

Town of Fremont 2022 Deliberative Session Minutes

Town Moderator Michael Rydeen called the first session of the 2022 Deliberative Session to order at 11:30 am in the gym at Ellis School. He spoke of the meeting agenda and reviewed Rules of Procedure which were adopted. Chairs were set up for social distancing. A virtual connection to a modular on site was established and available. All rose for the Pledge of Allegiance. The Select Board and Budget Committee introduced themselves to the audience. Seated were Town Administrator Heidi Carlson; Select Board members Gene Cordes, Roger Barham and Neal Janvrin; Budget Committee members Chair Mary Jo Holmes, Vice Chair Pat Martel, Gordon Muench, Jon Benson, Joshua Yokela; Town Attorney Diane Gorrow, Moderator Michael Rydeen and Assistant Moderator Jamie Thompson. There were 31 voters registered for the meeting with the Supervisors of Checklist. Greg and Ian Fraize were camera operators in the meeting room for FCTV and Bill Millios was at the Town Hall in the Control Room for the live broadcast capability. This meeting is live broadcast on FCTV and livestreaming on YouTube.

Select Board Chair Gene Cordes presented the 2021 State of the Town summary. He spoke of the Town's accomplishments and goals and referenced our experiences and challenges in 2021 with Covid-19. This summary of 2021 accomplishments includes:

We continued to cope with the effects of the COVID pandemic, focusing on being available to carry on the Town's operations. Special thanks to our Police, Fire and Rescue and Highway Departments. Our Emergency Management Director and Health Officer have been available and offered steady guidance. The Library has kept their operations available as much as possible and recreational use of the park was able to occur. We wish to thank town officials and employees and the ever-present volunteers for their commitment and flexibility throughout the year.

At the 2021 Town Meeting an additional full time police officer was approved. With leadership of our Police Chief the department navigated through resignations and was able to recruit to fill the vacancies and the added position. At year end all positions were filled and all officers were trained and able to work a schedule.

Our Fire / Rescue Department continued to offer paid on-call for nights and weekends EMS services and paid hourly compensation for department members contribution to the department. This is an initiative that began a couple of years ago in order to enhance availability and aid in recruitment.

With the recommendation of the Budget Committee the funds for road improvements were within the Highway Department 2021 operating budget. In the past the use of specific warrant articles was often used for the funding approval of specified road improvements. Through the leadership of the Road Agent the planned road improvements occurred on time and within the budget.

Using franchise subscriber fees, the FCTV committee continues to evolve the capacity of FCTV. A few individuals are making a big difference in what can be available in our community.

Through the vision of our Library Trustees and our Librarian, our Library is continuing to evolve what they are able to offer and their larger presence in our community.

Our youth continue to be engaged through programming being offered through the FAA and other youth groups. The opportunity for our youth to be engaged in structured activities and developing good relationships is the strength of our community.

Town of Fremont 2022 Deliberative Session Minutes

The donors to the Fremont Food Pantry and the Food Pantry volunteers continued to provide a needed resource to those in need. They are making a significant contribution to those that need the assistance.

The Town continued to implement a vehicle weight limit ordinance on Shirkin and Rogers Roads.

The 20-year bond for the Fremont Public Library was paid off!

Goals for 2022 Include: Have the funding in our budget to be able to provide pay raises to town employees; successfully recruit for a facility maintenance personnel to take care of the Town's buildings and grounds; continue with the evaluation and planning to address the Library HVAC equipment replacement needs; continue to address needed road repairs and improvements as planned by the Road Agent; obtain Town Meeting approval to enter into a lease purchase agreement for a new 6-wheel dump truck to replace the existing 2002 dump truck; return to having our traditional Town events again.

The Board would like to express our appreciation to all the Town Officials, Employees and Volunteers for their leadership, commitment and hard work. The Board also would like to thank the voters for the opportunity to serve Fremont.

Cordes then cited history that back in 1991 in the Town Report annual recognition began, acknowledging individuals who stepped up for the Town. The Board's Appreciation in the 2021 Annual Report is Moderator Michael Rydeen.

Moderator Rydeen went over the meeting Rules of Order and began with the Warrant Articles.

