

NARRATIVE FOR THE 2008 TOWN MEETING WARRANT

The following narrative seeks to provide additional information for voters pertaining to the articles proposed in the Town Meeting Warrant for 2008.

VOTE AT THE POLLS ON TUESDAY MARCH 11, 2008 FROM 8:00 AM to 7:00 PM AT THE FREMONT SAFETY COMPLEX AT 425 MAIN STREET IN FREMONT:

ARTICLE 1 will be voted upon by ballot, at the polls on March 11, 2008. The written ballot contains all candidates running for an elected office within the Town. There will be a separate ballot for candidates running for Fremont School District offices. Sample ballots will be posted at the Town Hall, Safety Complex, Library and Post Office for viewing before Election Day. You can vote by absentee ballot on Articles 1 through 5 only. The listing of candidates is also available on the Town Clerk's page, with other election information. The remainder of the Town Meeting discussion and voting takes place on Saturday March 15, 2008 beginning at 5:00 pm at Ellis School.

ARTICLE 2 will be voted upon by ballot, at the polls on March 11, 2008. This article proposes to update the Fremont Zoning Ordinance by adding other wetland systems to the Prime Wetland designation within the Town of Fremont. The wetland mapping project has been ongoing for a couple of years, and maps are available on the town's website, and posted at the Town Hall, as well as on file with several offices. There is also a full text wetlands report available at the Selectmen's Office and in the Land Use Office.

ARTICLE 3 will be voted upon by ballot, at the polls on March 11, 2008. This article proposes to update the Fremont Zoning Ordinance by increasing the additional acreage requirement within the Aquifer Protection District for lots containing more than one unit. For lots containing up to four units, the added area shall be 18,000 square feet per unit; and for five or more units, lots shall contain an additional 30,000 square feet per unit. No lot within the Aquifer Protection District shall have more than one residential structure, regardless of the number of dwelling units.

ARTICLE 4 will be voted upon by ballot, at the polls on March 11, 2008. This amendment proposes a new article to update the Fremont Zoning Ordinance to outline specifications and regulations for signs and sign placement in Fremont. The new ordinance is a comprehensive ordinance regulating all signage, including signs requiring permits, and establishing signage standards. The full text of the ordinance is contained in the official warrant within the Town Report.

ARTICLE 5 will be voted upon by ballot, at the polls on March 11, 2008. This article was submitted by petition and proposes to change the way that Fremont votes at our Annual Town Meeting. This article must pass by a 3/5 majority vote. If passed, it would do away with the traditional Town Meeting we currently use. The SB 2 method puts all questions before the voters on an official ballot, which is created in final form, after a deliberative session held generally in late January or early February. At this deliberative session, changes can be made to the final format of the warrant; which then becomes the "official ballot." From there, voting on the ballot items would take place on the second Tuesday in March, at the polls. The traditional Saturday March Town Meeting discussion and voting would be eliminated. In order to be eligible to vote by absentee ballot, you must meet the criteria outlined in RSA 657:1.

All remaining articles (6 through 23) will be acted upon at the recessed session of Town Meeting, which begins **at 5:00 pm on Saturday, March 15, 2008**. This part of the meeting is held at **the Ellis School** at 432 Main Street in Fremont, in the gymnasium. In case of inclement weather, the meeting will be postponed to 9:00 am on Saturday March 22, 2008.

By law, any warrant article requesting funding must be considered by the Selectmen and the Budget Committee, and each must make a recommendation on the proposed expenditure. This recommendation is noted at the end of each article within the warrant itself. The type of vote required is in parentheses at the end of each article as well, such as majority or 2/3 vote requirements. We have also included an estimate of what each article reflects as part of the total town portion of the tax rate. For comparison, the total town portion of the tax rate in 2007 was \$3.28. The total tax rate in 2007 was \$21.23.

