

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Holmes in the main floor of the Fremont Town Hall, and started with the Pledge of Allegiance. Present were Committee Members Mary Jo Holmes, Pat Martel, Gordon Muench, Gene Cordes, Josh Yokela, Jon Benson and Steve Bonaccorsi; Superintendent Ellen Halliday, Business Administrator Nathan Castle, Recording Secretary Shawn Perreault, Michael Rydeen, Glenn Glazebrook (arrived at 7:45 pm), and FCTV Operator Greg Fraize.

Motion was made by Cordes to approve the meeting minutes of 08 December 2021 as amended, seconded by Benson. Motion passed by a vote of 6-0-1 (Bonaccorsi).

**School Budget items - Sanborn GMR/Proposed Budget/Default Budget:** Castle stated he used a 3.5% increase for the Tuition on the prior budgets, but now has the final GMR of 3.75%. Castle stated that they see the GMR going higher in the future years. The GMR includes regular education and special education. It doesn't include capital cost. Capital Costs have increased as well. Last year, Capital Costs were \$1,922 and are \$2,056 this year, which is an increase of 6.97%. Holmes stated that the enrollment for everyone is down, not just Fremont. Our capital cost went down when the middle school was added into the High School, but enrollment was still down. Muench stated Sanborn is trying to make it as equal as possible, but they are bound by the contract too. Castle adjusted the numbers for the summaries, which brings the proposed school budget is \$12,298,324.50 and is an increase of \$55,773.50 or 0.46%. Martel stated that this is a decrease from the first budget presented to the Committee. A Tuition Cost Analysis report was handed out to the Committee showing the last five years. Holmes asked how many students are at Sanborn? Yokela stated right now there are 176 students and they are anticipating 160 next year. Halliday stated that originally the contract formula probably worked great for everyone, however, as the enrollment went down the GMR has risen. If they had used the formula this year, it would have been much higher. Muench stated Sanborn was not currently using the formula, they are trying to make it as fair as possible. He's not sure how long they will continue to be able to do that. Holmes asked if this is a violation of the contract. Muench stated no, COVID has allowed for changes. Sanborn is trying very hard to minimize impact to Fremont. Yokela stated that the formula isn't really appropriate anymore and they are trying to get what is needed to educate the kids not above what it takes to do this. Halliday stated the next step would be to have a conversation with Sanborn and see if anything can be done with the contract to continue to help us in costs owed. Yokela wanted to make sure that the GMR isn't doing a disservice to either Town by seeing a huge increase all of a sudden. Halliday stated the enrollment numbers being used are for the prior year. Further discussion was held.

The default budget is \$12,308,709.45 which is an increase of \$10,384.95. There was some discussion on prior meetings about the default budget being changed. There was an error that was corrected after the first meeting, however, the default budget was the same. Holmes stated that the Committee needs to make sure to educate the voters because if they vote No, costs will be higher to taxpayers due to the default budget being higher than the proposed budget.

Halliday wants everyone to remember this is not as high of an increase as it could be. First the budget was up \$150,000, then it was brought down to \$33,000 and is now up to \$50,000. Holmes reminded everyone that the Trust Fund accounts are there in case something unexpected happens. She feels that an amount like \$33,000 could be found somewhere in the budget and not put on the taxpayer. Halliday stated it depends how tight the actual budget to anticipated costs are whether money could be found. Holmes wondered if they could count on the COVID money to offset expected expenses. Muench stated as for the ESSER money, this School Board has always been conservative about the ESSER money. He feels it's important not to count on that money, because of the guidelines and requirements. There is always a possibility that something submitted might be rejected. If that happened, the money would have to then come from somewhere. Muench reminded the committee that this school board has been very conservative. They have also made things instead of buying them, saving thousands of dollars. He feels the school does the responsible thing, however, gets punished for saving the money.

**2022 School District Meeting Warrant:** Castle started by reviewing all the Warrant Articles with the Committee. Yokela stated that last week they looked at the Trust accounts and the one with a balance of \$400,000 is the building fund. Castle affirmed that, however, they will be withdrawing \$382,000 for the HVAC system that was replaced over the summer. This will leave about \$100,000 at the end of the year. Yokela asked if the HVAC was an emergency project? Muench stated it was discussed in the prior years and was planned for. It was on the same list as the roof, but they couldn't do both at the same time. Therefore, they did the roof and then the HVAC system. Cordes stated the proper way is to plan for these projects, you don't want them to end up being an emergency. Halliday stated the system failed inspection prior to the work being done. Yokela clarified his question, he doesn't recall the HVAC being on the list of projects that were going to be done this year. He doesn't recall it being discussed during the last budget session. Castle stated it was a Warrant Article last year. Halliday stated she looked at the prior Superintendent's PowerPoint and it was on there.

