

Town of Fremont 2023 Deliberative Session Minutes

Present: Select Board members Gene Cordes, Roger Barham, Neal Janvrin; Town Moderator Michael Rydeen, Town Clerk Nicole Cloutier, School District Clerk Shawn Perreault, Budget Committee Members Mary Jo Holmes (Chair), Pat Martel (Vice Chair), Josh Yokela, Jon Benson and Emily Phillips; Town Administrator Heidi Carlson, 43 registered voters and various other Department heads and members of the community.

Moderator Michael Rydeen called the meeting to order at 10:16 am following completion of the School District Deliberative Session, beginning with the Pledge of Allegiance. He reviewed the rules that would govern the meeting with everyone. Copies were available on the table upon entry, as were the 2023 Town Warrant and Article Narrative, copies of the budget expense and revenue reports (multi-year) and estimated tax rate impacts for the 2023 appropriations. The Moderator explained he would read a summary and purpose of each Article while the actual wording of the Article was displayed on a large screen at the front of the room.

Select Board Chair Gene Cordes reviewed the accomplishments and events the Town was able to hold in 2022 after having to cancel them in the past due to Covid. He highlighted the work of different Departments in the Town and the accomplishments they were able to make, as well as goals for 2023. He discussed the full-time maintenance person we were able to hire and the part-time position that still needs to be filled. He recognized the 2022 Town Report Appreciation Award presented to John Hennelly and Eric Abney two weeks ago, for all their dedication to the Town and the Library over the years. He then recognized Leon Holmes Sr who retired in 2022 after 65 years serving the Fremont Highway Department (and the community in general) in various capacities. Leon Holmes Jr talked about working with him and all the work his Dad did for the Town. He read a letter from Leon Holmes Sr to the Town, as he was not able to be present today due to health issues.

ARTICLE 1: To choose by ballot all necessary Town Officers for the ensuing year.

Budget Committee: 2 for 3 years
Josh Yokela
Brenda Beauchain

Budget Committee: 1 for 1 year
Nancy J. Murray
Patricia J. Martel

Cemetery Trustee: 1 for 3 years
Matthew E. Thomas

Library Trustee: 1 for 3 years
John Hennelly

Select Board Member: 1 for 3 years
Gene Cordes

Town Clerk Tax Collector: 1 for 3 years
Nicole Cloutier

Trustee of Trust Funds: 1 for 3 years
Jeanne Nygren

Rydeen read the candidates that are running and the office in which they are running for.

The Zoning Articles were discussed at the end of the meeting, but were left in order in the minutes. Moderator Rydeen explained that Articles 2, 3, and 4 cannot be amended at this meeting.

ARTICLE 2: Are you in favor of the proposed amendments to Article 4 and Article 7 (Zoning Proposal 1) submitted by the Fremont Planning Board for the Fremont Zoning Ordinance as follows:

New text

~~Deleted text~~

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Add the following to Section 403 – Definitions:

MOTOR VEHICLE REPAIR SHOP: The use of any building, land area or other premise used principally for the servicing and repair of automobiles, recreational vehicles, or other similarly sized vehicles.

MOTOR VEHICLE SALES: The use of any building, land area or other premise used principally for the display, sale, rental, or lease of new or used automobiles (but may include light trucks or vans, trailers, or recreation vehicles), and including any vehicle preparations, warranty, or repair work conducted as an accessory use.

Revise Section 708 - Table of Uses as follows (P – Permitted; X – Prohibited):

	Zoning Districts			
	SH	MS	FUR	R
<u>Motor Vehicle Repair Shop</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>X</u>
<u>Motor Vehicle Showroom</u> <u>Motor Vehicle Sales</u>	P	P	X	X

The Planning Board recommends this Article 5-0-0. (Majority vote required)

Rydeen read a summary of the Article. Neal Janvrin moved Article 2. Roger Barham seconded. Leanne Miner explained the Article. She further stated that this Article covers commercial property and not residential.

Rydeen stated that Article 2 will go on the ballot as presented.

