

Fremont School District Deliberative Session Minutes
January 30, 2016
Ellis - School Gym

Present: Patricia Coulombe, School District Clerk; Moderator Michael Rydeen; Superintendent Dr. Betsey CoxButeau, Attorney William Phillips; School Business Administrator – Sue Penny; School Board Members Susan Levine, Angela O’Connell, Jennifer Brown, Vice Chairman Gregory Fraize; Chairman Andy Kohlhofer; and Budget Committee Members Chairman Mary Anderson, Vice Chairman Mark Kidd, Patricia Martel, Gene Cordes, Michael Nygren, and Joe Miccile and approximately 76 registered voters.

Meeting called to order by Moderator Rydeen at 9:03 am. Pledge of Allegiance led by Boy Scouts and Cub Scout from Fremont James Thompson and Pete Thompson.

Moderator Rydeen then announced where the exits in the rear and pointed out the bathrooms. All Board members and staff at the head tables introduced themselves.

Moderator Rydeen went over General Rules and that a simple version Robert's Rules would also be followed. He also mentioned we will be doing this in a fair manner and if anyone is confused they can stop the meeting by yelling “Point of Order.”

“Point of Order” is the only yelling that will be allowed.

Moderator Rydeen explained that only voters would be allowed to speak unless they were school staff. He then described how the voting process would work, as well as the secret ballot process. He explained the secret ballot – 5 signatures presented to the Moderator voting on an article, using the Supervisors. We will only be working on one motion at time.

No Negative motions or comments are allowed. Fremont is an SB 2 town and he then explained a little about what that meant.

He explained how the Articles would be presented. He explained the discussion would be about the purpose of an article and then he went into the rules.

When an Article is first brought up, the Board will have the first 10 minutes to make any type of a presentation. He would then allow for individuals 3 minutes, and they would need to speak at the microphone.

The Moderator explained how to end a discussion on an Article by “Calling the Question” to call a question, and following that, only the people already in line would be able to speak.

The Moderator explained the procedure for speaking at the microphone, look at him and speak into the microphone. Please state your name and address so our Clerk may write it down. He asked that when you ask a question that you stay at the microphone until it is answered.

Moderator Rydeen went over the Disorderly Conduct procedure and asked that cell phones be turned to vibrate or off.

Article 1: The Moderator reviewed the candidates signed up for open School District positions:

School Board – 1 for 1 year: Angela O’Connell

School Board – 2 for 3 years: Susan Levine

School Clerk – 1 for 1 year: Patricia Coulombe

School Moderator – 1 for 1 year: No candidates declared

School Treasurer – 1 for 1 year: Elizabeth J. Stanley

There is a three year term for School Board member that no one signed up for.

Moderator Rydeen mentioned that Fremont’s TV Crew will donate their time to candidates, or even a Fremont resident that is strongly about an article and would like a wider audience. FCTV will be videotaping, by appointment, on Saturday and Sunday February 13 and 14, 2016. Contact Bruce White to make an appointment.

Article 2: School District Budget

The purpose is to raise \$12,353,571 for the 2016/2017 School year. If the Article fails, the default budget is \$12,700,700.

Mary Anderson, Budget Committee Chair spoke, giving data regarding the Budget Committee’s numbers and School Board’s numbers. She mentioned that if the School Board’s budget was approved, a \$200,000 home would go up in taxes \$500.00 and a \$300,000 home \$700.00. She then went into discussing her professional background and how important education is to her.

The Moderator gave the School Board 10 minutes to present.

Susan Levine spoke about the items that changed this year, both uncontrollable and already made.

Angela O’Connell mentioned with all the cuts the School Board has made that they would like to propose an amendment.

She mentioned that they realize the variance is a large number as well as the tax burden. They do feel that this \$104,000 increase is below the default budget and includes the same things that we have this year.

Jennifer Brown spoke about what they as a School Board put back into the budget. This includes the teacher, the 9th bus, and contractual obligations. She went into the importance of the 9th bus, the ride length and safety as well as some reasons for the teacher.

Andy Kohlhofer discussed some of the elementary math issues since he has been on the Board. He stated we put in a math specialist to address this but after looking at the budget we are going to train teachers, and what they should do, and receive a stipend.

Angela O’Connell moved to amend the Article by \$104,000. Greg Fraize seconds the motion. Moderator Rydeen repeated the amendment and opens discussion.

Mary Anderson spoke about how the Budget Committee came up with their number. She compared the state class sizes and Fremont’s class sizes. She mentioned the reason that the

Budget Committee feels 8 buses would work, mentioning the decrease in students.

Andy Kohlhofer discussed the reasons for the buses. He talked about the area the buses need to cover and amount of time students are on the buses. The Board is trying to limit the bus rides to 55 minutes.

Juliano 231 Main Street - What is the state maximum for class size?

Mary Anderson replies K3 is 25, and 68 is 30.

Juliano speaks about her experience in the schools during her youth regarding class sizes. She talked at length about the needs of a classroom and how students don't all get reached.

