

**FREMONT, NEWHAMPSHIRE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
2015 DELIBERATIVE SESSION  
SATURDAY, JANUARY 31, 2015  
Ellis School, 9:00 am**

School District Moderator, Victor P. Sokul, Jr., called the 2015 Fremont School District Deliberative Session to order at 9:03am. He asked all in attendance to please stand as he led the Pledge of Allegiance.

He then introduced the School District Chairman, Ida Keane, who introduced the other Fremont School Board members; Shannon Bryant , Greg Fraize. She mentioned that Tammy Kitt could not be here due to a family emergency and Andrew Kohlhofer could not attend due to a work commitment. She also introduced William Phillips, the School District Attorney. Moderator Sokul then introduced the Budget Committee Chairman, Mike Nygren, who introduced the rest of the committee present: Mark Kidd, Mary Anderson, and Neil Janvrin.

Moderator Sokul explained the general rules of order and that Roberts Rules of Order would be used only as a guide to run the meeting. He explained that only Fremont voters are allowed to speak. He explained that there would be only one motion on the floor at a time. He explained that after an article is read, it will be followed by up to ten minutes of Board presentation and discussion, after which time, the public would be welcome to speak by going to the microphone, and to begin by stating your name and address. There would be a limit to four minutes per person for speaking at the microphone.

Moderator Sokul stated that there were eight Articles on the School Warrant.

Moderator Sokul read aloud ARTICLE 1 and explained that it does not require any action and cannot be amended at this time. It is as follows:

**ARTICLE 1:** To choose the following School District officers:

School Board Members: 2 for 3 years

Jennifer Brown

Greg Fraize

Sharon Girardi

Ida Keane

School District Moderator 1 for 1 year

Victor P. Sokul Jr.

School District Clerk 1 for 1 year

Patricia Coulombe

School District Treasurer 1 for 1 year

Elizabeth J. Stanley

**ARTICLE 2:** To see if the school district will vote to approve the cost items included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Fremont School District and the Fremont

Education Association which calls for the following increases in salaries and benefits at the current staffing level:

Fiscal year	Estimated Increase
2016	\$71,063
2017	\$ 44,734

and further to raise and appropriate \$71,063 for the current fiscal year, such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits required by the new agreement over those that would be paid at current staffing levels.

(Recommended by the Fremont School Board 5-0)

(Recommended by the Fremont School Budget Committee 6-0)

Article 2 was moved to the floor by Ida Keane, and seconded by Greg Fraize.

Ida Keane explained the terms of the agreement. She explained that this is a two-year contract which will go from July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2017. It contains a change in Bereavement Leave time from five days per year to five days per occurrence. The sick leave buy-back option has been eliminated. A Sabbatical Leave was added. She explained that there were changes to the health insurance plans. The contract includes three professional days per teacher per year with the available money pool increased from \$9000 to \$ 12,000 per year. Course reimbursement would require a grade of "B" or better. The retirement stipend would now require fifteen years with the district from the twenty year requirement currently in place. The extracurricular compensation pool was reduced by \$3,000 to reflect changes in positions. The work day was redefined, and the evergreen language removed from the duration clause. The changes in salary steps for year one include a 1.75% + \$1,000 increase per step added to the current salary schedule and an additional step 15 added to the schedule at 3% over step 14. All members would move one step in year one. In year two, there would be no step movement but a 1.75% increase to the new, year one salary schedule. Other contract changes include grammatical corrections which do not change current terms and some clarifications of the present language in several sections of the contract to ensure proper execution by administration and that reflect changes in associated laws.

Resident Gene Cordes asked if she could explain the health insurance changes.

School Board Chair Ida Keane stated that districts around the country are facing problems with budget increases associated with health insurance premium costs and the new laws of the Affordable Care Act, particularly the Cadillac Tax. The Board is trying to give the employees the care they need without penalizing the district with the Cadillac tax if the premiums become too high. So, what has been agreed to is to drop the high premium coverage programs that we currently have, like Blue Cross/Blue Shield, and switch to plans the Mathew Thornton HMO, SOS, and Luminos plans. These plans will provide a savings to the district in the premiums over the life of these contracts, and give employees plans that will best fit the needs of their families. We have agreed to pay 85 % of the Mathew Thornton HMO premiums and the employee pays 15%, and for the Luminos, we have agreed to pay 100% and offer a \$1,200.00 contribution to a health savings account, if they take this plan.