Holmes asked if at the end of the year the School only had \$175,000 left and not all the warrants could be funded, where would the funds go? Castle stated that the warrant articles are listed in order and that is how the money would be disbursed.

Castle reviewed the collective bargaining agreement, which is only a one year contract. There was a change in compensation when teachers need to cover a class during their prep time. There was a handout provided to the Committee. Holmes asked how much the health insurance increased by? Castle stated 2.5%. Benson asked how many teachers are part of the contract. Castle stated it was 40. Yokela asked why the contract was not multi year. Halliday stated due to circumstances it was agreed to only do one year and it was easier to do it this way. If they did two years, it would have made the Teacher Contract and the Support Staff Contract due at the same time. Further discussion was held.

**School Warrant Article 2 – Collective Bargaining Agreement-Teachers:** Holmes read the Warrant Article aloud. Motion was made by Cordes to recommend the Fremont School District Vote to approve the cost items included in the collective bargaining agreement and further raise and appropriate \$88,611.50 for the 2022-2023 fiscal year. Muench seconded. Motion passed by a vote of 7-0.

**School Warrant Article 3 – Special Meeting:** Holmes read the Warrant Article aloud. Motion was made by Bonaccorsi to recommend the Fremont School District allow the Governing Body to call one special meeting if Article 2 fails, seconded by Muench. Motion failed by a vote of 3-4 (Yokela, Cordes, Benson, Martel)

**School Warrant Article 4 – Operating Budget:** Holmes read the Warrant Article aloud. Motion was made by Bonaccorsi to recommend the Fremont School District raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, totaling \$12,298,324.50. Should this article fail the default budget will be \$12,308,709.45 with certain adjustments required by prior actions, by law or by special meeting. Muench seconded. Motion passed with a vote of 7-0.

**School Warrant Article 5 – Appropriate to ETF from Fund Balance:** Holmes read the Warrant Article aloud. Motion was made by Muench to recommend the Fremont School District vote to raise and appropriate up to the sum of \$100,000 to be added to the previously established expendable trust fund, known as Special Education Expendable Trust Fund. No amount to be raised by additional taxation. Bonaccorsi seconded. Motion passed by a vote of 6-1 (Benson).

**School Warrant Article 6 – Appropriate to EFT from Fund Balance:** Holmes read the Warrant Article aloud. Motion was made by Muench to recommend the Fremont School District vote to raise and appropriate up to the sum of \$100,000 to be added to the previously established expendable trust fund,

known as the Ellis School Building and Grounds Maintenance Fund. No amount to be raised by additional taxation. Bonaccorsi seconded. Motion passed by a vote of 6-1 (Benson).

**School Warrant Article 7 – Appropriate to EFT from Fund Balance:** Holmes read the Warrant Article aloud. Motion was made by Muench to recommend the Fremont School District vote to raise and appropriate up to the sum of \$50,000 to be added to the previously established expendable trust fund, known as the Maintenance and Improvement of Technology Infrastructure and Equipment Fund. No amount to be raised by additional taxation. Bonaccorsi seconded. Motion passed by a vote of 5-2 (Benson, Yokela).

Castle and Halliday left the meeting at 7:54 pm.

**Petitioner Warrant Article Discussion – Ban of Voting Machine:** The Committee introduced themselves to Mr. Glazebrook and welcomed him to the meeting thanking him for coming in to explain his petition. Holmes read the petition aloud. Glazebrook proceeded to discuss his reasons for wanting to ban the voting machines, one being voter fraud. Michael Rydeen (the Town's Moderator) was present to answer questions and explained thoroughly the process the Town goes through with voting and how the machine is maintained. The petitioner, the Committee and the individuals present continued to discuss the voting machine process and the steps the Town takes for elections. The Town spends \$350 dollars a year to have the voting machine serviced at the Town Hall. The machine doesn't have WiFi and uses memory cards, which are sent out to get programed and has a travel log that everyone must sign. Discussion was also held on what is involved with hand counting ballots and timely reporting the results of a handout vs. machine count.

Motion was made by Cordes to recommend Warrant Article 17 (Submitted by petition) to see if the Town will vote to ban the use of voting machines in local, state and federal elections. Motion failed by a vote of 1-6 (Holmes, Bonaccorsi, Martel, Cordes, Benson, Muench).

**Review Town Warrant Article 8 with updated language (Library Expendable Trust Fund of \$10,000 to come from Unrestricted Fund Balance). This will be funded at \$10,000 from UFB:** Carlson wanted to make sure the Committee is clear where the funds are coming from for this article. The Committee is all set and understands where the funds will be coming from.

Next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday January 5, 2022 in the main floor meeting room – to finalize all Town and School budgets and Warrants in preparation for Public Budget Hearing on Wednesday January 12, 2022.

Cordes made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Martel. Meeting was adjourned at 8:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Shawn Perreault  
Recording Secretary