

Town of Fremont 2016 Deliberative Session Minutes

02 February 2016

Michael Rydeen called the first session of the Annual Town Meeting / Deliberative Session to order at 7:00 pm in the Ellis School gymnasium on Tuesday February 2, 2016. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Boy Scouts James and Peter Thompson.

Introductions were made by members of the head table. This included Budget Committee members Mary Anderson, Michael Nygren, Mark Kidd, Patricia Martel and Joe Miccile and Jenn Brown representing the School Board; Selectmen Leon Holmes Sr, Neal Janvrin and Eugene Cordes, Town Administrator Heidi Carlson; Town Attorney Diane Gorrow and Town Clerk Tax Collector Nicole Cloutier.

The Selectmen made a presentation for the 2015 Town Report Appreciation in acknowledgement of Patricia Martel in recognition of her time on the Budget Committee for 30+ years as a resident of over 37 years. Patricia will be finishing her terms in March and may be back. She has spent a great deal of time on the budget and has been a Trustee of Trust Funds since the 1990's.

Moderator Rydeen stated that everyone needs to check in with Supervisors of Checklist.

Moderator Rydeen stated that a modified version of Roberts Rules of Order would be used as a guide to run the meeting. He explained that Articles can be amended at this meeting, but will not be voted on at this time. Voting on the Articles will take place on Election Day, Tuesday March 8, 2016 by official ballot. He said the persons who are presenting an Article will be allowed 10 minutes to speak and members of the audience will be allowed 4 minutes to speak. He asked that before speaking, you state your name and address, and everyone wishing to speak must get to the microphone. Only Fremont voters will be allowed to vote or speak, aside from Town administrative staff and the Town's Attorney who are allowed to speak. Handouts of the Rules of Order, the Warrant Article Narrative, Town Budget Form MS-7 and the Default Budget form MS-7D, as well as other informational flyers were available for those in attendance. There were approximately 60 registered voters in attendance.

Moderator Rydeen explained the procedure for restricting reconsideration of Warrant Articles.

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

Moderator Rydeen read aloud the list of candidates running for office.

Budget Committee: 1 for 2 years

Joseph Miccile

Selectmen: 1 for 3 years:

Thomas A. O'Brien Roger A. Barham

Budget Committee: 2 for 3 years

Patricia J. Martel

Supervisor of Checklist: 1 for 6 years

Dennis Buteau

Cemetery Trustee: 1 for 3 years:

Steven Harms

Treasurer: 1 for 3 years

Rachel Edwards Kimberly Dunbar

Library Trustee: 1 for 3 years

Suzanne Wicks

Trustee of Trust Funds: 1 for 3 years

Patricia J. Martel

Moderator: 1 for 2 years

Michael Rydeen

Moderator Rydeen read aloud Article 2.

ARTICLE 2: 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 \$2,747,889? Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be \$2,592,270 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 Selectmen recommend this appropriation 2-0. The Budget Committee recommends this appropriation 5-2. (Majority vote required).

Mary Anderson moved this Article, Mike Nygren seconded.

Mary Anderson stated that this budget was decreased. The Budget Committee and Board of Selectmen have agreed on budgeting the same amount. Heidi Carlson highlighted changes to explained the difference between the default budget \$155,000 that would include paving on Whittier Drive for \$163,500. She explained that a large part is to resurface half of Whittier Drive, a half year for a new police officer, a Cemetery Sexton position, \$6,000 for fire equipment, social service payments changed, and extra money for programs and maintenance in the library budget.

Renee King wanted to know what the per \$1,000 increase would be in the tax rate, comparing the default and proposed operating budget. Heidi Carlson explained that if the entire operating budget passes, it would cause about a \$0.40 per thousand difference in the tax rate.

Police Chief Jon Twiss expressed the need for full-time staffing, and that we rely too heavily on part-time staffing. He stated the Fremont presently only has 4 full time police officers. Chief Twiss stated facts and statistics on investigations and calls as well as issues with crime. We are relying on part time officers, however full time staff have more training and skills are sharper. He expressed that part time staff are a great supplement but not good for typical cases. Relying on part time staff is dangerous for the safety and liability of the public when officers are not trained.