ARTICLE 6 is the opportunity for the Budget Committee to make their report on the 2008 budget process and appropriations. You can view the full Budget Committee Report on pages 102-103. As a general overview, the Budget Committee:

- Did not recommend 3% proposed cost of living adjustment for town employees. These wages not recommended total approximately \$14,500. This is perhaps a \$0.02 savings on the tax rate.
- Recommended \$300 additional for a computer for the Treasurer; did not recommend \$1,400 stipend increase for Treasurer.
- Did not recommend \$1,000 in legal expenses.
- Reduced FICA, Medicare and retirement by \$2,800 based on wage reductions throughout the budget;
- Within the Planning and Zoning budget did not recommend \$1,500 for postage; \$1,500 for professional services; \$1,700 for advertising expense; and \$250 in training.
- Within the Police Department budget did not recommend some training wages in addition to not recommending the 3% cost of living adjustment; did not recommend \$2,340 in cell phone costs.
- Did not recommend \$5,000 in funding for drainage repairs around the track at Memorial Park; did not recommend \$2,470 in Summer Program wages due to non-use in prior years.
- Did not recommend \$500 toward new library computers (with the thought that they could be purchased for less); did not recommend \$1,000 in dues, memberships & subscriptions.

ARTICLE 7 seeks to have the voters acknowledge and decide on the appropriate level of compensation for elected Town Officials, who are not subject to the Town's policies given their elected status. This has been a discussion item for several years, and it has been recommended by the NH Department of Revenue Administration and the Budget Committee that this article be placed to clarify each position and its compensation level. This article does not request the funding for each, they are included in the appropriate line item operating budget to be voted in Article 8. This article is detailed to include the position, its current compensation package, and the recommendations for 2008 of the Selectmen and Budget Committee.

ARTICLE 8 is the total operating budget for the Town of Fremont. This article is referred to as the master budget article. This number is the sum total of all operating budgets, and excludes any special warrant articles. The full budget detail can be found on the State Form MS-7, which is printed on pages 26 to 34 in the beginning of your 2007 Town Report.

The Selectmen have recommended \$2,416,250 for the operating budget and the Budget Committee has recommended \$2,378,095. The difference in these numbers is \$38,155. Following are some highlights of the major changes from 2007 to 2008, in the Selectmen's recommended operating budgets:

Wages in all areas are increased by 3% for the cost of living. Full-time employees and all police personnel included also for a step increase.

Executive: Increase in postage for the Clerk to do mailing of registration renewal reminders, increased cost to print and mail the monthly newsletter.

Election and Registration: Increased to cover four elections (two major, state/federal); and a need for voting booths mandated to meet standards; as well as additional staffing to cover the expected high turnout of the November General Election.

Reappraisal of Property: Multi-year contract with MRI (Municipal Resources Inc) to include a Consumer Price Index (CPI) increase in the cost of contracted assessing services.

Personnel Administration: Increase due to the increased cost of health insurance, even with a reduction in plan benefit offered to employees; an increase of 2% in the Town's share of police retirement for a full year; and a new full time police officer (with benefits) for a full year.

Planning and Zoning: Monies budgeted for training sessions for board members and staff.

General Government Buildings: Increased electrical and fuel costs; overall this item is down due to reduction in maintenance and upkeep. The roofing project at the Historic Museum was completed in 2007, under budget, and is not a recurring expense.

Cemeteries: Planned expansion (Phase II) at the Leavitt Cemetery.

Other General Government: The low bid price on the printing of the Town Report is expected to save approximately \$2,000.

Police Department: Includes the full year of cost for the fourth full-time officer hired in 2007. Increase in investigation wages and time spent, added computer equipment.

Fire Department: Reflective of the complete combination of fire and rescue to one department.

Highway Department: Block Grant revenue from the State of NH has come up slightly from \$83,419 in 2007 to a projected \$87,597 in 2008.

Solid Waste Collection: Budget amount listed is a contract rate for MSW/recycling pickup as increased over 2007 by 2.5% for cost of living and 2.2% for the increase in the number of new homes from 12/06 to 12/07. After putting the budget together, the Town was notified that the current hauler would not be able to fulfill his contract, and we are working currently to rebid of the contract in order to have a budget number available by Town Meeting. This amount is likely to change on the Town Meeting floor.

Library: Increase in wages and hours worked, increase in funding of Summer Reading Program, increased maintenance and utility costs. New computers and technical support included.

Debt Service: Bond and interest repayments are reduced over the life of the bonds. The Parks and Recreation Field Renovation bond was paid off in 2007. This appropriation is down \$78,702 from last year.