Josh Levine 72 Rowe Drive - He asked about the \$800,000 budget over last year's budget and the School Board is \$100,000 and some change. Of the \$800,000 that the Budget Committee is over last year, how much of that is discretionary? There are a couple of items that are uncontrollable, such as health insurance, transportation, special education, Sanborn High School tuition and the collective bargaining agreements. Is there any amount over the \$800,000 is discretionary or is it only the uncontrollable measures?

Susan Levine explains and Moderator Rydeen states that is sounds more contractual.

Mary Kaltenbach 121 Tuck Drive The \$40,000 for the one teacher does that include benefits and overhead costs also?

Susan Penny replied yes it does include it all. Mary Kaltenbach repeats that yes it does include everything and thanks them for the answer.

The Moderator asked for any more discussion on this amendment, and then states that the vote is to amend the budget to \$12,475,950 vote of no will place it back.

The amendment to Article 2 passed by CARD VOTE. The operating budget of \$12,457,950 will go on the ballot. (The Moderator was corrected by Superintendent Cox).

Now that we have amended we are on discussion to restrict it.

Mary Anderson mentioned that the Budget Committee did all they could do and this will be increasing taxes \$500-750 in one year.

A motion to restrict reconsideration on Article 2 was made was made by Greg Fraize. The Moderator went over what it meant to restrict a motion. It was seconded by James Thompson.

The vote was approved to restrict reconsideration and the Moderator stated that Article 2 will go on the ballot has amended.

Article 3: School Building and Grounds Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund

The Moderator explained that the purpose of this Article is to transfer \$10,000 to the School Building and Grounds Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund. It has been recommended by both

committees. It will be transferred from the June 30, 2016 available fund balance. Andy Kohlhofer moved the Article. Susan Levine seconded.

Andy Kohlhofer stated this will not come out of taxation. This was an excellent plan and helps us with unexpected situations and we have not had to go through the budget to try and fix things. The Board has not needed extra town meetings to get the money. He explained they have used it to fix the nurse's office, teacher lounge and are debating to do the bathrooms. One of the things they do believe is that a good education comes with a good school.

Jeff Rowell - 38 Sandown Road – Said that when he was on the Board there was \$60,000 in there and it sounds like you are tapping into it and every year we add \$10,000. He questioned what was in there now and also what had come out of the fund in the last couple of years?

Andy Kohlhofer stated there is \$33,058 in the fund now, and they will be using it to replace the rooftop air conditioning unit. So they will be using \$15,000. Second part of the question was answered and Andy Kohlhofer replied by stating last year a return of surplus to the General Fund that offset the tax rate in 2015. This was for the prior three year period, and it is unknown what that amount may be this year.

Angela O'Connell mentioned we have a much tighter budget this year so very little fund balance is likely to be returned.

With no further discussion, the Moderator closed Article 3 for discussion. He stated Article 3 will go on the ballot as written, unamended.

Article 4: Tuition Trust Fund

The purpose of Article 4 is to place \$100,000 in the Expendable Trust Fund known as the Tuition Trust Fund.

Greg Fraize moved Article 4. Andy Kohlhofer seconded.

Angela O'Connell spoke how the School Board put this fund in place to help with tuition. It would help if new students moved in midyear, and she gave an example of triplets. She also mentioned special education, and out of district expenses.

Jeff Rowell – Sandown Road asked if both of these get approved and say we have a fund balance of only \$90,000, is it the discretion of the Board to say we are going to fund the \$10,000 for the grounds and put the rest of it here?

Angela O'Connell stated \$10,000 would go first and then the balance in the other fund.

Tom Fontana -74 Beede Hill Road asked what this \$100,000 is for, questioning if it is to cover tuition because we don't know what Kingston is going to do or is it for the out of region special education. What happens to the balance if it isn't used?

Andy Kohlhofer stated that the balance does get carried over. We under budgeted this year \$27,000 lower and we had to come up with this amount. This does not have to be funded every year. They are so close right now they do think it is necessary.

Mary Kaltenbach asked how many high school students go now, and how are they proposing to increase or decrease?

Andy Kohlhofer explained the tuition amount doesn't decrease as we still have to pay for the capital costs at Sanborn Regional High School.

Susan Penny mentioned that in 2016 they anticipate 209 students and in 2015 there were 227. This Trust Fund would only be used for out of district tuition, We don't know if we will have an increase in students at Ellis or Sanborn.

Budget Committee Chair Mary Anderson mentioned she recommended this and brought it to the School Board last year as it would stabilize the School's budget. The Budget Committee would hope to keep it stabilized around \$200,000.

Jeff Rowell - Sandown Road asked if this had to be voted on every year?

Andy Kohlhofer said they don't have to vote on it every year, but the School Board has to vote to put it on every year.

The Moderator stated that Article 4 will go on the ballot has written.

Moderator Rydeen mentioned that he generally hosts "Meet the Candidates" and anyone who would like to participate should let him know, as well as anyone who wanted to be write in candidate.

He urged residents to get the word about, and be sure and vote on March 8, 2016 at Ellis School. Polls are open 7:00 am to 8:00 pm.

A motion to adjourn passed at 9:54 am and the meeting closed.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Coulombe
School District Clerk

Approved by the School Board February 18, 2016