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

Budget Committee: 2 for 3 years

Steven Bonaccorsi
Mary J Holmes

Cemetery Trustee: 1 for 3 years

No Candidates Declared

Library Trustee: 1 for 3 years

Arlene Nuzzi

Cemetery Trustee: 1 for 2 years

No Candidates Declared

Moderator: 1 for 2 years

Michael Rydeen

Treasurer: 1 for 3 years

Rachel Edwards

Select Board Member: 1 for 3 years

Roger A Barham
Brett A Hunter

Trustee of Trust Funds: 1 for 3 years

Patricia J Martel

Supervisor of Checklist: 1 for 6 years

Dennis Buteau
Shawn Perreault

After Rydeen read all of the Town Candidates aloud, Gene Cordes made a motion to move Article 2 & 3 to the end of the meeting, seconded by Janvrin. Motion passed. Moderator Rydeen tabled Zoning Articles 2 and 3 for later discussion with no objections. (They were discussed out of order but noted

Town of Fremont 2022 Deliberative Session Minutes

here in Warrant order). Each Warrant Article was read aloud or the purpose summarized, to begin each being discussed.

ARTICLE 2: Are you in favor of the proposed amendment to Article 11 submitted by the Fremont Planning Board for the Fremont Zoning Ordinance as follows:

Existing language

New language

~~Existing language to be removed~~

ARTICLE 11 – DWELLING UNITS, ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS AND HOME OCCUPATION Section 1101 – Dwelling Unit Requirements

1101.6 All multiple unit dwellings shall conform to and shall not exceed the following limitations:

Number of Family Units	Number of Bedrooms/Family Unit
7 - 8	One
5 - 6 <u>or more</u>	Two
3 - 4	Three
2	Four

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

Barham moved Article 2 for discussion, seconded by Janvrin. Rydeen turned it over to Planning Board Vice Chair Andy Kohlhofer to explain the changes. He stated the reason for the change is that no one wants to buy a one bedroom unit. This makes more sense and will make the units easier to sell.

ARTICLE 3: Are you in favor of the proposed amendment to Article 9 submitted by the Fremont Planning Board for the Fremont Zoning Ordinance as follows:

Existing language

New language

~~Existing language to be removed~~

ARTICLE 9 – LOT REQUIREMENTS Section 902 – Frontage

Every building lot shall have a minimum contiguous lot frontage on Federal, State and Town highways of two hundred (200) feet provided that where lots are located on exterior side of a curving street the minimum road frontage shall be no less than one hundred (100) contiguous feet, provided that the average width of the lot measured across its center shall be two hundred (200) feet. Building lots on which multiple family dwellings are located shall have an additional frontage of twenty (20) feet per family unit when less than five (5) family units and forty (40) feet per family unit when five (5) or more family units are considered. ~~i.e.: (two hundred (200) plus twenty (20) multiplied by the number of family units) or (two hundred (200) plus forty (40) multiplied by the number of family units).~~ No lot line shall be less than one hundred (100) feet and each lot shall have no less than four (4) lot lines. **The Planning Board recommends this article 5-0.** (Majority vote required).

Barham moved Article 3. Janvrin seconded. Kohlhofer explained that the way the original Article was written it didn't make sense, this change is to clarify the original Zoning Article.

Articles 2 and 3 cannot be amended and will go on the ballot as posted.

Town of Fremont 2022 Deliberative Session Minutes

ARTICLE 4: 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 \$3,834,661? Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be \$3,745,534 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 6-1.** (Majority vote required)

Mary Jo Holmes moved Article 4. Yokela seconded. Carlson spoke to the budget highlighting major areas of change. She stated both the Select Board and Budget Committee spent the past five months reviewing the budgets. There were a couple of things that make up most of the changes. There is a 2% wage increase for town employees, the new police officer is now included in the budget for a full year. There is a full-time maintenance position for a partial year, and some other positional adjustments to get wages closer to market rates. There are maintenance items at the Library. Although the bond is paid off, the building is now 20 years old and equipment is aging out.

Jamie Thompson (90 Red Brook Road) asked about the annual cost of the library bond. Carlson stated the most recent payment was approximately \$50,000 annually. The payments changed over the years with interest higher at the beginning of the note. As the years go, less goes to interest. The principal payments were consistent throughout at between \$45,000 and \$50,000 annually.

