

FREMONT N.H. SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING MINUTES
SATURDAY, MARCH 13th, 2010

CALL TO ORDER: Moderator Annmarie Scribner called the Meeting or order at 9:03 A.M.

Members of the Fremont Police Dept. led the "Pledge of Allegiance" and, held a 'Moment of silence for all those who are serving our Country'.

Moderator Scribner explained the rules of the meeting (as printed in the Annual Report) and how she would like to see the attendees observe them. The Moderator explained that non-Fremont voters would be allowed to speak. It was explained that you must register with the Supervisors of the checklist and receive a pink card to vote.

The Moderator asked Chairman Rowell to introduce the Members of the Board and others at the head table (including Principals, Lewis & Safina and District Attorney Eggert.) and new member Bernhardt (in audience).

Greta St. Germain introduced the members of the Budget Committee.

Special presentations were given to retiring member Pinkham and former member Christine Kenneway.

The Moderator read the list of winners in the Town and School District elections, March 2010.

The Moderator 'read the Warrant (as printed in the Annual District report)'.

Superintendent Landers explained some 'goals' and accomplishments. Fremont not on 'needs improvement' list, improved communications, 'professional development' of teachers, 'job descriptions', purchasing policy, next year look at math program and collective bargaining.

Moderator read Article #1. (Recommended by F.B.C. and F.S.B). Rowell moved question. Girardi seconded. The Moderator ask for discussion.

Rowell explained it would impact the tax rate by 6 cents per thousand of valuation. This includes custodians, Para - professionals and secretaries. Contains no health insurance clause. Needed to attract quality employees and to reduce turnover.

Bud. Com. Member Kohlhofer explained that the Bud. Com. did recommend it "with some reservations". The 'Evergreen clause' was a problem. Kohlhofer said that even if this article does not pass, 'step increases' will still be given.

Citizen Itse said that we will be committing ourselves to 'future step raises' .

Citizen / staff member Kathy Richard says that because of the 'Evergreen clause' they will be rewarded by step increases but few will use it.

Citizen Kelly said, Fremont has a ranking by the State of 92 out of 124 districts. He said, "There should be no raises for that performance".

Citizen Blades said that this will equal \$15 for a house valued at \$200,000 Citizen Rowell said "these people work really hard. They are making \$15,000 not \$500,000".

Member Pinkam said that continuity of maintaining staff is more important than training new ones. Not a lot of money. The principals have to take classes and update their knowledge.

Citizen Steve Leshair asked if hand ballots would be counted afterwards. Moderator Scribner explained the method of voting and the difference between 'recount' and 'reconsideration'.

Citizen Abney said that she has expertise in contracts and has advice to people 'on the fence'. "you have very well trained people here. All you have to do is give up your coffee once or twice this year".

The Moderator explained that you will get ballot for articles 1,2 and 3 all at once.

Polls for article #1 opened at 9:51AM. 30 minute 'break' starts.

10:21 meeting called back to order.

REPORT OF THE BUDGET COMMITTEE

Bud. Com. Member Kohlhofer said that the "reprint of Bud. Com (page 127) informs us that income is 90 thousand of dollars off". "This will increase the impact on the tax rate. Income is down \$800,000 in delinquent taxes. The Town needs to reconsider what it can afford". "Top level employees will receive thousands of dollars in 'bonuses'. The projected impact for article #6 is \$400,000 but actually is, \$500,000. If the Town re-values you might pay more". He said, "If the School District wants it (money for raises), they will find a way to fund it, even if it's not in the budget".

Moderator 'tabled' article #2 until results of article #1 are read.

Moderator read article #3.

Article #3 (NOT recommended by Bud. Com., recommended by F.S.B.) moved by Chair Rowell, second by member Girardi.

Moderator opened up for discussion.

Member Genthner said, "this is a small amount of money on the table. We are asking for a 1 year contract. Current contract expired last summer. Two reasons we selected 1 year. We can go back next year and review including health language. 16 teachers have hit the 'top step'. There would be no more money for them without a new contract. There is no C.O.L.A.

Kohlhofer said; that the B.C. would rather see a health insurance plan controlled by the Administration and S.B. than the evergreen situation. If Obama care passes it will not affect these union contract plans. There are numerous other options out there to look at.

Moderator asked for discussion on Article #3 @ 10:40 A.M.

