cordes said the Select Board is usually the one spending the money or signing the needed contract. This is more for tracking money in certain departments, more of a planning tool. Holmes reminded members some of the money did come from the CARES and other grant money. Cordes explained that some of the Town's operating budget money was used for the Safety Complex paving project because under the grant criteria, project need to be competitively bid, and only a portion of the items needed fit the criteria. Holmes reminded McGinn that if he has any other specific questions he can email Carlson too. McGinn asked why some departments still have so much money left, example Highway and Fire. Cordes stated that some like highway have to account for worst case, such as plowing and salting. The winter season is just beginning now. Further discussion was held.

**Revenue:** Holmes showed McGinn that in Permits & Inspections it was 125% over what the Town thought they would take in. Cordes stated that they try to be conservative on the amount they anticipated will be raised. They don't want to be over-confident and have to make funds up. Martel questioned why no revenue was showing for the Emergency Management fund when it shows the Select Board anticipated \$80,000. Cordes will ask Carlson.

Josh Yokela arrived at 7:03 pm.

**Town Meeting Warrant 2022:** The Committee reviewed the balance of Warrant Articles received to date to make additional recommendations. The numbering sequence is still subject to change.

**Article 8 Library ETF (amount from UFB is still to be determined):** Holmes started by reading the Warrant. Holmes informed McGinn this is where the unused money comes from. The Town has the money, but the voters need to approve using it instead of returning it to the Fund Balance. Holmes stated if they can put the money aside it saves on big impacts. Muench stated it's saving for large purchases that may come up. This way the Town isn't hit with a million dollar expense all at once. Benson was given clarification on how spending excess money works and that it always has to appear as a Warrant Article question to the voters. Muench stated if it is not approved on the Warrant Article it will not go into this savings account but remain in the fund balance. Cordes reminded Benson that this is a bottom line budget, so it might be a certain department. Benson is thinking about a department padding their budget to be able to spend it the following year. Holmes stated that is what this Budget Committee is for. Martel asked if an estimate was ever given on the replacement of the HVAC system. Cordes stated that they are getting a design done with an engineer so that everyone is bidding on the same job. Muench

stated there is usually a discussion with the School or Select Board for things that certain departments want to do, this way it's capped and everyone sees the projects/needs. Yokela stated that the no tax impact isn't really right, that if it is voted down it would be deducted from the tax rate. Yokela wondered if the Select Board would change one of their Warrant Articles if the Highway Department doesn't spend their remaining money. Cordes stated the Select Board is well aware of the money left and there are a number of options on the table.

Motion was made to recommend this Warrant Article by Cordes, seconded by Muench. Motion to recommend was passed with a vote of 6-1 (Benson).

**Article 12 Social Service Agency So Rock:** Holmes read the Article. Cordes stated this group met with the Select Board this year and last. They offer mental health care to all student age children. They are already helping the kids in this Town. Holmes clarified that if this is approved this year, it then goes into the agencies expense and will be available to them every year after. Cordes stated yes, but funds must be requested from the groups every year. Yokela stated the Town voted this down last year and wondered why it's back this year. Cordes stated that any Warrant Article can be put back on to the ballot. Cordes reminded the Committee and residents that if it's in a Warrant Article and the money is voted down they can not spend money on it. Holmes stated So Rock has directly serviced 576 youth and families (indirect services) in Fremont. They have programs, workshops, coalition meetings, and a lot of emotional support for students. Further discussion was held regarding what they do.

Motion was made to recommend this Warrant Article by Muench, seconded by Benson. Motion to recommend was passed with a vote of 5-2 (Yokela, McGinn).

**Article 13 Social Service Agency Family Promise:** Holmes read the Article. Cordes stated they met with the representatives. They are offering housing programs and services to avoid homelessness. He feels the critical issue is, that if they can address this, it is less likely to have a welfare impact on the Town. Holmes stated their mission is to help families rise from homelessness.

Motion was made to recommend this Warrant Article by Muench, seconded by Benson. Motion to recommend was passed with a vote of 5-2 (Yokela, McGinn).

**Article 14 Town Clerk 2% increase:** Holmes read the Article. Cordes stated that other employee wages are budgeted with a 2% increase. However, when there is a change in salary of an elected official they put it on the ballot. Yokela reviewed the paid position of elected, he asked how the Road Agent salary was split out.

Motion was made to recommend this Warrant Article by Cordes, seconded by Muench. Motion to recommend was passed with a vote of 6-1 (Yokela).

**Article 15 Town Forest Designation on parcel 04-017:** Cordes stated this is not a money article, just an approval of designation to allow this land to be subject to the Town Forest Ordinance. He stated the land was located along Louise Lane and old railroad corridor, is mostly wetland. This is land the Town already owns, again they are just seeking the designation.

Motion was made to recommend this Warrant Article by Cordes, seconded by Martel. Motion to recommend was passed with a vote of 6-1 (Yokela).

**Article 16 CRF Historic Museum:** Cordes stated that this has been on before, but it's been a while since it has appeared. The Town Historian has asked this to be placed on here because there is work that needs to be done and money needs to be saved for the project. Benson asked what was being renovated. Cordes

stated the Historian is looking to have an addition to the Museum, and other work is needed. However, nothing specific is being proposed right now. This is to put money in the reserve. Cordes stated that there are things like the horse drawn hearse and such that should be housed in the Museum.

Motion was made to recommend this Warrant Article by Cordes, seconded by Muench. Motion to recommend was passed with a vote of 5-2 (Yokela, McGinn).

**Article 17 Petition to ban use of voting machines:** This Warrant Article is being tabled. The petitioner will be given the opportunity to come before the Committee to discuss their reasoning behind the petitioned Warrant Article.

**Article 4 Town Operating Budget:** Cordes stated that the Select Board did bring this forward in the amount of \$3,834,661 and recommended by them 3-0. Martel stated the budget is up 3.8% over last year. Benson asked if the Committee was voting on what they had recommended. Cordes stated yes, now this Warrant Article brings the full operating budget forward to the Town for voting/approval. Cordes will have Carlson check the numbers and the rationale. Holmes stated if this doesn't pass the default would be \$3,745,534 with certain adjustments required by prior Town action or by law with one special meeting.

Motion was made to recommend this Warrant Article by Muench, seconded by Benson. Motion to recommend was passed with a vote of 6-1 (Yokela).

#### **School Budget items**

There is the GMR, School Warrant Articles and the Contract left to be reviewed next week with the School District.

There was discussion to clarify which Trust Fund of the School's went with which department. The current balance of each being as follows: Tuition: \$300,000, Building: \$400,000 and Special Ed: \$200,000. Muench believes there will be a Warrant Article to place additional funds in the Special Education Trust Fund, but couldn't recall the other. Yokela believes the other warrant article was going to be for the Tech Trust fund.

Yokela also asked about the property assessment line and when it would be spent, which is \$8,000.

The Committee set time for Glenn Glazebrook, the petitioner, to discuss his petition to ban use of voting machine at 8:00 pm next week, after the anticipated close of school portion of the meeting.

Muench made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Benson. Meeting was adjourned at 8:02 pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday December 15, 2021 in the main floor meeting room at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Shawn Perreault  
Recording Secretary