Leon Holmes Jr stated that the Highway Department is the largest increase in the budget. Over 2015, it is increased by \$163,500 for the Whittier Drive work. He stated that Whittier Drive was paved over 25 years ago. Also a lot of salt was used last year, which increased the budget by \$17,000 last year.

The Moderator announced Article 2 will go on the ballot as presented.

Moderator Rydeen read aloud Article 3.

ARTICLE 3: To see if the Town will vote to establish an expendable trust fund under the provisions of RSA 31:19-a, to be known as the Fremont Highway Winter Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund for the purpose of funding winter maintenance as necessary and to raise and appropriate the sum of twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) to be placed in this fund and further to name the Board of Selectmen as agents to expend.

The Selectmen recommend this appropriation 3-0. The Budget Committee recommends this appropriation 7-0. (Majority vote required).

Mary Anderson moved this Article, Gene Cordes seconded.

Gene Cordes explained that the winter last year inhibited the rest of the year. Rather than planning for extreme weather, we would like to have an expendable trust fund, a reserve fund for unexpected harsh winters. This allows for better planning.

Michael Rydeen pointed out that this article states winter use and can only be used for winter related maintenance. Flooding would not be included in this fund.

Mary Anderson added that we won't have to raise taxes every year if this article passes which will allow for saving.

Brittany Thompson of Brown Brook Circle asked if this can be reworded as to not say winter or can we make another article for other seasons? Michael Rydeen replied that we cannot restate the article. Mary Anderson added that floods would normally be partially recovered with FEMA assistance.

Heidi Carlson stated that the grouping of storms last year set back the Highway Department by an estimated \$50,000 and that \$17,000 was recovered from FEMA at year end. We had to cut back paving because of this. She agreed that this article helps save for future needs.

Leon Holmes Jr. seconded Heidi Carlson and stated that we need this in order to not take away from road maintenance.

The Moderator announced Article 3 will go on the ballot as presented.

Moderator Rydeen read aloud Article 4.

ARTICLE 4: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) to be placed in the Library Building Maintenance Expendable Town Trust Fund.

The Selectmen recommend this appropriation 3-0. The Budget Committee recommends this appropriation 5-2. (Majority vote required).

Leon Holmes Sr motioned this Article, Gene Cordes seconded.

Gene Cordes stated that the Library needs maintenance and that 2014 had unplanned issues. This would be saving for our future needs. He also stated that the building is 14 years old.

Eric Abney stated that the library had new roof put on last year. He is hoping upkeep will be more of a preventive maintenance vs costly fix later on.

The Moderator announced Article 4 will go on the ballot as presented.

Moderator Rydeen read aloud Article 5.

ARTICLE 5: 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 Bridge Construction and Reconstruction Capital Reserve Fund.

The Selectmen recommend this appropriation 3-0. The Budget Committee recommends this appropriation 5-2. (Majority vote required).

Gene Cordes motioned, Mary Anderson seconded.

Heidi Carlson stated that there is \$40,000 in the bridge construction fund. In 2015 we took out \$8,500 for engineering. We are 2/3 done with the Martin Road Bridge engineering work, and are waiting for the State DOT on Bridge Aid funding confirmation. This is a savings account, as we have two bridges currently on the State "Red list". At last we heard, Fremont was eligible for 2020/2021 for funding but it's not in writing.

The Moderator announced Article 5 will go on the ballot as presented.

Moderator Rydeen read aloud Article 6.

ARTICLE 6: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) to be placed in the Town Hall Renovations Capital Reserve Fund.

The Selectmen recommend this appropriation 3-0. The Budget Committee recommends this appropriation 7-0. (Majority vote required).

Gene Cordes motioned, Mary Anderson seconded.

Gene Cordes stated that we've been putting money in and that he believes we will have the funds to take care of the needs at the Town Hall. He added that the heating system is very old and hard to maintain because many of the parts are unavailable. Gene also pointed out that the basement has no bathroom.

Adam Cloutier of 38 Danville Road asked if we could utilize the Library meeting room more often. Gene Cordes replied that the Land Use Boards and Board of Selectmen use records at the Town Hall for reference and thus generally meet there. Cordes also stated that we have the Town Hall and that it needs to be taken care of. There is no insulation in the walls and we have offices down there that need to be taken care of.

