

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Chair Mary Jo Holmes starting with the Pledge of Allegiance. Present were Committee members Mary Jo Holmes, Pat Martel, Gene Cordes, Gordon Muench, Jon Benson, Josh Yokela and Steve Bonaccorsi; School Superintendent Ellen Halliday and Business Administrator Nathan Castle; and Recording Secretary Shawn Perreault.

Motion was made by Holmes to approve the meeting minutes of November 2, 2022 as presented, seconded by Muench. Motion passed by a vote of 6 Yes – 0 No.

Motion was made by Muench to approve the meeting minutes of November 9, 2022 as presented, seconded by Benson. Motion passed with a vote of 5 Yes – 0 No – 1 Abstain (Holmes).

Review the School Budget:

Castle started off by presenting the Board with a list of questions and answers the Budget Committee emailed to him as follows:

1. *How much money has not been budgeted for in ESSER 3? The Fremont School District was allocated \$324,358.05. We have budgeted \$255,206.66 so far. The remaining amount is \$69,151.39.*
2. *End of year surplus's go back how long? I went as far back as 2005 and there has been a surplus every year.*
3. *How much was spent on mandated water filtration systems? In total: \$60,015 for installation of the Manganese filtration, arsenic filtration, and PFAS filtration. Add another \$5,000 a year in mandated tests (4 a year for PFAS, 2 a year for arsenic and 4 a year for manganese). Replacing filters cost approximately \$17,000 a year. Initial startup: \$60,015. Yearly costs: \$22,000.*
4. *What big projects are scheduled over the next 5-8 years? We have a couple of projects in mind. One is to replace the fire pump, which we estimate will cost about \$30,000. We are looking to convert our water lines to nitrogen but have not had any luck with interested vendors to even look at it at this time. The last project in mind is to change over thermostats in 4 rooms. A portion of that has been written in ESSER 3 in hopes to cover some of the costs.*
5. *The projected Reg Ed enrollment per your FY24 request is 163 students at Sanborn and this calculation shows 165 for FY24. That would be approx. \$43,000 (\$21,500 x 2) too much in the FY24 budget request. Please confirm. There was a mistake in the reg ed enrollment. There should be 165 students going to Sanborn next year. (Updated handouts will be provided).*
6. *Regarding the SPED students at Sanborn - I did not see a headcount for those students but I am coming up with approx. 39 SPED students for FY24? We are budgeting for 30 students enrolled in SPED next year. There is an additional cost for a 1 on 1 para that skews your numbers.*
7. *The requested enrollment/budget/employee spreadsheet will be provided.*

The ERRS III Funds were reviewed along with the balance and the items it will cover before it runs out.

Holmes asked to review the budget numbers before and after the numbers came in from Sanborn, as she was unable to attend last week's meeting. There was a question on using the Tuition Trust Fund for any additional costs that come in on the GMR. There was a lot of discussion on the purpose of the Tuition Trust Fund and when it should be used. The GMR will be in on December 15. Sanborn gave Fremont 5% and right now Kingston/Newton are at 4.5%.

The Committee then discussed enrollment numbers and the rising costs. Even though enrollment has been decreasing the budget has continued to rise. This is due, in part, to the overall rising costs of supplies and such that are needed on a yearly basis. There was discussion on where teachers were really needed, classroom size and the School Board Classroom Size Policy. The roles of some teachers teaching multiple grades. In addition, last year there was a fourth grade teacher added to the budget, which they were unable to fill. This position is in the new proposed budget. Halliday also explained that they are always looking at the needs of the students and teachers. There are some classes that require extra support due to the make up or special needs of their class. She further stated that a Spanish teacher was added this year and is working out great. The budget must be responsible but also meet the needs of every student.

Halliday and Castle stated that after the last meeting, they reviewed the Trust Fund requests they were seeking to put in Warrant Articles. They have decided to withdraw the Technology Trust of \$50,000 request and lower the Maintenance Trust request from \$100,000 to \$50,000. There were a lot of discussion on possible projects, under maintenance, that would be happening in the next 5-8 years. Also, there was a lot of discussion on the importance of the Maintenance Trust Fund. The reason for it, the reasons to use it, different timelines for reaching the Trust Fund's 5 year goal of \$500,000. Board members asked if this was the time to hold off adding to the fund, due to everyone experiencing increased costs. Some members felt things would level out and perhaps waiting until next year would be better for the taxpayers. Muench explained his thoughts behind having the Trust Fund, the reasons for it and the examples where it would be used. There are basically three reasons to use the funds: 1. Unforeseen repairs (such as the boiler going); 2. Unforeseen mandates; and 3. Catastrophic event (such as the roof). Holmes reminded everyone that the money added to the Trust Funds comes from surplus funds. In addition, Cordes reminded everyone that this money has already been raised by taxes. Halliday cautioned the Committee members that not adding to the Trust Funds is taking a chance nothing will happen.

Benson went through the proposed budget to clarify some items he was unsure off, such as items ending in 10 are Ellis, items ending in 30 are the high school. Telephone/internet was switched to the tech lines and he clarified Pinkerton cost as well as a ballpark cost per student for the high school without transportation and capital costs. His number came to around \$27,195.49 for Sanborn. Muench reviewed the State average numbers to Ellis and Sanborn again. Muench is proud of the budget and the team that came up with this budget. He feels they have been very conservative, responsible and below the State averages. There is no fat in this budget.

Halliday and Castle explained they are still negotiating the teacher contract. It will be done before the Warrant Articles go to the voters. Halliday explained there was a change in leadership this year and therefore things were a little delayed.

Next meeting date is November 30, 2022 in the basement meeting room at the Town Hall.

Adjourn at 8:15pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Shawn Perreault
Recording Secretary