Resident Jodi Donahue asked if Ida could explain the changes in the work day.

School Board Chair Ida Keane explained the language was changed to state that the work day will begin 15 minutes before a student day begins and 30 minutes after a student day excluding early release days. Variations of the work schedule must be pre approved by the building principal.

Resident Angela O'Connell spoke to support Article 2 and the teacher contract. She explained that our schools state test scores have been rising. She explained that we have had some turn over in staff that was sad to see. Recently, there was a third grade teacher who had tremendous impact and was nominated for the teacher of the year award who left and she believed that one of the reasons being that there was not a new teachers' contract and not having an increase in pay over the years. So, that is something that is very concerning we do not want to lose staff that we have. She commended the budget committee and school board for supporting this and knowing how important it is to the support staff. She mentioned that the tax impact is small and this will attract more people into the community, fill some of the empty houses, and bring in people to help with the tax base. She mentioned that the best negotiations happen when there is a win win on both sides. She felt that the support staff would be getting an increase which they haven't since 2009 but there would also be some long term savings as well.

Resident Carla Smith represented the Fremont Educational Association and she thanked both the school board and the budget committee for their support with Article 2 and hoped that the community would see the true savings as well as keeping the longevity of the teaching staff at Ellis.

Resident Gene Cordes asked if Ida could explain what it means that the evergreen clause is going away.

School Board Chair Ida Keane explained that what the Evergreen clause means is that when the contract ends everything remains status quo with the then current contract. Ida referred to a comment Resident Angela O'Connell mentioned earlier about scores improving. She showed slides about how Ellis compared to other schools around. She mentioned we are not the highest paid but we are pretty close to lowest paid. The teachers haven't had a contract since 2009 so she thinks it would be great to get these contracts passed. She mentioned that they did come in with an operating budget lower than last year to help offset the costs to compensate the teachers, and with the hope of not hitting the taxpayers with too much, if any, tax rate increase. Right now they do not think there will be much of an increase unless revenue really drops and we won't know that until later. She showed that achievement in reading and math is going steadily up. We are doing good things and would like to compensate the teachers.

Moderator Sokul stated that Article 2 would go to the voters as written.

**ARTICLE 3** Shall the Fremont School District, if Warrant Article 2 is defeated; authorize the governing body to call one special meeting, at its option, to address warrant article 2 cost items only?

(Recommended by the Fremont School Board 4-1)

(Recommended by the Fremont Budget Committee 5-1)

Article 3 was moved by Greg Fraize, and seconded by Shannon Bryant.

Moderator Sokul asked if any there were any questions. Moderator Sokul then stated that Article 3 will go to the voters as written.

**ARTICLE 4** To see if the school district will vote to approve the cost items included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Fremont School District and the Ellis School Support Staff ( AFT- Local #6223) which calls for the following increases ins salaries and benefits at the current staff level:

Fiscal Year	Estimated Increase
2016	\$ 25,182
2017	\$ 24, 757
2018	\$ 24,964

and further to raise and appropriate \$ 25,182 for the current fiscal year, such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits required by the new agreement over those that would be paid at current staffing levels.

(Recommended by the Fremont School Board 5-0)

(Recommended by the Fremont Budget Committee 6-0)

Article 4 was moved by Greg Fraize and seconded by Ida Keane.

