

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Jon Benson at 7:00 pm in the basement meeting room at the Fremont Town Hall, 295 Main Street in Fremont with the Pledge of Allegiance. Present were Committee members Jon Benson (Vice Chair), Joshua Yokela, Nancy Murray, Gordon Muench and Gene Cordes; Town Administrator Heidi Carlson and Recording Secretary Shawn Perreault.

Motion was made by Murray to approve the August 23, 2023 meeting minutes as presented. Muench seconded and the motion passed with a vote of 5-0.

The Committee began with a review of two budgets circulated at the last meeting.

4195 – Cemetery: Perreault reviewed the budget with the Committee informing them that a line was added called Contracted Help Repair. Perreault explained that Pest Control was needed this year for some wasp and upon reviewing the budget the Trustees found the budget lack a line item for these expenses. This new line item was added with a budget of \$1,200. In addition, a 3% COL wage increase was added to the wage lines. We have had great reviews/feedback on the landscaping company we have used for the past two years, this is working very well for the Town. Muench made a motion to recommend 4195 in the amount of \$38,110. Benson seconded and the motion passed with a vote of 5-0.

4520 – Parks & Recreation: Carlson informed the Committee about the changes to the budget over the current year. This includes money for teen recreation events being removed as no plans came forward to use it in 2023; and it will be put toward adult recreation events. There is no summer camp planned for 2024.

A Santa suit is planned for replacement this year, so that \$250 was removed from the Christmas event in 2024. We are currently making plans to replace a push mower that is worn out. Carlson also highlighted some of the Town-supplied funds toward FAA work this season, including \$407 for crushed stone and a little over \$500 for new dug out roofs (and Jackson Lumber made a big donation toward the dugout project). FAA held their annual fall clean-up last Saturday.

Ellis School is now using the field for all practices and games. The Town will do some yearend maintenance once kids are off the fields later this fall. Yokela asked why the Easter budget was up 50%. Murray explained items that more eggs and candy are bought each year, and there has been an increase in the number of kids and families attending. Cordes made a motion to recommend 4520 in the amount of \$35,064. Muench seconded and the motion passed with a vote of 4-1 with Yokela voting in the negative.

The Committee then moved to other budgets Carlson distributed this evening to include rationale and an updated expense to date report.

4130 – Executive: Carlson stated the largest change is the Select Board has created a new position for a Finance/HR Director. The past year of study and the Study Committee who worked on the project and their findings were discussed. Carlson explained some of what the position would be responsible for and that she was currently doing the majority of the work involved in the job. However, it really requires more time than she can devote to it and more things need to be done better. Further discussion was held.

Yokela asked if the Select Board would place the new position as a Warrant Article. Cordes stated they would not. Cordes reviewed the discussions on salary and ability to recruit as well. Carlson will make copies of the data collection from the Study Committee along with some other information and bring it back for the next meeting.

4140 – Town Clerk/Tax Collector: Carlson stated that the 3% wage increase for the elected official Town Clerk Tax Collector salary is the request, but the Select Board will put that portion of the request

into a Warrant Article as has been practice for many years. Other hourly employees are also included at a 3% increase. There is an increase to the Clerical wages because they are looking to add 3 additional hours per week. Carlson advised of some other changes in the budget to include an increase in office supplies for the amount of toner used to print registrations (the State no longer pays for any equipment in the office); and postage.

Yokela brought up a State Statute that covers the membership in the NH Town Clerk's Association and the NH Tax Collector's Association. He read aloud from NH RSA 31:8 providing that the cost per Town per year cannot exceed \$20. Carlson had looked into the NH Town Clerk dues for this year and was asked to look at the Tax Collector Association to ensure this is the case.

Discussion was held on the actual cost and how it was reflected. Yokela made a motion to reduce Dues and Conferences by \$40 to reflect that only \$20 for each Association would be paid. Benson seconded and the motion passed by a vote of 5-0. Muench made a motion to recommend 4140 in the amount of \$78,030. Murray seconded and the motion passed by a vote of 4-1 with Yokela voting in the negative.

4141 – Election & Registration: Carlson discussed all the elections that will be happening in 2024. There are extra State and Federal elections in 2024. She went over what the Town pays for vs what the State will be paying for. Voting booths are being slowly replaced to account for old and aging equipment. The newer styles are easier to handle and set up. Carlson went over the requirements for the number of booths per registered voters. Carlson discussed the historical data as well. Muench made a motion to recommend 4141 in the amount of \$23,721. Benson seconded and the motion passed by a vote of 5-0.

4199 – Town Report: Carlson indicated that this was put out to bid already and this budget reflects the low bid, for a lesser number of printed books. Carlson discussed what is ordered and mailed. Muench moved to recommend 4199 in the amount of \$2,950. Murray seconded and the motion passed by a vote of 5-0.