ARTICLE 3: Are you in favor of the proposed amendments to Article 12 (Zoning Proposal 2) submitted by the Fremont Planning Board for the Fremont Zoning Ordinance as follows:

Remove the following from the Aquifer Protection District:

~~**Definition in Section 1203.4 (Existing) Animal Feedlot:** A commercial agricultural establishment consisting of confined feeding areas and related structures used for the raising of livestock. An animal feedlot shall be considered one on which more than five (5) animals are raised simultaneously.~~

~~**Prohibited Uses in Section 1203.8.D(9) (Existing) Animal feedlots.** (see definitions=five (5) or more animals)~~

The Planning Board recommends this Article 5-0-0. (Majority vote required)

Rydeen read the article. Janvrin moved Article 3. Barham seconded. Miner explained the Article. This Town is built on agriculture. The 5 animal limit doesn't make sense for Fremont. There are already State and Federal laws that highly regulate aquifers and the Planning Board felt this was unnecessary.

Rydeen stated that Article 3 will go on the ballot as presented.

ARTICLE 4: Are you in favor of the proposed amendment to Article 13 (Zoning Proposal 3) submitted by the Fremont Planning Board for the Fremont Zoning Ordinance as follows:

Add the following to Article 1301.1 – Elderly Open Space:

Pursuant to RSA 674:17, IV, any increased density, reduced lot size, expedited approval, or other dimensional or procedural incentive under this elderly open space ordinance is deemed applicable to a

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development of workforce housing as defined in RSA 674:58, IV. Any proposed workforce housing development shall comply with the provisions of the Fremont zoning ordinance, site plan and subdivision regulations with respect to environmental protection, water supply, sanitary disposal, traffic safety and fire and life safety protection.

The Planning Board recommends this Article 5-0-0. (Majority vote required)

Rydeen reviewed a summary of the Article. Janvrin moved Article 4. Barham seconded. Miner spoke on the Article. This is a requirement and allows certain incentives, so they added Elderly to the Article.

Andy Kohlhofer stated this is a State law and if we do not adopt it, it will be automatically applied. This is a way of the Town having some control. He further explained that State laws make it very hard to restrict residential housing developments. Fremont has a lot of limits due to the number of wetlands we have.

Rydeen stated that Article 4 will go on the ballot as presented.

ARTICLE 5: Shall the Town of Fremont raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by Special Warrant Articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling \$4,104,296? Should this Article be defeated, the default budget shall be \$3,971,859 which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Town of Fremont 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.

Note: This operating budget warrant article does not include appropriations contained in ANY other warrant articles. **The Select Board recommends this appropriation 3-0. The Budget Committee recommends this appropriation 5-2-0.** (Majority vote required)

Rydeen summarized the purpose and numbers in Article 5. Mary Jo Holmes moved Article 5. Jon Benson seconded.

M Holmes spoke as the Budget Committee Chair about all of the Departments coming before the Committee and all the hard work they put into their budgets.

Kohlhofer questioned certain lines regarding salary increases and General Government Buildings, which Heidi Carlson explained were related to personnel. She further stated that the Town's health insurance carrier is Health Trust. Further information about the type of plan coverage were not readily available. Within Government Buildings, there were also some fuel increases.

Lori Holmes asked about certain clerical wages being brought up to market value. Carlson explained that the Town has been reviewing positions, a few at a time and trying to bring them up to market rates. Last year they did this for the Executive and Land Use Offices, and this year it focuses on two positions in the Library and the Police Department AA.

M Holmes wanted the public to understand one of the reasons the operating budget was up a little more than prior years was due to the wage increase going from 2% to 5% for all town employees.

With no further discussion, the Moderator stated that Article 5 will go on the ballot as presented.

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ARTICLE 6: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of four hundred five thousand dollars (\$405,000) to purchase a new fire tanker truck and equipment for the Fire Rescue Department with \$305,000 from the Fire Truck Capital Reserve Fund and \$100,000 to come from Unassigned Fund Balance. No amount from taxation. This Special Warrant Article will be non-lapsing and will not lapse until the fire tanker purchase is completed or by December 31, 2024 whichever is sooner. **The Select Board recommends this appropriation 3-0. The Budget Committee recommends this appropriation 7-1.** (Majority vote required)

Rydeen summarized the Article. Janvrin moved Article 6 and Barham seconded.