Kohlhofer (848 Main Street) stated the raise wages that is in the budget, this makes life harder on the taxpayers that may not have it. Even though the bonds are gone, the money is still being spent and he doesn't feel it's a responsible budget.

As discussion ended, the Moderator stated Article 4 will go on the ballot as written.

ARTICLE 5: 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 Select Board recommends this appropriation 3-0. The Budget Committee recommends this appropriation 6-2.** (Majority vote required).

Rydeen read the Warrant Article. Barham moved Article 5, seconded by Janvrin. The Fire Chief stated that they are looking to replace the 1988 tanker truck next. A new tanker is going to run between \$500,000 to \$600,000. This fund helps save for replacement trucks. Even if the full amount isn't in the fund, the money allows them to help lessen the impact on the Town the year the equipment is purchased. The Chief is asking the voters to please support this Article.

Kohlhofer wanted to remind voters that these articles were on the ballot last year. So, if this Article passes again this year, it won't be an increase to the tax rate, because it was there last year.

Yokela (16 Tibbetts Road) stated the reason he voted no on this article was because he doesn't feel this puts enough into the reserve fund to achieve what we are looking. If \$50,000 is put in each year, there is still a huge cost to the town because the replacement cost of these vehicles is so much. He feels there needs to be more. The current balance is \$256,000. Carlson stated that if we were putting

Town of Fremont 2022 Deliberative Session Minutes

\$100,000 in every year, we'd be closer, but there were years this article didn't pass. So, this seemed to be what taxpayers felt could be added each year. The current tanker is over 30 years old. The current NFPA recommendation is 20 years on equipment. There will be a hit when we order the truck, but anything that offsets it is better than nothing.

Jane Pellegrini (39 Kelsey Drive) asked if the article is defeated, would the "blip" we pay at the time a truck was purchased be larger? Carlson confirmed it would.

With no further discussion the Moderator stated Article 5 would go on the ballot as written.

ARTICLE 6: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) 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 7-1.** (Majority vote required).

Barham moved the Article, Janvrin seconded. Carlson stated this is similar to the Fire Truck Fund. The Town needs to be able to take care of the bridges. There are currently two red listed bridges, Martin Road and Scribner Road. This summer and fall they were able to get the State to approve the engineering on Martin Road. The State will reimburse 80% of the cost. Changes in the wetland and other rules and regulations have forced the Town to redo things since work on this project began in 2014. The Town currently has an engineering contract for \$147,000 to get through to bid documents and put the project out to bid. The additional appropriation is to provide the Town the cash flow needed to finish step one and then be able to request the reimbursement back from the State. If we don't get the project through this first phase soon, we may lose our chance to be on the funding list and will have to pay for the entire project. There was further discussion on the amounts, reimbursement from the State and how the Town will fund it.

Holmes asked if the money is not there, would the bridge and road access be shut down by the State? Carlson stated there is a chance the State could shut it down as happened with the Sandown Road Overflow Bridge, but it is unknown.

With no further discussion the Moderator stated Article 6 would go on the ballot as written.

ARTICLE 7: 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 7-1.** (Majority vote required).

Barham moved the Article, seconded by Janvrin. Carlson stated this fund is to save for the cost of replacement servers. There is \$12,000 in the account now. In approximately two years, the next server would be replaced. There would another one the following year.

With no further discussion the Moderator stated Article 7 would go on the ballot as written.

Cordes made a motion to restrict reconsideration of Articles 4,5,6 & 7. Janvrin seconded. The motion to restrict reconsideration passed.

Town of Fremont 2022 Deliberative Session Minutes

ARTICLE 8: 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 6-1.** (Majority vote required).

Barham moved Article 8, seconded by Janvrin. Carlson stated there is \$47,000 currently in the account. The next big project is the HVAC system. They used under spent money from 2021 to contract with a mechanical engineering firm to design a new system that will run between \$80,000 and \$100,000 to install. This is a savings account to fund Library Maintenance.

With no further discussion the Moderator stated Article 8 would go on the ballot as written.