Adam Cloutier asked if there were a way to utilize funds between the Town Hall and the library to help both. Michael Rydeen replied that we cannot move money from one Capital Reserve Fund to another. Heidi Carlson stated that meetings are often double booked so the Town Hall is needed as a meeting facility.

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

Moderator Rydeen read aloud Article 7.

ARTICLE 7: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) to be placed in the Property Reassessment Capital Reserve Fund.

The Selectmen recommend this appropriation 3-0. The Budget Committee recommends this appropriation 7-0. (Majority vote required).

Gene Cordes moved the Article, Leon Holmes Sr seconded.

Heidi Carlson indicated that there was a revaluation process done in 2015 that was fully funded from this Capital Reserve Fund, and that savings to it each year has been able to pay for the every five year revaluation cycle.

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

Moderator Rydeen read aloud Article 8.

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 Selectmen recommend this appropriation 3-0. The Budget Committee recommends this appropriation 7-0. (Majority vote required).

Leon Holmes Sr moved the Article, Gene Cordes seconded.

Leon Holmes Jr explained that the Highway Department owns a one ton truck, backhoe, sweeper, and plows and sanders. He estimated to replace this equipment is \$297,000. The year 2012 took from the Fund to purchase a replacement one ton truck and a used backhoe. He urged that we want money there for when equipment is worn out so that it can be replaced.

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

Moderator Rydeen read aloud Article 9.

ARTICLE 9: 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 Emergency Management Equipment Capital Reserve Fund.

The Selectmen recommend this appropriation 3-0. The Budget Committee recommends this appropriation 7-0. (Majority vote required).

Neal Janvrin moved the Article, Gene Cordes seconded.

Gene Cordes stated that we need to replace the generator at the Safety Complex. Neal Janvrin stated that we also need a generator at the School, for use in the event of an emergency or power outage.

The Moderator announced Article 9 will go on the ballot as presented.

Gene Cordes made a motion to restrict consideration on Articles 2 through 9. Mary Anderson seconded. The vote was approved unanimously by voice vote.

Moderator Rydeen read aloud Article 10.

ARTICLE 10: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of eighty-one thousand seven hundred dollars (\$81,700) to shim and overlay sections of Chester Road and do associated shoulder work.

The Selectmen recommend this appropriation 3-0. The Budget Committee recommends this appropriation 7-0. (Majority vote required).

Gene Cordes moved the Article, Mary Anderson seconded.

Leon Holmes Jr. stated that last time this road was paved was in 1994. This road is just over a mile in distance and the cost is \$81,700 to do the planned work on the worst sections.

Michael Rydeen asked what the life expectancy of this work would be. Leon Holmes Jr. replied that we have been getting 20 years out of it but there will still be potholes, this road will need to be sealed.

The Moderator announced Article 10 will go on the ballot as presented.

Moderator Rydeen read aloud Article 11.

ARTICLE 11: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of eighty-five thousand four hundred ninety-five dollars (\$85,495) to shim and overlay a section of Sandown Road and do associated shoulder work.

The Selectmen recommend this appropriation 3-0. The Budget Committee recommends this appropriation 7-0. (Majority vote required).

Gene Cordes moved the Article, Mary Anderson seconded.

Leon Holmes Jr. explained that plans are to finish what he started last year. He plans to go from Abbott Road to Cavil Mill Road. This year there will be a lot of emphasis on Sandown Road and Chester Road. He stated that if all three projects are done, next year he will focus on North Road and Beede Hill Road.

Heidi Carlson stated that, in theory to completely dig up the roads will cost twice as much as the overlay process. That process is supposed to last 20 years. For the capital assets process, we value them as a life expectancy of 15 years when overlaid, however some last 10-15 years depending on how often travelled the roads are.

The Moderator announced Article 11 will go on the ballot as presented.

Moderator Rydeen read aloud Article 12.

ARTICLE 12: To see if the Town will authorize an increase in the Town Clerk Tax Collector's annual salary by five thousand dollars (\$5,000) to be a total of forty thousand dollars (\$40,000), and for the position to include 10 days of paid time off and to raise and appropriate the sum of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) for this purpose.

The Selectmen do not recommend this appropriation 2-0. The Budget Committee does not recommend this appropriation 7-0. (Majority vote required).