Seth Wood, President of the Fire Truck Committee, spoke to the Article referring to a power point presentation that replaced the Warrant on the screen. He reviewed the process the Committee went through, the companies they requested bids from, bids they received and the reasoning behind the company they chose. He also informed the voters that the truck is a stock vehicle and not a custom truck. This allowed the Town to keep the cost low, still get the needed equipment and meet the safety requirements, which the current tanker no longer meets. In addition, the new truck will have an automatic transmission and therefore more employees will be able to drive it. The current tanker has a manual transmission and only 2 or 3 employees are able to drive it. The truck has a lead time of 36-42 work weeks once received from the chassis manufacturer.

Fire Chief Richard Butler spoke on the Article and asked for the Town's support of the purchase.

Deputy Chief Joseph Nichols spoke about a building fire that happened in Raymond last night and the great response from the Department (given a well below zero night with high winds). He feels that the Town's support is important to the Department and that it increases the morale of the Department.

Carlson further spoke to the Department's efforts regarding the truck and their work over more than two years to come up with a solution that is stock, yet meets their needs, and keeps the taxpayers in mind. She further explained the full funding, which also includes another \$100,000 coming from ARPA funds that have already been received and accounted for by the Town.

The Moderator stated Article 6 will go on the ballot as presented.

Benson made a motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 6, seconded by Jamie Thompson.

Kohlhofer stated his concern that if the restriction passed and an expected cost came up later the Town wouldn't be able to go back and revise prior amounts.

Motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 6 passed by card vote.

ARTICLE 7: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) to be placed in the Bridge Construction and Reconstruction Capital Reserve Fund. **The Select Board recommends this appropriation 3-0. The Budget Committee recommends this appropriation 7-0-0.** (Majority vote required)

Rydeen read the purpose of the Article. Janvrin moved Article 7, Barham seconded. Carlson spoke to the Article. She explained the NH DOT red list bridges and progress to date on Martin Road beginning in 2014. Late last fall the Town's consulting engineer submitted the design and bidding plan to the State

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for approval. It is currently being reviewed. She reviewed the costs, the 80% bridge aid given by the State and the estimated construction timeline of July/August where the water will be at its lowest. Rydeen asked if the State would shut the road down or restrict it to one lane as they did for the Sandown Road bridge. Carlson said this is a possibility based on a letter received recently from DOT.

The Moderator stated Article 7 will go on the ballot as presented.

Cordes made a motion to restrict from reconsideration Articles 5 & 7, seconded by M Holmes.

Kohlhofer expressed the same concerns. Angela O'Connell stated the information on all these articles has been in many locations for a number of weeks and voters should be well aware of what the Town is looking to vote on. By not restricting articles, voters run the risk of having their wishes over ruled by those that remain if they leave. Josh Yokela expressed a similar opinion to Kohlhofer on restricting articles and feels they should not be restricted from reconsideration.

The motion to restrict reconsideration of Articles 5 & 7 passed by card vote.

ARTICLE 8: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) to be placed in the Highway Equipment Capital Reserve Fund. **The Select Board recommends this appropriation 3-0. The Budget Committee recommends this appropriation 6-0-1.** (Majority vote required)

Rydeen read the purpose of the Article. Janvrin moved Article 8, Barham seconded.

L Holmes Jr spoke on the Article. He gave examples the Fund has worked in the past to save for needed equipment, and his hope the Town would vote to replenish the money.

The Moderator stated Article 8 will go on the ballot as presented.

ARTICLE 9: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of forty-six thousand forty-six dollars (\$46,046) to hire a new full-time police officer. This sum covers five months of wages and benefits and necessary gear, equipment and required testing for the officer. If approved, this funding will remain as part of the operating and default budget in future years. **The Select Board recommends this appropriation 3-0. The Budget Committee recommends this appropriation 4-3-0.** (Majority vote required)

Rydeen stated the purpose of the Article. Janvrin moved Article 9, Barham seconded.

Chief Jon Twiss spoke on the Article. He stated that when the Town hired him 10 years ago we asked him to make our Town safer and keep us professional. He discussed the number of full-time officers we currently have and how those numbers no longer work for us. He went over the FBI crime and employee stats and what is recommended. His goal is to continue to bring staff levels to where they need to be to keep the community and officers safe. He has had to deny vacation time because it could not be covered at current staffing levels. This additional officer will allow more flexibility for sick and vacation time. It will allow him to have 2 officers on during some of the busiest times like Thursday, Friday, Saturday nights. He stated that Fremont is facing increase in number of calls, crime has increased and drug related issues have increased as well.