Citizen Mrs. Rowell said that she is very discouraged and that the teacher profession is not fairly compensated. "let's think about where we were". "Let's show them we support their efforts here".

Greta St. Germain introduced the Budget Committee. She noted their hard work this year. She said that we should not forget that "people are hurting" and she urged people to get up and speak.

Citizen Herrmann said that we have a teacher nominated for 'Teacher of the Year'. And, we don't want to lose this type of teacher.

Citizen Blades said, "it will only cost \$12.20 per year on a \$200,000 house to keep these teachers.

Greta St. Germain said: we need to see these scores at Ellis School go up before we give out rewards.

Mrs. Rowell said, "I can't speak on specifics but we can't get good scores if we don't have good teachers. My son is doing great. They can't teach if they need 2nd jobs.

Ida Keane said, I am a parent and a taxpayer and usually fiscally conservative. Eight of the teachers at the top pay scale work great with my children. Don't talk about the ability of the teachers but think about if we can afford it.

Citizen Abney said, "No good business would cut their best employees". In regards to scores, the teachers don't tell the students that they are not doing well.

Citizen Joe Michelli said: In 2009 Fremont had the third highest tax in the State. Yet we are rated 92 out of 124 in our scores. I don't think anyone should be rewarded for that.

Citizen Guidoboni said; "Ellis School was put in an odd category. The scores are not accurate". Recognize that they (the students) are treated as what they are not who they are.

Moderator Scribner closed voting on Article #1 at 10:51 A.M. She opened voting on article #3 at 10:51 and set the time of 11:21 for voting to close on Article #3.

At 11:03 the Moderator read the tally of votes from article #1. YES-124 NO-49.

ARTICLE PASSES

Sealed ballot envelope was given to Clerk.

A citizen made a motion to restrict reconsideration. Seconded by another citizen.

The Moderator asked if there was any discussion.

With no discussion, the Moderator called for a card vote.

Passed by card vote.

The Moderator read Article #5 (Not recommended by Bud. Com. , recommended by School Board)

Motion to move question by Jeff Rowell. Seconded by Peg Pinkham.

Moderator asked for discussion.

Jeff Rowell said that it failed in 2008 and 2009. It is only 4 cents per thousand of valuation. He said that it is for students who stay behind after school at Sanborn. Stops will be determined later. Time would be changed to 5PM to accommodate sports practices.

Andrew Kohlhofer asked if the contract was for a “full size bus” for 6-9 students?

A citizen said that unless you live “within walking distance” of Main St., you cannot use it.

Citizen Kenneway said; It is just giving them an opportunity.

A Poplin Drive resident said; It (the bus) leaves before sports team get back to Sanborn. We don't need it.

Mr. Landers said; the timing has not been determined yet. Perhaps a smaller bus can be used.

Citizen Royer said: Two years ago we had less students. Two years ago 10 – 15 kids would be on the bus. It will make sure that my kids get time after school. My son started a military club. Even if they live 4 miles from Main St., they will still be close to home.

Dan Itse said: \$16,100! You don't know what size or time, how do we know the cost?

The Moderator said: That is based on 180 days.

Ida Keane read a quote from 2 years ago, “up to \$16,100”. She said: It may not cost that much.

The Moderator announced that the polls were closed on article #3 at 10:22AM.

Kohlhofer said: When this was proposed, the Bud. Com. asked for an “up to” clause.

The Moderator asked if there were any more questions. There were no more.

Card vote @ 10:25AM. YES – 71 NO – 91 ARTICLE #5 FAILED

Greta St. Germain made a motion to restrict reconsideration on article #5.

Moderator asked for discussion. None. Motion to restrict – passed.

Moderator reads article #6 (Recommended by Bud. Com., not recommended by School Board) at 11:31 AM. Motion to move by Pinkham. Second by Jeff Rowell.

Kohlhofer said: The problem is, with the School Board it is hard to find out where the money is spent. If we vote ‘no’, we have to re-discuss the budget.

Pinkham said: Everyone should have a copy of the Power Point for article #6. These numbers went out before the meeting between the School Board and the Budget Committee. Teachers come and go. Look at page 127 & 128. The difference is 3.57% between the two figures. The School Board feels that the budget of the District is fair. We have to constantly make ‘adjustments’. You will hear about ‘class ratios’. When I went to school there were 50 students per room. Other costs are \$10,000 for computer replacement, Special Ed. Up \$44,219, \$22,000 in fuel savings. \$10,562,000 is the budget Committee figure. \$10,775,544 is the School Board proposed budget. Pinkham took a ‘poll’ of the School Board to see if they agreed with this figure (\$10,775,544). All members said, “aye”.