Interest on Tax Anticipation Notes: Increased interest rate on borrowing, and increased borrowing for town and school funding (in anticipation of taxes) to meet cash flow needs.

If the operating budget and all warrant articles pass with the Selectmen's recommendations, it is estimated at this time that the tax rate for the Town would perhaps decrease by \$0.09 per thousand. All tax impact estimates are per \$1,000 of valuation. The operating budget represents an estimated \$2.61 of the total town portion of the tax rate. (In 2007 the total town tax rate was \$ 3.28). The total number of

veteran credits and the amount of overlay (which affect the final rate) are not available at this time, which is one reason why the values are estimates. We are also assuming a conservative, but reasonable, amount of growth in the total assessed valuation of the Town, which is the largest component of the tax rate setting formula.

ARTICLE 9 requests funding (\$115,000) for seven existing capital reserve accounts. Each fund has already been established for future use. These funds will add to what has already been set aside. These funds accrue over time and are then used to offset the cost of larger capital purchases when needed. To see the amount already established in each of these funds, refer to the annual report of the Trustees of Trust Funds in the Town Report on page 78. The estimated tax impact of this expenditure is \$0.27 per thousand.

ARTICLE 10 requests funding to establish a new Town Expendable Trust Fund for the purpose of funding Cable Access for the Town. This article does not ask to appropriate any money, but would put up to an estimated \$4,000 in the fund in 2008, derived from cable franchise fees. The article is written to have the Board of Selectmen as agents for the fund, so that they can work with a future Cable Access Committee (Access Management Committee) on programming, as established by the Committee, funding equipment and other items from the franchise fees collected by Comcast on monthly cable bills. The tax impact of this article as proposed is \$0.00.

ARTICLE 11 requests funding (\$3,098) for the Police Department to purchase new equipment for the OHRV patrol, including full face helmets, rider safety goggles and safety gloves, Point Blank vests, Radio Com Ports (headset worn under safety helmet), patrol uniforms and jackets. There is \$3,098 proposed to be removed from the special revenue fund to offset the purchase price. This means that no money is raised by taxation for this purchase. The tax impact of this purchase is \$0.00.

ARTICLE 12 requests funding (\$48,320) to continue a Mosquito Control Program for the Town. The Selectmen have placed this article on the warrant so that the community can have an opportunity to consider it and decide whether or not to proceed again this year with a town-wide program. The program for 2008 is comparable to what was done in 2007, and also allows for emergency spraying should that be necessary. The overall Mosquito Control Program is a comprehensive program beginning with surveillance, which involves trapping adult mosquitoes; to treatment of larvae (a major focus of an effective control program) through adulticiding. The proposal for 2008 includes more monitoring, collecting, and testing of mosquitoes for WNV and EEE. In calendar year 2008, we received grant funds from our 2007 Mosquito Program Reimbursement Application of \$5,076 which will offset this expense.

The cost shown here is for one year of a Mosquito Control Program, which would begin immediately following Town Meeting if this appropriation is approved. This would be (at a minimum) an annual cost to the Town for mosquito control. It is anticipated that this type of program will need to be done for the foreseeable future if the Town continues to have concerns about the mosquito population. The information the Town has received from State Health Officials at this time indicates that EEE and WNV will again be issues in NH this year. They cannot forecast to what extent, but feel it is important for towns to remain vigilant and prepared. The estimated tax impact of this expenditure is \$0.10.

ARTICLE 13 requests funding (\$75,000) to shim and install overlay paving, and shoulder work on sections of Birch Haven (700 feet), Rock n Pines (850 feet), Sandown Road (975 feet), and Pulaski Drive (600 feet). This work includes a tack coat to tack existing pavement prior to top coat; two and one-half inches (averaged) overlay of hottop; and to cold plane (grind) the end sections to meet the existing pavement. The estimated tax impact of this expenditure is \$0.18.

ARTICLE 14 requests funding (\$10,000) for a new Capital Reserve fund to be established, for a future renovation/addition to the Fremont Historic Museum, a town-owned property at 8 Beede Hill Road. The current museum at some point needs to be expanded to be able to fit the town's historic hearse and the antique fire hand pumper. The estimated tax impact of this expenditure is \$0.02.