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Kohlhofer would like to see the police log posted again somewhere. This would allow him and others to see what officers are facing, the increase the Chief referred to and make it easier for voters to see the justification to add the officer.

Chief Twiss stated he was posting this information on the Police Facebook page, which show how many views, and no one was viewing them. He said he would be happy to post the information on the website. He gave an example of a recent domestic call they had to answer and the different agencies that needed to be called. The Chief also informed the voters that an officer responds to every call, including any request for the Fire EMS Department. Usually the police are first on scene and have performed life saving measures until the Fire Department can arrive. The Fire Rescue members are responding from home and need to get to the station and then to the call.

Yokela stated he recalled the Chief asking for a sixth officer a few years back and saying that would fill their needs. Then he got another officer last year and are now asking again. He feels the line or need keeps moving and wondered when it would be enough.

Chief Twiss stated that he never said 6 would fill the need. He went before the Budget Committee during that time and said he could use another 3 officers. The Town was not in a position to hire that many at once and the Committee asked him to request one. The need is always fluid and increases in crime and population will always be changing. In the past, he has taken years off from requesting an additional officer when he felt he could hold off.

Fire Chief Butler stated when he moved here in 1985 the Town was very different. There weren't as many roads or people. As the Town grows so does its safety needs. He hopes the voters will support this Article.

M Holmes spoke about her personal need for fire and police at her home. She feels the Town needs this additional officer to help protect the Town.

Carlson expressed her thoughts from the floor on the Town's history with the police and fire departments. Fremont has always been amazing with their support. It has allowed the departments to come a long way in supporting those employees and volunteers we depend on. They are seeing things in this town we thought we would never see, such as mental health issues, stating that not only our public safety officials, but our teachers are social workers among other challenges.

Sgt Mike Buckley spoke on all the outside programs that officers have been a part of. He cited several examples of officers at the school and fostering a good view of the Police with the students. Another officer would allow them even more options to be more visible at community events. He noted many programs within the school, Fishing Derby, Santa event, etc as good programs for the community.

Nicole Cloutier expressed her concern with the rise of illness and mental health issues due to Covid. Everyone has been wearing masks for so long that they can't fight off germs like they used to, believing this affects the PD as much as anyone, as Twiss earlier expressed (sickness and filling shifts). She feels that by asking for one officer at a time, the Chief was acting responsibly towards the Town. This additional officer is more important than ever now.

With no further discussion, the Moderator stated Article 9 will go on the ballot as presented.

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Benson made a motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 9, seconded J Thompson. Motion passed by card vote.

ARTICLE 10: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of four thousand dollars (\$4,000) to be placed in the Fremont Computer Equipment Expendable Trust Fund previously established. This sum to come from Unassigned Fund Balance. No additional amount to be raised from taxation. **The Select Board recommends this appropriation 3-0. The Budget Committee recommends this appropriation 5-2-0.** (Majority vote required)

Rydeen summarized the Article. Janvrin moved Article 10, Barham seconded.

Carlson explained that this money has already been raised in the 2022 tax rate. They are seeking permission to move it to a savings account for future computer needs.

Phil Rea asked how the Town's information was stored. He wanted to know if the Town used any cloud based backups. Carlson explained that the Town has two servers, which mirror each other and are located in two separate buildings. One in the Town Hall the other at the Safety Complex.

Rydeen expressed his concern that although a cloud based back up sounds better and that there may be State or Federal regulations around municipal government servers and it could end up costing more. The requirements and needs might lead to other expenses.

With no further discussion the Moderator stated article 10 will go on the ballot as presented.

ARTICLE 11: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) to be placed in the Library Building Maintenance Expendable Town Trust Fund previously established. This sum to come from Unassigned Fund Balance. No additional amount to be raised from taxation. **The Select Board recommends this appropriation 3-0. The Budget Committee recommends this appropriation 7-0-0.** (Majority vote required)

Rydeen summarized the purpose of the Article. Janvrin moved Article 11, seconded by Barham.

Librarian Eric Abney spoke on the Article. He explained that the funds were recently used to replace the HVAC system and the funds need to be rebuilt. The Library is now 21 years old, the bond is paid and things like the carpet are going to need replacing. Once the funds are rebuilt, they can start updating those other items.

