

Report of the Select Board

The year 2022 is notable in that as a community we were able to again have Town events, the first uninterrupted year since the pre-Covid days of 2019. Events included the Memorial Day Parade, Veterans' Day observance and Wreaths Across America event in December. These events honor our past and current military service members. As a community we are thankful to all who put themselves in harm's way to protect our freedom, safety, and health. This includes our Police and Fire / Rescue Departments.

In 2022 the resumption of activities and events led by the Parks & Recreation Commission and community groups such as the FAA, Friends of the Fremont Library, scouting groups, Fremont Public Library programming and the knitters, quilters and others, have all lead to a return to a feeling of normalcy and a stronger sense of community.



In March, Roger Barham was re-elected to the Select Board for a three-year term. The current Select Board members have worked well together for seven years, are very dedicated and collectively have many years of experience in Town Official capacities.

Accomplishments in 2022 include:

- We continued to cope with the effects of the COVID pandemic, but we became more accustomed to what is necessary to go about our lives with some risk avoidance and because of the availability of vaccines and information from health officials it was less threatening.
- Our Town Moderator, Mike Rydeen successfully planned and guided us through a Town Meeting vote process, a September State Primary Election, and a November General Election with significant voter turnout. The Moderator has kept Town Officials informed of latest changes and requirements in the meeting and voting processes.
- Under the leadership of the Road Agent, Leon Holmes Jr, overlays to Ann Lane, Deer Run, Hooke Road, Kelsey Drive and Kirstens Landing were complete. This finalized work done in the previous two years with a final course of pavement. Additionally, 5,900 feet of reconstruction work was undertaken on Whittier Drive. This will nearly finish up with the two miles of reconstruction of Whitter. We are most appreciative to the Road Agent, highway workers and the highway winter maintenance contractors for their diligence in keeping our roads open and safe as quickly as possible. They work under difficult conditions.

- Our Fire Rescue Department continues to recruit, train, and develop its members to offer critical services to the Fremont community. In the past year the Select Board worked with Fire Rescue officers to monitor the signups for the paid on-call shifts and the Department's response to various types of calls for service. We continue to study this carefully as the community grows and requests for service increase. We are currently providing on-call EMS coverage with Fremont staff for most evenings and weekends.
- During 2022 the Fire Rescue Department reviewed its communication within Fremont and evaluated its dispatch services. In December Fremont Fire Rescue Department migrated to the Rockingham County dispatch services. We thank Chief Butler and the other officers for their continued commitment and leadership. We also thank Raymond Dispatch for their many years of service to Fremont providing dispatch services.
- Despite the retirement of a long-time officer, our Police Department was quickly able to fill that vacancy. We are grateful for Chief Twiss's steady leadership during what has been a period of staffing shortage and turnover. We continue to work with Chief Twiss on expanding our capabilities and additional staffing to meet the demands of current calls for service.
- Fremont Community Television's (FCTV's) capacity and role within the community continues to be strong and evolving. The FCTV Committee continues to provide a strong commitment and vision for FCTV's role in Fremont and the Select Board is thankful for their large contribution.
- The Land Use Office continued to see development projects, but still managed to focus on longer-term planning projects to include Master Plan updates and working on newly required Storm Water Management processes.
- A term we became familiar with in 2022 was "supply chain issues." Replacement police cruisers that were ordered after the 2022 Town Meeting have not been received and are not expected until the spring of 2023 or beyond. We are beginning to see some increasingly costly repairs of these vehicles which are used 24/7 by our officers.
- Similarly, the replacement dump truck whose lease purchase was approved at the 2022 Town Meeting, was ordered last spring and has not been received by the Highway Department at the time of this writing. It is now anticipated to be received in the spring of 2023. Thankfully there have not been any recent major repairs on the current highway vehicles.
- The second cache of ARPA funding was received in the fall. We committed some of these funds to a replacement speed monitoring sign for the Police Department and a replacement EMS vehicle for the Fire Rescue Department. We also engaged engineering firm Keach-Nordstrom Associates (KNA) to do a 10-year road study to evaluate and help us plan and budget in the coming years. We have committed some of these funds to



pay for the balance of the HVAC replacement work at the Fremont Public Library. A report of the funds to date appears elsewhere in this report.