ARTICLE 15 requests funding (\$2,000) in support of a new social service agency, Great Bay Services. Great Bay Services currently serves two clients and their families from Fremont. Their mission is to offer support to people with disabilities and special needs and to their families; to enrich and enhance the lives of the people they serve, and to assist them in reaching their potential through comprehensive services which give options and choices; to initiate innovative ways to meet the changing needs of their clients; and to support self-determination and advocacy for those they serve. The estimated tax impact of this expenditure is less than \$0.01.

ARTICLE 16 requests funding (\$2,000) in support of a new social service agency, SeaCare Health Services. SeaCare Health Services is a non-profit organization providing access to medical care for uninsured adults, assistance in applying for long-term prescription medications for low-income families and home visiting/health coordination services for children. In 2006, they served 19 individuals with medication needs; and many others with other medical access programs. The estimated tax impact of this expenditure is less than \$0.01.

ARTICLE 17 has been placed in the warrant due to citizen-expressed interest in having the polls open longer. This proposes to add one hour in the morning, so that polls would open at 7:00 am, thus allowing more people to vote prior to leaving Town for work. This can be discussed and amended on the floor of the meeting as well. Changing the hours would add slightly more money to the elections budget (to cover more hours of workers) in years beginning in 2009. For State elections, we must first make this decision locally, and then ask the NH Secretary of State to place a question on the November 2008 State/Federal Election ballot. If approved, Article 17 would take affect for the next State Election in September 2010. There is no tax impact of this article in calendar year 2008.

ARTICLE 18 works in conjunction with Article 17. If Article 17 passes for State and Federal Elections, we will have the same hours for all local elections. There is no tax impact for this article in calendar year 2008.

Articles 19 through 21 are placed for voters consideration and do not reflect the Selectmen's desire to discontinue these practices, but to allow voters the choice on how much money is spent to fund them. No matter what the decision is on these articles, the Selectmen's Office will carry out the voter's wishes.

ARTICLE 19 has been placed in the warrant for the voters consideration on whether to discontinue mailing the monthly Town Newsletter. Currently, we print 1,750 copies monthly at a cost of \$225-360 (depending on if a single or double issue); and mail them at a cost of \$286 monthly. If we discontinue mailing it, we

would save at least \$3,400. Due to its availability on the website, we could print less paper copies, saving perhaps \$150 per month. The document would be printed in lesser quantity and available for pickup at town buildings, and would continue to be available on the Town's website.

ARTICLE 20 has been placed in the warrant for the voters consideration of whether to discontinue mailing the Annual Town Report. Currently, we print 1,750 copies; and mail them at a cost of just over \$1,000 (cost varies annually due to the size and weight of the report). If we discontinue mailing it, we would save an estimated \$1,000 to \$1,200 in mailing costs; and perhaps \$2,000 to \$3,000 in printing, as we would print less copies. The document would be available for pickup at town buildings, the annual meeting locations, and would continue to be available on the Town's website.

ARTICLE 21 has been placed in the warrant for voters consideration of whether to discontinue printing the assessment listing in the even-numbered years Annual Report. This report is approximately 40 pages, and adds approximately \$1,500 in printing cost to the report every other year. This information has always been available for review at the Selectmen's Office, and is also available at the taxpayer terminal in the office, as well as on the Vision Appraisal website. The Town annually funds a contract to maintain this information on the Vision site, so that this information is accessible to all via the web.

ARTICLE 22 proposes to accept deeded title to Kenniston Way, a new roadway off of Copp Drive. A two year maintenance bond of \$11,613 is on file and will be held by the Town for the two year maintenance period. (Majority vote required.) All engineering and town inspections (by the Road Agent) have been completed and found to be satisfactory at this time.

ARTICLE 23 is the meetings closure article, for the transaction of any other business to be brought before the voters. Business here is advisory in nature, having not been "forewarned" on the warrant.

We hope this information is helpful to your understanding of the issues to be voted upon at the 2008 Annual Town Meeting. If you have specific questions that might be answered in advance of the meeting to be held on March 15, 2008, please feel free to call our office at 895 2226 or send an email to Selectmen@Fremont.nh.gov or to FremontTA@comcast.net.

Gene Cordes
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Fremont Board of Selectmen