With no further discussion the Moderator stated article 11 will go on the ballot as presented.

ARTICLE 12: To see if the Town will authorize an increase in the Cemetery Trustee Stipend by fifty dollars (\$50) each to be a total of two hundred dollars (\$200) per Trustee per year; and further to raise and appropriate the sum of one hundred fifty (\$150) for this purpose. **The Select Board recommends this appropriation 3-0. The Budget Committee recommends this appropriation 4-3-1.** (Majority vote required)

Rydeen stated the purpose of the Article. Janvrin moved Article 12, Barham seconded.

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Matthew Thomas spoke on the Article. He expressed the time, commitment and work that goes into being a cemetery trustee. He hopes that the Town would support the increase.

Yokela stated he felt the dollar amount requested was arbitrary and wanted to know the reasons they decided on that amount. Thomas stated that the trustees were not trying to be unreasonable. They were trying to help with the cost of fuel, but still be respectful to the Town and responsible.

Carlson clarified in response to questions that if this passes, Cemetery Trustee would make a stipend of \$200 each. It is currently \$150 each.

M Holmes spoke as a Cemetery Trustee. She has to leave a half hour early from work on days that Trustees meet. She does the job for the love of the Town and care of the cemeteries. They work to make the cemeteries the best they can be and keep them up. The \$50 is not a lot to ask, but it is something to help.

The Moderator stated Article 12 will go on the ballot as presented.

ARTICLE 13: To see if the Town will authorize an increase in the Town Clerk Tax Collector's annual salary by one thousand eight hundred ninety-four dollars (\$1,894) to be a total of thirty-nine thousand seven hundred eighty dollars (\$39,780); and further to raise and appropriate the sum of one thousand eight hundred ninety-four dollars (\$1,894) for this purpose. **The Select Board recommends this appropriation 3-0. The Budget Committee recommends this appropriation 5-2-0.** (Majority vote required)

Rydeen stated the purpose of the Article. Janvrin moved Article 13, Barham seconded.

Shawn Perreault expressed her feelings on the hard work of the Town Clerk/Tax Collector. She stated that unlike other increases in wages, because this is an elected position all her raises must be voted on too. She expressed her hope that the Town would support this raise and her belief that she has earned it.

The Moderator stated Article 13 will go on the ballot as presented.

ARTICLE 14: To see if the Town will authorize an increase in the Road Agent's annual stipend by two thousand (\$2,000) to be a total of six thousand five hundred dollars (\$6,500); and further to raise and appropriate the sum of two thousand dollars (\$2,000) for this purpose. **The Select Board recommends this appropriation 3-0. The Budget Committee recommends this appropriation 4-3-1.** (Majority vote required)

Rydeen stated the purpose of the Article. Janvrin moved Article 14, Barham seconded.

L Holmes Jr spoke on the Article. He explained that this is outside his position on the Highway Department. It is estimated to be about 10 hours per week in the budget. As Road Agent, he is on call 24/7 365 days a year and if he is unavailable he pays out of pocket for coverage.

Cloutier said she hopes the Town will support this Article and offered some data on what that breaks down to per hour.

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Carlson explained that Guerwood Holmes started this stipend some 20 or more years ago. At that time, the Town had no staff, only contractors. This is outside of what Leon does for his full-time job for the Town as a member of the Highway Department. The stipend was never intended to be hourly compensation, but only to offer a small sum to reimburse some of the time spent.

Yokela stated that a stipend isn't supposed to represent a position's/person's worth. It is designed to help fill positions. There are plenty of Boards and Committees that do not have stipends. These volunteers work just as hard as those that do have them. He feels hours worked is not a valid reason to increase a stipend.

Lori Holmes stated that unlike the Road Agent, these other Committees and Boards have support such as someone doing their meeting minutes. The Road Agent is always on call and has gotten calls in the middle of the night for things like downed trees that he must go and clear them.

Cloutier again stated the amount requested is not a lot when you think of what L Holmes Jr does. That if we didn't have someone like him we couldn't fill the position for the stipend we do offer.

With no further discussion the Moderator stated that Article 14 would go on the ballot as presented.