Leon Holmes Sr moved the Article, Gene Cordes seconded.

Nicole Cloutier, Town Clerk Tax Collector referenced an orange handout citing the Town Clerk Tax Collector's job description. She gave a history of the position and salary changes from 2008 to present. She pointed out that in 2008 the salary was very close to what it is currently and that was for only the Town Clerk position (not including Tax Collector). She explained why she is asking for a raise. She is the first elected official to do both jobs. The current salary is \$35,000, similar to the 2008 salary for the Town Clerk position. She cited a typical work week ranged from 23-25 hours a week, however there are many times a year that she works 35+ hours to get the job done. This job is not mandated hourly, only requires whatever amount of time it takes to perform the job.

Some weeks are more hours, for example when taxes are due and during election weeks. She cited that there are 2 months of tax intake per year and there will be 4 elections this year. All of which will require around 35+ hours a week. She showed graphs on the difference in the Town Clerk job since 2008 when the salary was very close to now, showing the percentage increases in different services (motor vehicles, dog license, tax collections, etc). She also showed a salary survey that was sent out to all Town Clerks in the State, showing any town under a 5,500 population in comparison to Fremont at 4,400. This survey showed that she is underpaid as related to the other towns. She cited that benefits would be a much greater asset to her family, however benefits would be more expensive to the Town, approximately \$23,000 per year and thought that the wage increase would be a better idea for the Town. She then referred to a comparison of hours open from past years of previous Fremont Town Clerks, showing that her hours open are very comparable and that working less hours per week is not indicative that the office is open less. It is open almost the same amount of hours previous to now, and she is actually open more hours compared to some years. She attributed the less work hours to moving a lot, working faster if she is working less; streamlining processes and doing them as efficiently as possible.

Dennis Acton wanted to know why the Budget Committee and selectmen do not agree with the salary increase. Mary Anderson of the Budget Committee replied that the hours worked are not plentiful and that this is equivalent to an \$80,000 annual salary. Gene Cordes of the Selectmen also stated that the focus is on hours worked. The Selectmen also feel strongly that voters need to make these decisions.

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

Moderator Rydeen read aloud Article 13.

ARTICLE 13: To see if the Town will vote to establish an expendable trust fund under the provisions of RSA 31:19-a, to be known as the Fremont Police Department DARE Expendable Trust Fund for the purpose of funding the annual DARE (Drug Awareness Resistance Education) Program and to raise and appropriate the sum of three thousand dollars (\$3,000) to be placed in this fund and further to name the Board of Selectmen as agents to expend, upon recommendation of the Police Chief.

The Selectmen recommend this appropriation 3-0. The Budget Committee recommends this appropriation 7-0. (Majority vote required).

Leon Holmes Sr moved Article 13. Gene Cordes seconded.

Police Chief Jon Twiss stated that the Dare Program is a great program, geared toward fifth graders and cited its benefits to the children. He said Fremont Officer Huard teaches DARE, and the curriculum and textbooks are provided, but this will give the program some extra perks like a special graduation. The Moderator announced Article 13 will go on the ballot as presented.

Neal Janvrin moved to restrict reconsideration of Articles 10 through 13. Gene Cordes seconded. The voice vote was approved.

Moderator Rydeen read aloud Article 14.

ARTICLE 14: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of forty-nine thousand five hundred fifty dollars (\$49,550) to continue the Public Health Mosquito Control Program.

The Selectmen recommend this appropriation 3-0. The Budget Committee recommends this appropriation 7-0. (Majority vote required).

Gene Cordes motioned, Neal Janvrin seconded.

Heidi Carlson explained that this program is mostly related to treatment of larvae in wetland areas as well as identification of additional wetland areas. There is an allowance for emergency spraying at the Memorial Ballfields, Library, and Ellis School in the event that there are positive mosquito tests nearing the end of the season, usually around Labor Day. This is the 8th year of this program.

Dennis Keane asked if there are any metrics to measure success of this program. Heidi Carlson replied that there is not a lot of good data and that the State has reduced funding for testing, as well as beginning testing later in the season, currently around July 1. Testing is done and funded by the State would pay for.