- We continued to work with the Library Trustees and the Librarian on the HVAC replacement at the Fremont Public Library. Work was nearly complete at year end and is functioning to supply heat to the building.
- We have continued to work with the Highway Department and the Town's consulting engineer on the Martin Road Bridge replacement. At year end the NH DES was reviewing the final design and we anticipate that work to get underway in the spring for the replacement. The Road Agent is also planning to do significant reconstruction of the roadway in coordination with bridge work. The Town received two "bonus" payments in 2022 for highway and bridge work that will be directed to work on Martin Road and the Martin Road Bridge. This will expand what we are able to do for highway and bridge work in the next year or two.
- We thank the voters for their support of a full-time maintenance position, which was recruited and hired in June. A part-time supervisor position is still being recruited.

Year end 2022 encumbrances included:

- Reconstruction of 133 feet of wall in Leavitt Cemetery
- Replacement of the router for the Police and Fire Rescue Department network
- Allowance for use of the unexpended funds (to be voted on the 2023 Town Meeting Warrant) to fund the Computer and Library Maintenance Expendable Trust Funds (\$14,000); and a portion of the cost of the proposed new Fire Tank truck (\$100,000)
- Balance of the Library HVAC contract
- Paving retainage due in 2023 on 2022 paving work
- Repointing the foundation walls at the Historic Museum
- Partial payment of equipment for the new cruisers
- HVAC service at the Safety Complex

On the 2023 Town meeting there are Articles we would like to bring to your attention to include some additional information for your consideration:

- Article 5 includes 5% wage adjustments for Town Staff to try and keep up with the rate of inflation and the fact that Fremont is traditionally behind other municipalities in terms of competitive wages. We are attacking a few positions a year with larger adjustments to keep the Town in a competitive position and track those who have been with the Town and hold on to their institutional knowledge.
- Article 6 authorizes the purchase of a new Fire Tank Truck. It is proposed to be completely funded from monies already on hand, with no new tax impact. The full cost of the truck is \$505,000. The Warrant Article asks to raise and appropriate \$405,000 which will be funded from the existing Fire Truck Capital Reserve Fund (CRF) (\$305,000) and \$100,000 from the Unassigned Fund Balance (as above in the encumbrance list). The final \$100,000 cost of the truck will come from existing ARPA funds and does not need to be re-appropriated in the Warrant Article. All ARPA funds are to be handled as unanticipated revenue and were the subject of two Public Hearings (one each in 2021

and 2022). We apologize for the complexity of these Articles but have written them at the direction of the NH DRA, who watches over all Town appropriations.

- Articles 10 and 11 appropriate funds to the Computer and Library Maintenance ETF (as above in the encumbrance list) which will not be raised by new tax appropriations. The funds will be transferred from the 2022 Unassigned Fund Balance (meaning unexpended appropriations or additional revenues in 2022).
- Article 9 seeks funding for a seventh full-time Police Officer. This would bring Fremont closer to recommended staffing levels for this size community. It would likely bring more time for an officer to be able to be in our school as well.
- Articles 19 & 20 must be passed in order that all current Veterans can maintain their credit status. The Legislature expanded the eligibility to include more potential Veterans, but re adoption of the full statute is necessary to enable currently approved Veterans to maintain their status.

We formed a Study Committee in the Fall of 2022 to look at the Town's needs for a part-time Finance Administrator position. They are researching towns similar to Fremont and working on a job description. We expect work to continue in the spring with a plan before the next budget cycle.



Wreaths Across America Ceremony
17 December 2022

In summary the Select Board wishes to express appreciation to the voters / taxpayers for the Budget and Warrant Article approval that occurred at the 2022 Town Meeting. We have seen many accomplishments from that funding. The Select Board is most appreciative of the

Town's employees, Department Heads, Elected and Appointed Officials and the ever-present volunteers. Without all of you we could not make municipal government work.

The Select Board is pleased to have the opportunity to serve the Fremont community and we look forward to working with everyone again in 2023.

Respectfully submitted,

Gene Cordes, Chair
Fremont Select Board

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Roger A Barham

Photos courtesy of Michelle Gallant and Bill Millios