ARTICLE 15: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000) to be placed in the Historic Museum Capital Reserve Fund. **The Select Board recommends this appropriation 3-0. The Budget Committee recommends this appropriation 4-3-0.** (Majority vote required)

Rydeen stated the purpose of the Article. Janvrin moved Article, Barham seconded.

Thomas spoke on the Article. He gave the history behind the request and talked about what the addition would look like. He is always obtaining new items and space is becoming an issue. The Museum is open once a month from May to November and by appointment. He thanked voters for support thus far, and asked the Town to support this addition to the savings account.

The Moderator stated that Article 15 will go on the ballot as presented.

ARTICLE 16: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of thirty-four thousand dollars (\$34,000) to continue the Public Health Mosquito Control Program. **The Select Board recommends this appropriation 3-0. The Budget Committee does not recommend this appropriation 5-3.** (Majority vote required)

Rydeen stated the purpose of the Article. Janvrin moved Article 16, Barham seconded.

Carlson spoke to the Article explaining the Board leaves this on for annual voter consideration. This is the same program the Town has supported for many ears and primarily involves treatment of larvae in wetland areas, and up to two emergency ground sprayings at the school, Complex and ballfields. The sprayings are NOT town wide. If needed, they happen at the end of the season due to a positive EEE or WNV outbreak in Fremont or a surrounding town. The price has decreased because the company's home office is now located in Fremont.

The Moderator stated Article 16 will go on the ballot as presented.

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ARTICLE 17: To see if the Town will vote to establish a Fremont Parks and Recreation Expendable Trust Fund per RSA 31:19-a, for improvements at Memorial Fields/Park, and to raise and appropriate five thousand dollars (\$5,000) to put in the fund, with this amount to come from general taxation; and further to name the Select Board as agents to expend from said fund. **The Parks & Recreation Commission recommends this Article 4-0-0. The Select Board recommends this Article 3-0. The Budget Committee recommends this article 6-2. (Majority vote required)**

Rydeen summarized the purpose of the Article. Janvrin moved Article 17, Barham seconded.

Carlson spoke to this Article which was presented by a private citizen to the Select Board and is supported by the Parks & Recreation Commission. The current Parks & Recreation Revolving Fund is limited to what funds can be placed in it (only from user fees like the yard sale or vendor fair registration fees) and is growing very slowly. This would allow money to be put aside by the voters for larger projects.

Cloutier spoke to her reasons for requesting this Warrant Article of the Select Board, including the original intended use for it, like saving for a pavilion. She moved to amend the Article to remove “at Memorial Field/Park” and add “additional structural amenities” referring to her original language, which had been updated by the Parks & Recreation Commission to be for Memorial Park. She said it wasn’t intended to limit us to the Memorial Fields, and mentioned a small structure at the Library for instance. She did not want it restricted to Memorial Fields and it was vague on purpose for any improvement at any location.

Yokela stated the funds should be for a specific project and therefore moved to further amend the Article to strike the language” and further to name the Select Board as agents to expend from said fund.” This way, the voters will need to be consulted to approve what the funds are spent on. He felt this was necessary due to how broad the Article is currently worded.

Cloutier’s amendment was clarified “for the addition of structural amenities.” This was seconded by Kohlhofer. Yokela’s motion of further amending the motion was seconded by Emily Phillips.

Cloutier agreed that voters should have a say in what the funds are spent on.

Benson said that he would rather know what we are voting for with more specificity.

Nancy Murray, a Parks & Recreation Commission member, would like to see this pass. She feels our fields need to be explored more as a recreation use. She would like to see the Parks & Rec have the ability to bring something like the pavilion to the ballfields and talked about fundraising as well. This would allow the ballfields to be enjoyed more, which can only benefit the Town.

Carlson agrees taking out the Select Board as agents to expend might be a good idea because they only have jurisdiction on Town owned property and not over something like the School or Library. That could require further voter approval, either at the Town or School District level.

Michael Hanson asked if this was for large or small projects, and suggested that smaller operating improvements should be done through the operating budget and a fund like this should be used for capital projects. There was some discussion about capital versus expendable trust funds, purpose, and how the Town defines capital projects.

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Yokela further stated that the lack of clarity of what the money is to be used for makes it more important to bring the vote back to the voters at the annual meeting.

The motion to remove the Select Board as agents to expend passed by card vote.

Cassaundra Depierre expressed concern about the vagueness of the Article and commended upon the availability or access to Memorial Fields.