Gene Cordes asked if there have been any cases of EEE in Fremont. Heidi Carlson replied that she thinks we've had one case in a neighboring town. Michael Rydeen stated that there have been cases in surrounding towns.

Don Miller asked if the Town is still considered 70% wetlands. No one specifically had the percentage of wetland area in Fremont. Heidi Carlson replied that the species of mosquitoes are also changing. She also added that we have talked about contracting with the Company to spray at times when it is convenient for the public like outdoor activities and events.

The Moderator announced Article 14 will go on the ballot as presented.

Moderator Rydeen read aloud Article 15.

ARTICLE 15: Shall the Town vote to establish a recreation revolving fund pursuant to RSA 35-B:2, II for the purpose of funding improvements to Fremont Parks and playing fields. All fees and charges received from special programs and events sponsored by the Parks & Recreation Commission will be deposited into the fund and the money in the fund shall be allowed to accumulate from year to year, and shall not be considered part of the Town's general fund unreserved fund balance. The Town Treasurer shall have custody of all moneys in the fund, and shall pay out the same only upon order of the Board of Selectmen upon recommendation of the Parks & Recreation Commission and no further approval is required by the legislative body to expend. Said funds may be expended for the purpose of funding improvements at the

fields and parks in Fremont, and to raise and appropriate the sum of up to one thousand dollars (\$1,000) to be deposited into this fund and further to authorize this amount from the unreserved fund balance (surplus). The name of the Revolving Fund will be the Parks & Recreation Improvement Revolving Fund.

The Selectmen recommend this appropriation 3-0. The Budget Committee recommends this appropriation 6-1. (Majority vote required).

Gene Cordes motioned, Mary Anderson seconded.

Heidi Carlson explained that this is being proposed to establish a fund to save for future needs, using the fees from user-fee based programs such as the Pumpkin Fund Run/Walk held last October. The Town would collect a registration fee, pay any associated invoices from the fund, and the balance could accumulate and be used toward a future park improvement without impact to taxpayers. Nicole Cloutier further explained that the goal of Parks & Recreation was to save enough money to build a future pavilion for use by the Parks and Recreation Commission, as well as PTA on field day and FAA for tournaments etc.

Heidi Carlson explained that we have \$1,000 to appropriate from Unreserved Fund Balance, which was revenue in excess of expenses in 2015 for the Pumpkin Run.

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

Moderator Rydeen read aloud Article 16.

ARTICLE 16: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) to be placed in the Fire Truck Capital Reserve Fund.

The Selectmen recommend this appropriation 3-0. The Budget Committee recommends this appropriation 7-0. (Majority vote required).

Neil Janvrin motioned, Gene Cordes seconded.

Gene Cordes stated that the intent of this is to set money aside for a future fire truck.

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

Moderator Rydeen read aloud Article 17.

ARTICLE 17: 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 Renovation Capital Reserve Fund.

The Selectmen recommend this appropriation 3-0. The Budget Committee recommends this appropriation 7-0. (Majority vote required).

Gene Cordes moved the Article Neal Janvrin seconded.

Gene Cordes explained that this fund is for putting money aside to add on to the museum to be able to shelter historic items such as the horse drawn hearse and fire pumper that are in the Town's possession.

The Moderator announced Article 17 will go on the ballot as presented.

Moderator Rydeen read aloud Article 18.

ARTICLE 18: To see if the Town will vote to designate as Town Forests, in accordance with NH RSA 31:110, the following parcel of land: Beede Spaulding Conservation Land Map 3 Lot 56.

The Selectmen recommend this appropriation 2-0. The Budget Committee recommends this appropriation 7-0. (Majority vote required).

Leon Holmes Sr motioned, Gene Cordes seconded.

Bill Knee explained that this purpose is to move land from property owned by the town to a legal status of town forest. This comes down to the management of the parcel land. Currently town forests are co-managed. This will have no tax impact or tax break.

The Moderator announced Article 18 will go on the ballot as presented.

Moderator Rydeen urged people to get out and talk to their neighbors about Warrant Articles, and to be sure that everyone votes on Tuesday March 8, 2016.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:23 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole Cloutier
Town Clerk

Moderator Michael Rydeen speaking
at the Town's 2016 Deliberative Session
Ellis School Gymnasium
02 February 2016

Photo courtesy of
Heidi Carlson