School Board member Greg Fraize explained the negotiated terms of the Ellis School Support Staff agreement. He explained there will be an evaluation committee established. The grievance procedure was clarified. The number of vacation accruals was clarified. The sick leave accrual for calendar year employees was up to 70 days and academic year employees to 35 days. The accrued sick leave can be used for the care of a child or spouse up to ten days. Employees will be paid for the day when attending professional development during a normal work day. Changes to health insurance plans as well as Life Insurance were added. There was a clarification of pay installments and an annual longevity payment of \$500 after ten years of service. This Agreement is a three-year agreement which would go from July 1, 2015 to June 20, 2018. Year one would have a 1% increase to the salary schedule, adding \$750.00 to step 15, and eligible employees will move up one step. Year two would see a 1.5% increase to the salary schedule, add thirteen cents to para tracks, and eight cents to secretary and custodian tracks (to help offset HMO, POS costs) and all eligible employees would move one step. In year three, there would be a 1.5% increase to salary schedule. Year two adds a step 16 at 2% more than step 15 and all eligible employees move up one step. Minor changes to the contract include grammatical corrections which do not change current terms. Clarification of the present language in several sections of the contract was made to ensure proper execution by administration that changes in laws have been captured.

Resident Jeff Rowell asked if Greg Fraize could explain the 2016 increase of \$25,182 at the bottom part of the article “to further raise” for the current fiscal year.

School Board member Greg Fraize could not answer the question and referred to School District Attorney William Phillips.

School District Attorney William Phillips explained that is a two-part article. The first part is to approve cost items of the contract and the second part is to raise the appropriating funds. He then explained that the language terms are from the NH Department Revenue Administration website and that they read the current fiscal year, but it really is for the fiscal year 2016.

Resident Jeff Rowell explained that he was supportive of Article 2 and he has seen in the past that both boards have been supportive, and then it goes down in flames at the polls. So, he hopes the word gets out.

Resident Marian Guidoboni asked about the base salary of a paraprofessional for the first year. She then asked how much they could they make at step 15.

School Board member Greg Fraize responded that a first year support staff with certification presently starts at \$10.91. A first year certified teacher working at a para is \$13.91. A support staff member at step 15 makes about \$17 and change.

Resident Sue Levine she expressed her support for both contracts and thanked both committees for all their hard work. She hopes that this year will bring new results to the polls. She asked if we would have to have another warrant article to appropriate vote again if it failed.

School Board member Greg Fraize said at that point that there was a warrant article to deal with that potential issue.

Resident Sue Levine asked so if we get this passed we are good for three years.

School Board Member Greg Fraize agreed. Then he mentioned that the para-educators' step 1 starts at \$10.91 and step 15 is \$16.52. secretary step 1 is \$ 11.68 and step 15 is \$17.63. custodian step 1 is \$12.18 and step 15 is \$18.34. Lastly, the teachers' step 1 is \$13.09 and step 15 is \$19.81.

Moderator Sokul stated that is article will go to voters as written.

**ARTICLE 5** Shall the Fremont School District, if warrant article 4 is defeated, authorize the governing body to call one special meeting at its option, to address warrant article 4 cost items only?

(Recommended by the Fremont School Board 5-0)  
(Recommended by the Fremont Budget Committee 5-1)

Article 5 was moved by Greg Fraize and seconded by Shannon Bryant.

Resident Deb Genthner asked, "Why did the School Board have a 5-0 vote for Article 5 and a 4-1 vote for Article 3?" She was curious about why someone voted "yes" on article 5 and "no" on article 3. Ida then said that the gentleman that voted that way is probably not here today.

Moderator Sokul explained that if there was no further discussion that the article would to the voters as written.

School Board Member Greg Fraize made a motion to restrict Articles 3 & 5 for reconsideration. School Board Chair Ida Keane seconded the motion.

Moderator Sokul stated that there had been a motion to restrict articles 3 & 5 for reconsideration and it has been seconded. He then opened the floor for discussion.

Being none, Moderator Sokul called for a voice vote. He asked that all those in favor indicated so by saying "I," and all those not in favor say so by saying "nay". There were no nays. Moderator Sokul declared that Articles 3 & 5 were restricted from reconsideration.

School Board Member, Shannon Bryant made a motion to restrict Articles 2 & 4 from reconsideration. School Board Member Greg Fraize seconded the motion.

Moderator Sokul stated that there had been a motion to restrict Articles 2 & 4 from reconsideration. He then opened the floor for discussion.