Kohlhofer referenced use of the upstairs room of the Town Hall and use for community events.

Hanson made a motion to amend “of structural amenities” to “for capital projects.” This was seconded by M Holmes.

Yokela said this motion appeared to be changing it to a Capital Reserve Fund without using the language of that Statute. This led to discussion between the statutory language for Capital Reserve Funds versus Expendable Trust Funds. Carlson expressed concern about the differing language and reference to the quoted Statutes. Cloutier asked for the definition of a capital project and Carlson looked up the Town’s policy.

This motion to remove “of structure amenities” to “for capital projects” failed by card vote.

Cloutier asked if this limited it to under \$10,000 and it is not believed it does. Benson further stated his concern that there is no real stated purpose of what the money is for. There was no further discussion.

The motion to remove at Memorial Fields/Park and add additional structural amenities passed by card vote. The Article will now read as follows:

ARTICLE 17: To see if the Town will vote to establish a Fremont Parks and Recreation Expendable Trust Fund per RSA 31:19-a, for addition of structural amenities and to raise and appropriate five thousand dollars (\$5,000) to put in the fund, with this amount to come from general taxation.

With no further discussion, the Moderator stated that Article 17 will go on the Warrant as amended.

ARTICLE 18: To see if the Town will vote to increase the all-volunteer Parks and Recreation Commission membership from five (5) to seven (7) members. **The Parks & Recreation Commission recommends this Article 4-0-0. The Select Board recommends this Article 3-0. The Budget Committee recommends this Article 7-1.** (Majority vote required)

Rydeen read the Article. Janvrin moved Article 18, Barham seconded.

Murray spoke on the article. The Parks & Rec would like to see more people on the Commission to help with the amount of work involved in setting up and running the various events. They believe this would give them the ability to spread the work further. She feels this is a valuable knit of the community.

Hanson wanted to know if the seats would get filled and if they don’t will the Commission still be able to run properly.

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Rydeen stated the reason for adding more seats is because the Parks & Rec is no longer just a youth organization. They are expanding to all age groups and as such having more seats would allow different age groups to be represented. He feels that they will be able to have more volunteers to fill it.

Jane Pellegrini wondered if this Article fails will there still be options to volunteer, and Rydeen said yes. She also suggested that the volunteer opportunities be made more visible.

With no further discussion, the Moderator stated Article 18 will go on the ballot as presented.

ARTICLE 19: Shall the Town of Fremont readopt the Optional Veterans' Tax Credit in accordance with RSA 72:28, II, for an annual tax credit on residential property of \$750? **The Select Board recommends this Article 3-0. The Budget Committee recommends this Article 7-0-1.** (Majority vote required)

Rydeen read the Article. Janvrin moved Article 19, Barham seconded.

Carlson explained that due to the State Legislature adopting a new bill in 2022 that expands the eligibility to some currently-serving Veterans. In making that change, all towns that want to keep their current amount (in Fremont \$750), must readopt the Credits. Yokela further shared his conversations with the NH Attorney General and DRA regarding the standard versus optional Veteran's Credit. If these Articles don't pass then Veterans would only get the standard credit of \$50.

Cloutier asked how people qualify. She also wanted to know if the amount of \$750 could be increased. Carlson explained the basics of qualification criteria such as dates of service, honorable discharge, resident of Fremont and live in your primary residence in Fremont. Yokela informed the body that the \$750 is the highest amount you can vote to give. The only thing the Town would be able to do with the amount is lower it.

With no further discussion the Moderator stated Article 19 would go on the ballot as presented.

ARTICLE 20: Shall the Town of Fremont readopt the All Veterans' Tax Credit in accordance with RSA 72:28-b, for an annual tax credit on residential property which shall be the same amount as the Optional Veterans' Tax Credit voted by the Town of Fremont under RSA 72:28? **The Select Board recommends this Article 3-0. The Budget Committee recommends this Article 7-0-1.** (Majority vote required)

Rydeen read the Article. Janvrin moved Article 20, Barham seconded.

Carlson stated the reason for this is the same as Article 19, but it covers a different group of veterans.

With no further discussion the Moderator stated Article 20 would go on the ballot as presented.

