

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm in the Basement Meeting Room at the Fremont Town Hall, 295 Main Street in Fremont. All rose for the Pledge of Allegiance. Present were Committee Members Mary Jo Holmes, Gordon Muench, Jon Benson, Steve Bonaccorsi, Brenda Beauchain, Nancy Murray, Joshua Yokela and Gene Cordes; Town Administrator Heidi Carlson and SAU Business Administrator Nathan Castle and Superintendent Ellen Halliday. The meeting is live broadcast on FCTV by Bill Millios and available on Vimeo. Introductions were done around the table.

Meeting minutes for May 10, 2023 were distributed. A motion was made by Bonaccorsi and seconded by Benson to approve them as written. The vote was approved 7-0-1 with Yokela abstaining.

Chair Holmes indicated the School District usually comes this time of year after their FY year closing. Business Administrator Nathan Castle did a review of the School Expense Report for the FY ended 06/30/2023. The Sanborn Tuition had a balance of \$91,516 and Sanborn Special Education tuition line had a balance of \$27,181. There are also three line items at the end which are in the negative, related to the food service bill. They did not move monies to move them to zero them because they have a fund balance. They can have up to three months of expenses on hand and they had more so bought some items to spend it down. Castle stated that three months of the food service budget is approximately \$45,000.

It was noted they put \$100,000 in the Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund; \$100,000 in the Special Education Expendable Trust Fund; and \$50,000 in the Technology Expendable Trust Fund as of 06/30/2022. This year there will only be \$50,000 into the Maintenance ETF. Castle noted the FY 06/30/2023 Fund Balance is \$336,777 which will be returned to the taxpayers.

There was some question about use of surplus versus use of Trust Funds, and if available, surplus would be used ahead of the Trust Fund savings. It was confirmed that the Tuition and SPED Transportation transfers were due to either a new student or change of placement. Holmes explained that the School District has been good working with the taxpayers and the Committee to work in good faith on the budget and return of any residual to the general fund to offset taxes.

Castle reported on the revenue funds and noted the district changed banks earlier this year and received an additional \$24,000 in interest. He also noted an extra \$14,000 in Medicaid reimbursement due to reporting on special education services.

It was noted how much work the changing banking is. Halliday stated she appreciated the Committee's support. Muench then thanked the Administration for their work in putting all this together and seeing some reward in added revenue and other endeavors to try and save money.

There was discussion about how to ask questions if they come up with further review of the materials the school circulated tonight. They should be circulated to Castle, and all the Q&A will be distributed to all members at the next meeting.

SAU Officials left the meeting at 7:17 pm.

The Town Revenue and Expense Reports to date were reviewed. There was discussion about the amount of revenue submitted for the DRA MS 434 for Fall setting of the tax rate.

The 2023-2024 budget calendar of important dates and a tentative meeting schedule were distributed.

Some of the 2024 budgets which have been recommended by the Select Board were reviewed by the Committee.

4153 Legal - Muench moved to recommend \$35,000 for Legal as it is level funded. Benson seconded and the vote was approved 7-0. Yokela was not in the room during the vote.

Cordes brought up the issue of the January 11, 2023 minutes which were tabled at the May 10th meeting. Muench moved to approve the minutes of January 11, 2023. Benson seconded. The vote was approved 6-0-1. Yokela was out of the room.

4191 Planning & Zoning – There was discussion about the changes in the budget which include a reduction in the budgeted number of hours due to the staff schedule. A 3% COLA is included. They have reallocated some of the professional services to cover different tasks. Overall, the budget is down about \$1,700.

Muench moved to recommend \$52,264 for Planning & Zoning. Bonaccorsi seconded and the vote was approved 7-0. Yokela was out of the room.

4240 Building Inspection – There was discussion about an increase in hours based on average hours currently worked to keep up with permitting and inspections. There are still several developments ongoing. There is also a 3% COLA and an increase in mileage to cover additional miles as well as incidental supplies. Revenues are anticipated to fully cover this appropriation.

Benson moved to recommend 4240 Building Inspection at \$50,547. Muench seconded and the vote was approved 7-1-0 with Yokela voting in the negative.

4610 Conservation Commission – The budget was reviewed. It is up with a small wage line for 3% COLA at 8 hours per month. The only other change was an addition of \$1,500 in professional services. The Commission is looking to hire a consultant for about 12 hours at \$125 for the development of a strategic approach to land conservation with an emphasis on grant funding. There was considerable discussion about the amount and purpose.

Bonaccorsi moved \$5,340 for Conservation Commission. Benson seconded and the vote was 7-1-0 with Yokela voting in the negative.

The following Town budgets were distributed for future review:

4195 Cemeteries
4520 Parks & Recreation

The basement meeting room is available on Wednesdays September 13 and 27 and October 11 and 25, which were all set for meeting dates at 7:00 pm. They will look later at dates in November and December.

Muench also noted that the School Board is deep into the high school study work. Presentations have been made accessible on the SAU website, in the Newsletter, and Carlson will post the link on the Town's website as well. Muench summarized their work for the high school search. They put out an RFP and have four proposals from area schools including Epping, Pinkerton, Raymond and Sanborn. The Search Committee initially had six and has narrowed it down. They are doing a walkthrough of each school and looking at what is the best option for the entire community. They are looking at offerings (classes, vocational, sporting, SPED, regular education, transportation, extracurricular, etc.) as well as the formula which may be used to calculate fees. They are looking at the school's rankings as well.

Some of these towns will also have to have a WA on their ballot to accept Fremont students. This does not affect Pinkerton as a private academy. There was lengthy discussion about the different ways for the School Board to approach the study and the vote, as well as the work done to date and still to be done.

Muench said the School Board is looking at the best overall value for everyone in the community. Yokela asked about what would be presented to the voters and Muench said the School Board will make a presentation to the voters of what their eventual school of choice recommendation is and what all the reasons are behind their choice. He noted that Fremont may not have a voting seat on the School Board of the receiving District without a cooperative, but that one of the things they would ask for is a voice on the Board.

Discussion continued about how the School Board is handling the process for choosing a new high school. There are many variables involved in this process and the School Board's decision. Ultimately one choice will likely be on the ballot (including discussion about DRA and how "if/then" or multiple choice Warrant Articles are discouraged and, in some cases, disallowed on a ballot). If that fails, the School Board would likely come back in another year with another choice.

With no further business to come before the meeting, Yokela moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:13 pm. Bonaccorsi seconded and the vote was unanimously approved.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday September 13, 2023 at 7:00 pm in the basement meeting room at the Fremont Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Heidi Carlson
Town Administrator