Moderator Sokul asked for voters to use their voting cards for this vote. Moderator Sokul asked for "All in favor of restricting articles 2 & 4 to please raise your voter cards? All of those who oppose?" Moderator Sokul declared that Articles 2, 3, 4 & 5 were now restricted from reconsideration.

**ARTICLE 6** To see if the Fremont School District will vote to raise and appropriate the budget committee's recommended amount of \$11,701,213 for the support of schools, for the payment of salaries for the school district officials and agents, and for the payment for the statutory obligations of the district. This article does not include appropriations contained in special or individual articles addressed separately. Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be \$11,717,436 which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Fremont School District or by law; or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13, X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only.

(Recommended by Fremont School Board 5-0)  
(Recommended by Fremont Budget Committee 7-1)

Article 6 was moved by Greg Fraize and seconded by Ida Keane.

School Board member Greg Fraize explained that he had sat on both boards. He stated that the proposed budget was down \$155,773.00. He explained that they were hoping that both the teacher contract and the support staff contracts would pass. He explained that they budgeted Sanborn's tuition rate for the coming year based upon historical actuals not on the guaranteed maximum rate. That is one way that they were able to lower the budget. The Board budgeted for 7%, not the given rate of 9 %. He mentioned the budget included adding a .5 custodian, a .5 Spanish teacher, and a .25 payroll specialist.

Discussion concluded without change to the article, so Moderator Sokul declared that article 6 would go to the voters as written.

School Board Member, Shannon Bryant moved to restrict article 6. School Board member Greg Fraize seconded the motion.

Moderator Sokul opened discussion about the motion to restrict Article 6 for reconsideration. He then asked for all in favor to raise their voter cards, then all those opposed. Then he declared that Article 6 was restricted from reconsideration.

**ARTICLE 7** To see if the Fremont School District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$10,000 to be added to the Ellis School Building and Grounds Maintenance FUND. An expendable trust fund previously established. This sum is to come from June 30, 2015 fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2015. No amount to be raised from taxation.

(Recommended by Fremont School Board 5-0)

(Recommended by Fremont Budget Committee 6-0)

Article 7 was moved by Shannon Bryant and seconded by Ida Keane.

Resident Jeff Rowell asked what was in the trust fund now, and what have it been used for recently?

School Member Shannon Bryant explained what had been spend out of the fund. She explained that the prior balance was \$25,164.33. This year \$849 was spent for a 2-way radio base console, \$949 for an IDS floor scrubber, \$1296 for 2 vacuum cleaners and accessories, and \$12,790 for two roofs on the portables. This left a balance of \$15,879. She expressed that they felt it was important to keep up the building.

Moderator Sokul stated that Article 7 will go to the voters as written.

**ARTICLE 8** To see if the school district will vote to establish an Out of District Tuition Fund, an Expendable Trust Fund per RSA 198:20-c, V for the purpose of providing funds for unanticipated out- of-district tuition expenses and to vote to raise and appropriate \$100,000 from the June 30, 2015 fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2015 to be placed in the fund; further to name the school board as agents to expend from the fund. No Amount to be raised by taxation.

(Recommended by Fremont School Board 5-0)

(Recommended by Fremont Budget Committee 6-0)

School Board Chair, Ida Keane explained that this article would allow the district to take some of the savings in our budget that we have right now because we had budgeted our Sanborn tuition GMR at 15% when we were building the budget for this current school year. With that money there now, the Board could set it aside into this trust so that if by some chance the GMR that Sanborn gave us this year of 9.91% actually came in at the 9.91%, then there would be the funding to cover that cost. Historically, the GMR has always dropped by at least 3%, so we typically get a GMR rate that comes in at about half of the GMR. So, in sense this is like a rainy

day fund in case the tuition goes up. This may also help for an out-of-district placement. This rainy day fund money would not have to be built into the operating budget. We will not have to have an inflated operating budget if we have funds like this available. Also, there is money in our budget this year so the Board would not have to ask for a new \$100,000 to fund the trust.

Resident Jeff Rowell asked if this is a set article or would we have to vote on this every fiscal year.