ARTICLE 21: To see if the Town will vote to designate as Town Forest, in accordance with NH RSA 31:110, the following parcels of land: 04-066 and 04-066.001. **The Select Board recommends this Article 3-0. The Conservation Commission recommends this Article 5-0. The Budget Committee recommends this Article 6-1-0.** (Majority vote required)

Rydeen read the Article. Janvrin moved Article 21, Barham seconded. A map of the area showing these parcels and adjacent conservation lands was up on the screen for review.

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Miner explained this land was donated to the Town and the Town is seeking to have it covered under the Town Forest Ordinance. This would allow hiking and such and prohibit camping or setting up fires. Kohlhofer stated most of this land is unbuildable due to wetlands.

Hanson asked if this would close the part of the rail trail that goes through this piece of land to ATVs and snowmobiles because no motorized vehicles are allowed in the Town Forest. Barham clarified that the railroad bed trail is owned by the State and the Town lands abut it on either side, so there is no conflict.

With no further discussion the Moderator stated Article 21 would go on the ballot as presented.

ARTICLE 22: By Petition: Are you in favor of increasing the board of selectmen to 5 members? **The Select Board does not recommend this Article 3-0. The Budget Committee recommends this Article 5-3.** (Majority vote required)

Rydeen read the Article. Phillips moved Article 22, seconded by Yokela.

Kohlhofer stated he is on the Planning Board, which has 7 people. He finds having more people brings more ideas and livelier discussions. He worried that if one person is out, that there could be a 1-1 vote and things would not get done.

Phillips spoke to the Article as one who had signed the petition and helped to gather signatures. She thought that due to respect for sitting members, some people are reluctant to run. She is concerned about the Board's power relative to mandates around the pandemic. She feels that the aging Select Board would benefit from introducing others to the board to learn it. The members that are there are doing a great job, but adding seats would allow new people to come on board, keep the experience and get the next leaders ready to step up. Danville and Brentwood, which are similar in size, have 5 members. She feels it is good to ask the people.

Pellegrini's concern is similar to the concern about expanding Parks & Rec, would we be able to fill the new seats. She felt that generally they run unopposed, in her years of watching it. Rydeen stated a couple of prior years where there was more than one person running.

Murray said that in the past 17 years there were only three times where more than two people ran for an open Select Board seat. There have been a couple times when two people ran. She thinks that the lack of candidates is more likely due to the huge time commitment to serve on the Board. She noted there is only a 17 to 23% voting participation, and that there are many opportunities for people to participate in local government.

Yokela mentioned additional people who have run in recent years. For all of the same logic as the Parks & Recreation Commission increase can be applied here.

Rydeen spoke as a citizen and disagreed in that the Select Board meets more frequently and makes a lot more decisions than Parks & Recreation.

Thomas stated that the Board is not a good old boys club and doesn't feel it ever had been. He cited some examples of other people running. He feels the Board works well together and debates items to come forward with a decision. He doesn't feel anyone should be intimidated. He feels the Town is fortunate to have so many people on this Board in the past to work well together to run the Town. He

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feels that people are not stepping up due to the workload and time commitment, to that Board as well as other commitments on other boards. He noted several towns where there is divisiveness. He urged people to keep the Board as it is.

Gordon Muench feels this should be left up to the voters to decide. The town population is expanding. He currently sits on a board of 5 people and a board of 8. He welcomes the different views and this allows people to learn and grow together. The size of the board doesn't mean that no fighting will take place. That comes down to the ability of the elected people to work together. He believes the current board is doing a great job, and the divisiveness could occur at any time. He would love to see more people run, younger people, and wants competition. It's important that people have passion about their community and what they are doing.

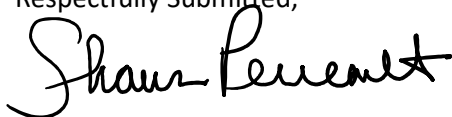
With no further discussion the Moderator stated Article 22 will go on the ballot as written.

Discussion went to the Zoning Articles, as noted in order at the beginning of the Warrant.

Phillips thanked all the people serving and all the people that have stepped up to run for an open office.

Cordes moved to adjourn, seconded by Janvrin. Meeting adjourned at 1:20 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Shawn Perreault

Minutes certified: 16 February 2023 Including 14 pages for the Town of Fremont 2023 Deliberative Session



Nicole Cloutier
Town Clerk