4215 – Ambulance Service: Carlson explained that at least every five years Fremont's contract with Raymond to provide ambulance transportation is reviewed. Within the current contract there is a modest \$500 increase annually. In looking at other towns such as Chester, we save a lot of money with Raymond. In response to questions about the nursing home, it was noted this contract is for 911 service calls only. Other non-emergency transport is handled by a transport service or outside (private) ambulance company. Muench made a motion to recommend 4215 in the amount of \$13,000. Yokela seconded and the motion passed by a vote of 5-0.

4220 – Fire Rescue: Carlson briefly reviewed this budget and said the Chief would be in once the Select Board makes their recommendation after further discussion on Thursday. She highlighted some increases and discussed the on-call coverage that was added a few years ago. She will be inviting the Fire Chief to come and present this budget and answer any questions. This budget was tabled.

4290 – Emergency Management: Carlson and the Director have been through this and removed some items that would be covered by agencies such as FEMA in a large-scale emergency. They also accounted for items that the Town already has supplies of, such as masks and hand sanitizer. This budget also includes two PM service calls per year for the three Town generators. There was an increase in 2023 expenses due to the Town ability to extend the warranty for the Town Hall and Highway Shed generators, which the Board felt was an important investment. Muench made a motion to recommend 4290 in the amount of \$5,937. Murray seconded and the motion passed with a vote of 5-0.

4313 Bridges: Carlson explained that in order to maintain the warranty on the Sandown Road Overflow Bridge deck, the Town is required to have an annual engineering inspection and complete paperwork.

These funds pay for that annual inspection and report to keep the warranty in good standing. Muench made a motion to recommend 4313 in the amount of \$1,750. Cordes seconded and the motion passed by a vote of 5-0.

4316 Street Lighting: Carlson discussed the cost of the streetlights. The majority are Eversource and there is one with NH Co-op. This is down \$1,000 from the current year. Muench made a motion to recommend 4316 in the amount of \$5,000. Murray seconded and the motion passed with a vote of 5-0.

4415 – Health: Carlson stated that the stipend for this HO and Deputy remain the same as 2023. This pays for training, memberships and supplies. The Health Officers are required to inspect events such as the food at the grass drags, and some small equipment is purchased to complete. This also covers a portion of one annual PFOA test, which is extremely expensive. Muench made a motion to recommend 4415 in the amount of \$1,585. Benson seconded and the motion passed with a vote of 5-0.

4442 – Direct Assistance: Carlson discussed how the cases are broken out and what they may cover. The Director does a great job of finding resources. These numbers change year to year based on how early winter comes and the events in an individual’s life. Muench made a motion to recommend 4442 in the amount of \$20,580. Murray seconded and the motion passed by a vote of 4-0-1 with Benson abstaining as he was out of the room during discussion.

4550 – Library: Carlson noted this is for the Committee to review in advance of the meeting with Library personnel. The largest change is the conversion of the Librarian from part-time to full-time. The current librarian works 39 hours, so it is only an additional hour per week but there are effects within the Personnel Administration line from being entitled to a benefit package. The current Librarian would only be taking advantage of a few of these. They are also seeking to increase the Children’s Librarian by 7 hours per week and add a new Aide position at 16 hours per week. The Trustees have also budgeted for a 5% COL wage increase instead of the 3% the Select Board is currently recommending. Budget was tabled.

4583 – Patriotic Purposes: Carlson discussed the replacement of Flags that are hung up every year from just before Memorial Day to right after the 4th of July. Annually we purchase new flags at all Town buildings and those for grave markers in the Village and Leavitt Cemeteries. Letters are also sent to every Veteran inviting them to Memorial Day and a Veterans Day dinner. Muench made a motion to recommend 4583 in the amount of \$3,300. Yokela seconded and the motion passed by a vote of 5-0.

4711-4721 Debt Service: Carlson explained this is the Principal and Interest owed on the Town’s last bond for the Glen Oakes Land purchase. Interest payments are made twice a year in January and July. The principal payment is made annually in July. Muench moved to recommend 4711-4721 in the amount of \$42,260. Murray seconded and the motion passed by a vote of 5-0.

4723 – Interest on Tax Anticipation Notes: This budget has been reduced to \$2.00 just to keep it open. This is used if the Town must borrow money in anticipation of taxes, which we have successfully avoided since converting to twice per year tax billing. In addition, since the Town changed banks, we have made a lot more interest on the accounts. Yokela made a motion to recommend 4723 in the amount of \$2.00. Murray seconded and the motion passed by a vote of 5-0.

The next meeting will be on September 27, 2023 at 7:00 pm in the basement meeting room. Beyond that, meetings are also scheduled for Wednesdays October 11 and 25, 2023 at 7:00 pm.

At the September 27th meeting, the Librarian and Library Trustees will present their budget and either the Police or Fire Department will also present theirs.

Yokela made a motion to adjourn at 8:25 pm. Cordes seconded and the vote was unanimously approved 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Shawn Perreault
Recording Secretary