Kohlhofer said: The 2nd grade would go down to 14 students (per room). They don’t need the additional teacher. Some budget item are left at \$1.00 so that they can move money around. Bud. Com eliminated increases to non-contract people. He said: “if it is so bad for the top step employees, why do they stay? You should reject the increase for the superintendent. If you have any more questions, ask the moderator to ask us (the budget Committee). Last year a \$500,000.00 increase. This year an increase.

Kenneway said: It’s about innovation and productivity. The teachers step up and do what they are asked to. As a person who has had a child here for the last 24 years. I make a motion to amend the budget to \$10,775,544 .

Second by citizen Abney.

Results of article #3 read – YES – 99 NO – 64 ARTICLE PASSES

Dan Itse asked: Will the 4 items that are ‘zeroed out’ remain at zero?

Moderator –“No money will be put into these lines”.

Kohlhofer: the Budget Committee does not support this amendment. Special Ed. is 40% of the budget. The State only gives back 17% dumping the rest back on the Town. There are record unfounded mandates. Federal grants are down. We can eliminate the ‘go green’ program so that math gets more money. These are issues that the Bud. Com. is interested in. All we hear is, “we need, we need’ but we can’t afford it.

Citizen said: No one in this room got a 7 ½ % raise in the last 2 years.

Citizen Zukas asked: What is the \$125,000 difference between the Bud. Com. And School Board regarding Sanborn tuition?

Kohlhofer: Based on the numbers we were given.

Keane: This question is about tuition being cut. The budget will go down if the Sanborn contract is not approved.

Citizen Dennis Howland read the article and asked: How do you change this?

Moderator said: The amendment is to change from the Budget Committee numbers to the School Board numbers.

Jeff Rowell said: You can change numbers and language.

Ally Burke called the question.

Moderator said, “no”. We will have a 2 minutes recess (@ 12:20PM.

Moderator came out of recess at 12:24PM

Citizen Howland said: Until we vote we can’t amend.

Moderator said: No, until the amendment fails, the language can’t be changed.

Kohlhofer said: this increase is too much. I make a motion to amend it to \$10,675,544.

At 12:30 P.M., a private discussion was held between the Moderator and the School District attorney.

Kohlhofer said: We have lost \$100,000 in revenue from the state.

Pinkham said: We still need 10.7 million to keep the two positions.

Citizen Keith Stanton questioned page 4 of the 'Power Point' hand-out that said the "impact" of \$10,500,000 on the budget was only 18 cents and shouldn't it read, 'the impact of the increase'?

A citizen asked if this was all about revenues vs. increases.

Kohlhofer said: It's about moving money around as they choose. The last few years they have had a surplus.

Citizen Perrault called the amendment.

Citizen Cordes seconded.

Card vote called for by Moderator. Amendment does not pass.

Citizen Kenneway moved to vote for an amendment of \$10,775,544.

Seconded by A citizen.

No discussion.

Moderator called for a card count. Motion passed.

**Kohlhofer asked for a hand count. Results of hand count – YES – 85 NO – 54
Amendment passed.**

Dan Itse proposed to reduce line 5734-170 to zero.

Moderator said: You can't.

Citizen Burke made a motion to move the question.

Citizen Perrault seconded.

Voting started at 12:45 PM. on Article #6.

Polls closed at 1:09PM.

Moderator tabled article #4 .

Citizen Cherrie Ficker made a motion to not reconsider article #3.

Second by citizen Burke.

FINAL

Motion Passed by card vote.

Mr. Landers noted that one Ellis School teacher is in the running for "Teacher of the Year" in New Hampshire.

Results of voting on Article #6 were read by the Moderator.

YES – 99 NO – 52 Article #6 - Passes

Neil Janvrin made a motion to restrict reconsideration of article #6.

Seconded by a citizen.

Moderator asked for a show of cards. Motion passed.

Neal Janvrin made a motion to adjourn.

Seconded by citizen Matthew Thomas.

Majority in favor.

The Moderator adjourned the meeting at 1:15 P.M.

Article #7 (To transact any other business which may legally come before this meeting) was NOT addressed.

Respectfully submitted by,
Keith Stanton, Fremont School District Clerk.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Keith Stanton", with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.