ARTICLE 9: To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to enter into a five-year lease agreement for \$151,798 for the purchase of a new six-wheel dump truck and equipment for the Highway Department and to raise and appropriate the sum of thirty-two thousand fifty-four dollars (\$32,054) for the first year's payment for that purpose. This lease agreement contains an escape clause. **The Select Board recommends this appropriation 3-0. The Budget Committee recommends this appropriation 7-0-1.** (Majority vote required).

Barham moved the Article, Janvrin seconded. Carlson stated in Leon's Town report, he gave the Town an overview of their three major pieces of equipment (one-ton and six-wheel trucks and a backhoe). The current dump truck was bought used and it is in need of replacement. This is a flat cost to buy the truck with a dealer trade-in value. The Town may consider selling it outright if that would further reduce the overall cost. The four remaining lease payments would be added to the Town operating budget.

Holmes asked Carlson to explain the escape clause. Carlson stated that if next years budget didn't pass and the money for the truck's lease could not be found within the operating budget elsewhere, the escape clause allows the Town to give the truck back and terminate the lease.

Kohlhofer stated that it appears it would only be a \$7,000 increase, referring to the previous year appropriation to the Highway Equipment Capital Reserve Fund. Carlson explained that Leon didn't request money for the Capital Reserve Fund in order to fund this truck lease. If the current truck can be sold for more than the trade in value, the Town would do that and use that money as a down payment.

With no further discussion the Moderator stated Article 9 would go on the ballot as written.

ARTICLE 10: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of thirty-five thousand dollars (\$35,000) to continue the Public Health Mosquito Control Program. **The Select Board recommends this appropriation 3-0. The Budget Committee recommends this appropriation 6-2.** (Majority vote required).

Barham moved the Article, Janvrin seconded. Carlson stated this is the same program that has been here since 2008. The company was able to lower their cost. This is not Town wide spraying, primarily larval treatment in wetlands.

With no further discussion the Moderator stated Article 10 would go on the ballot as written.

Town of Fremont 2022 Deliberative Session Minutes

ARTICLE 11: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of four thousand seven hundred fifty dollars (\$4,750) to support a new social service agency, the So Rock Coalition for Healthy Youth. If approved, this agency would be included in future operating and default budgets. **The Select Board recommend this appropriation 3-0. The Budget Committee recommends this appropriation 5-2.** (Majority vote required).

Barham moved the Article, seconded by Janvrin. Angela O'Connell (63 Gristmill Road) encouraged people to really look at this organization. They have done a ton of work for students and families. This only failed by a few votes last year. Fremont has been receiving benefits already, even though it was voted down.

So Rock Director Tim Lena stated they have been involved in the Sanborn, Timberlane, and Hampstead regions for years. Just in 2021, under COVID, they still managed to offer a number of programs to help parents and kids. They would love the Town's support.

Greg Fraize (46 Midnight Sun Drive) urged the Town to support this organization and gave an example of a program they put on. He feels they are a wonderful support to parents and kids.

With no further discussion the Moderator stated Article 11 would go on the ballot as written.

Cordes made a motion to restrict reconsideration on Articles 8, 9, 10 & 11. Janvrin seconded. The motion to restrict reconsideration passed.

ARTICLE 12: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) to support a new social service agency, Family Promise of Southern NH. If approved, this agency would be included in future operating and default budgets. **The Select Board recommends this appropriation 3-0. The Budget Committee recommends this appropriation 5-2.** (Majority vote required).

Barham moved Article 12, seconded by Janvrin. There was no discussion. The Moderator stated Article 12 would go on the ballot as written.

ARTICLE 13: To see if the Town will authorize an increase in the Town Clerk Tax Collector's annual salary by seven hundred forty-three dollars (\$743) to be a total of thirty-seven thousand eight hundred eighty-six dollars (\$37,886); and further to raise and appropriate the sum of seven hundred forty-three dollars (\$743) for this purpose. **The Select Board recommends this appropriation 3-0. The Budget Committee recommends this appropriation 6-1.** (Majority vote required).

Barham moved the Article, seconded by Janvrin. Holmes stated the reason this is on the ballot is due to it being an elected position. Yokela clarified that it is the Town's policy that elected positions will be the amount elected at unless the voters choose otherwise.