School Board Chair, Ida Keane explained that this would be a permanent trust fund, and it may never get used but it would be there in case it was needed. She then stated, after talking with School District Attorney Will Phillips, that this is the first year we have not budgeted the full GMR because we are pretty safe in not doing that. Yet, at the same time we don't want to put the district at risk to have to spend more that was appropriated and call a special meeting to do so.

Resident Marian Guidonboni asked about the RSA relating to trust funds. She said that the article talks about being able to using funds according to RSA. She was concerned that funds may be diverted to be used to pay for other expenses such as health insurance premiums for employees of the district. How did the law go along with this article? Was this for educational expenses or can the funds be expended from this for other purposes?

School District Attorney Will Phillips explained that you can only use the funds for what they are set up for. The statute allows you to set up trusts for different reasons. So this trust is solely for funding out-of-district tuition. So, because the Board has been budgeting a large amount of money based on the GMR from Sanborn only to have the final tuition rate to come in historically at half of what the GMR was, this was a safe way to not have to do that. So the district has been running this surplus every year so the idea being that the article was to budget at the historical average and create this trust fund and it could only be used for the out-of-district tuition. The statute allows districts to create trust funds for many specific reasons. So a district could have an insurance trust fund. That is not what this trust fund is for.

Resident Marian Guidonboni asked if the purpose would have to be specifically named in the warrant article.

School District Attorney Will Phillips stated, "Yes."

Resident Marian Guidonboni asked that this warrant article would state that it will not be used for other purposes other than tuition.

School District Attorney Will Phillips stated, "No, the title of the trust states its purpose."

Resident Marian Guidonboni asked if the article had to specify only for out-of-district tuition.

School District Attorney Will Phillips stated, "No."



School Board Chair, Ida Keane said that this trust fund will save us from having to budget too much money for Sanborn and then having the GMR come in less than we budgeted, thus carrying a high unexpended fund balance each year.

Resident James Thompson asked why is there such a big difference between the GMR and what the actual tuition is every year.

School Board Chair, Ida Keane explained that Sanborn estimates the GMR before the budget goes in front of their voters or even before their public hearing. The GMR is their best guess, to use to propose their budget before it gets hashed out between everybody. So it gets decreased based on the final vote.

Resident James Thompson asked, "What happens if this doesn't pass and the increase is more than the 7% budgeted?" School Board Chair Ida Keane stated that we would have to find the money somewhere else in the budget because we did not budget for it.

Resident James Thompson asked, "Where would the cuts come from?"

School Board Chair Ida Keane explained that we would have to find them within the budget and then she said that the GMR has historically never come in at the estimate, but we would try to spend some of the FY15 fund balance on things we need for next year. That way we would have the money for tuition next year for the high school if this doesn't get passed and if the GMR comes in at the highest level.

Resident James Thompson asked, "When you are talking about spending the fund balance, you are talking about the extra balance from this year, because the actual increase this year was less than the GMR?"

School Board Chair, Ida Keane responded, "Yes."

Resident Dennis Keane asked, "What do we do with the excess funds if it doesn't pass?"

School Board Chair, Ida Keane stated that as long as everything stays the same, it would be sent back to offset taxes when we do the tax rate in September.

Moderator Sokul stated this article will go in front of voters as written.

School Board Chair Ida Keane moved to restrict Articles 7 & 8 from reconsideration. Shannon Bryant seconded the motion.

Moderator Sokul asked for a verbal vote restricting Articles 7 & 8. He then asked, "All in favor to restrict Articles 7 & 8, please say yes? All those opposed say no?" Then he declared that both articles 7 & 8 were restricted.

Resident Tammy Bond expressed that she knows both committees have done a lot of work and would like to challenge everyone to reach out to residents that do not have children in the school to help get the word out.

Moderator Sokul thanked everyone and reminded everyone that voting day is Tuesday, March 10, 2015.

School Board Chair Ida Keane moved to adjourn until voting day March 10, 2015 and Greg Fraize seconded the motion.

Meeting adjourned at 10am.

Signed, Patricia Coulombe Date 3/11/15  
Patricia Coulombe, Fremont School District Clerk