With no further discussion, the Moderator stated Article 13 would go on the ballot as written.

ARTICLE 14: To see if the Town will vote to designate as Town Forest, in accordance with NH RSA 31:110, the following parcel of land: 04-017. **The Select Board recommends this article 3-0. The Conservation Commission recommends this article 5-0. The Budget Committee recommends this article 6-1.** (Majority vote required).

Town of Fremont 2022 Deliberative Session Minutes

Barham moved the Article, seconded by Janvrin. Kohlhofer expressed concern that over 11% of the Town property is held in conservation. He feels we should move out of conservation and allow the Town to be built up.

Carlson stated this is to add a small piece of land the Town already owns and is 90% wetland to the current Town Forest. This is to connect existing trails. These two pieces of property are not buildable lots and have a very low taxable value.

With no further discussion, the Moderator stated Article 14 would go on the ballot as written.

ARTICLE 15: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) to be placed in the Historic Museum Capital Reserve Fund. **The Select Board recommends this appropriation 3-0. The Budget Committee recommends this appropriation 5-2.** (Majority vote required).

Barham moved the Article, seconded by Janvrin. Town Historian Matthew Thomas stated the purpose of the Article is to be able to save money and build a three-bay garage addition to the Museum. This building would be used to house important town historical equipment, such as the old fire pumper truck. There are a number of items that could and should be displayed. It would also free up space in other buildings that are currently storing these items.

Kohlhofer asked if there were plans for this, and does it meet all the set back requirements. Thomas stated because the addition would be the same size as the current building, it does meet the requirements. There is not a formal design yet. The anticipated cost would be about \$40,000.

The Moderator stated Article 15 would go on the ballot as written.

Cordes made a motion to restrict reconsideration on articles 12, 13, 14 & 15. Janvrin seconded and the motion to restrict reconsideration passed.

ARTICLE 16: By Petition: To see if the town will vote to ban the use of voting machines in local, state and federal elections. **The Select Board does not recommend this article 3-0. The Budget Committee does not recommend this article 6-1.** (Majority vote required).

Holmes moved the Article, seconded by Yokela. The petitioner was not present. Rydeen stated the petitioner did come to speak to the Budget Committee and his biggest concern was the machine's ability to be tampered with. Rydeen noted that 20% of the voters that signed this petition have not voted in any Town elections. Rydeen explained that our machine has no external ports, no WiFi and never leaves Fremont. The memory card does get shipped out, but the card only included the ballot position and has a log that must be signed by anyone that touches it. He doesn't recommend this.

Thompson stated having helped out in the last year, he has seen how everything is done very above board. There are very limited places for fraud to happen. If this passes it would be an additional cost to the Town. We don't have a lot of volunteers or paid staff and if this passes, each election would require even more people to be hired.

Town of Fremont 2022 Deliberative Session Minutes

Holmes would like to encourage people to vote against it. Going back to hand counting would be a bad idea. There is a lot of places that the public can come in and view the process. There are many precautions taken to make sure the election results are protected.

Rydeen confirmed that every year there is a legal election process that must be followed. He explained the testing and voting process. When there has been a recount, it has never gone the other way. Milford still does hand counting. They have 9 to 10 fresh people come in to count ballots after voting closes and they are there for 3 hours. More hand counts would cause more errors.

Carlson stated that the testing is generally filmed on FCTV. She explained the testing process as well. The machine is under lock and key of the Town Clerk or Moderator at all times and it is kept behind a locked and alarmed door in the Town Clerk's Office. The bag that the machine is housed in has a numbered lock that has to be signed and witnessed every time it is opened. It's about \$5,000 on average for personnel costs of elections. In November 2020 we had 2,600 ballots, to have to count those by hand would be extremely time-consuming. The machine is the best process, there is also no person trying to determine "what did they mean?" She encouraged anyone who wants to help at elections to reach out to her, the Clerk or the Moderator.

With no further discussion, the Moderator stated Article 16 would go on the ballot as written.

Cordes made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Janvrin. Meeting was adjourned at 12:54 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Shawn Perreault
Recording Secretary