

**FREMONT SCHOOL DISTRICT
School Board Meeting
February 6, 2010
10:00 A.M.**

**School Administrative Unit #83
Blackrocks Village
5 Hall Road, Unit 1
Fremont, NH 03044**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Jeff Rowell called the February 6, 2010 meeting of the Fremont School Board to order at 10:10 AM at the Ellis School Library, 432 Main Street, Fremont, NH 03044.

II. ROLL CALL

Present were School Board Chairman Jeff Rowell, Vice Chairwoman Peg Pinkham, Deb Genthner, Sharon Girardi, Ida Keane, Elementary Principal Dawn Lewis, Middle School Principal John Safina, and Superintendent Bill Lander.

Members of the public: Lisa Fiorvante and Melissa McKeon.

III. BUDGET REVIEW

Ms. Pinkham had distributed the latest Budget Committee recommendations via email.

Ms. Pinkham asked for any update on tuition. Mr. Lander said that the Sanborn Business Administrator sent the forms she uses to calculate tuition. He said changes would have to be voted on. She asked if individual tuition rate included Special Education cost and Mr. Lander said yes, that there is a cost above and beyond the per pupil cost. Mr. Lander's understanding was that both voters of Sanborn and Fremont agreed upon the formula. Ms. Pinkham said that they were not told that the extra Special Education cost was part of the regular tuition calculation.

Ms. Keane asked if Fremont gets IDEA reimbursement for high school Special Education students. Ms. Lewis said Fremont would if the catastrophic aid cap was met.

Ida Keane made a motion to accept changes that are recommended for the current operating budget. Sharon Girardi seconded the motion.

Discussion.

Ms. Keane's concern while working on the budget was to try not to cut the two new teaching positions. She was careful to stay within the bounds of being a Board member. She wanted to be able to explain the budget to taxpayers.

Ms. Genthner's had a concern that Ms. Keane looked into Special Education while the Budget Committee did not. For example, Ms. Genthner said there are 10 out of district placements and a

request for money for an 11th because there might be a need for it next year. She said that if it were not budgeted, money would have to come out of regular education. Ms. Keane explained that she asked for backup on the number that was requested from the administration. She looked at the lists and the actual costs (not the estimates). Ms. Genthner said that things could happen and children might need extra services. Ms. Keane said she left money in there.

Ms. Pinkham said that the budgetary process begins in late September. In the course of a year, children come in and out of the school with different needs. She said that administrators take a snapshot originally but it changes during the year. She thanked Ms. Keane for her work on the budget. Ms. Pinkham's concern is that in the past, they've come in too lean and if they need to be expended, it comes from regular education. Ms. Pinkham had a concern about line items being consistently under spent.

Ms. Keane said that she didn't turn numbers back to less than what the District was spending. She was hoping to get answers to questions she had tonight.

Mr. Safina said that when he and Ms. Lewis went through the supply budget, they tried not to reduce items for students. Ms. Keane felt that Fremont overspends on supplies, as compared to Districts like Chester who has more students but spends less on supplies.

Mr. Safina said that Ellis does not have a reading program with textbooks. A lot of supplies that teachers are buying through that line item are part curriculum materials. He said that another District who has a reading program might purchase texts through a different line item. Ms. Keane said that there was a curriculum test materials line and a workbook test materials line that are completely funded. Ms. Keane said she looked at cost classification sheets to compare Fremont and Chester Districts. Ms. Pinkham asked if Ms. Keane asked Chester's Business Administrator if some supply costs came from other areas. Ms. Keane said no but she asked about cost classification and she felt she was answered sufficiently.

Mr. Lander said that the Administration thought that if there needed to be cuts made, they could live with the \$10,200 reduction in the 1100 line. Mr. Safina mentioned that even though money hadn't been spent on it, it didn't mean money couldn't be spent on computer software to benefit kids more. He said if they had to live without it, however, they would. He said that he is still evaluating procedures but he agreed on trying to be specific with costs.

Ms. Pinkham asked if the budget is driven by educational need or holding a flat tax base. Mr. Rowell said that the process starts in June/July when the Board develops goals. The first goal is to improve student achievement, the second is to improve communication and dissemination of information to the public, the third is to develop a systematic approach to support and professional development, and the fourth is to complete a strategic plan for the District so that the highest quality of education can be provided. The administration keeps these goals in mind when doing the budget and bringing it to the School Board and Budget Committee. The School Board has fiscal responsibility. The question is, if cuts are made, would they compromise the District's goals.

Ms. Pinkham said that there have been revisions to the budget reporting process over the years and that it is difficult to point out what one thing was in the past and is now. As a result, the Budget Committee has a different understanding of the School District Budget and terminology.

Ms. Keane said that the administration is asking for: original bottom line number plus retirement adjustment (.53%) plus one paraprofessional. Mr. Safina and Ms. Lewis said they presented a

budget that was fulfilled educational goals but that also “matched a number” (was fiscally responsible for the Town of Fremont).

Mr. Safina mentioned a concern under Special Education: \$8K and \$20K for tutor salaries cannot come out of Title I because they are only for Title I students. Those tutors and paraprofessionals cannot work with any other type of students. He said Title I has not been fully established yet. He said someone comes in as a contracted service for now in the hopes that it will be established for next year.

Ms. Keane amended her motion to take \$20,000 (that can only be used for Title I students) off of the cut for line 5330 and to put back \$8,000 in line 5121.

Ms. Keane asked about after-school tutoring. Ms. Lewis said that they did not have regular education tutoring last year. Ms. Lewis said that a lot of the tutor funds (line 5120) are used for high school kids and 504 students. The tutor money from last year was for regular education. Ms. Keane clarified that \$66,000 was needed all together for tutors and aids and paraprofessionals and Ms. Lewis said yes.

Tuition NH Special Education:

Ms. Keane said that Sanborn Regional tuition was estimated at \$7,000 per child but it will only be \$6,276 so she took off \$24,000 (actual was \$24,616) that won't be spent. She reviewed purchase orders provided by Ms. Lewis. Ms. Lewis said that students can move between tuition and private and it is not always certain. Ms. Lewis monitors programs through the year but her numbers by projections are close to what the District will most likely spend (to avoid paying for out of district placement).

Ms. Pinkham suggested taking the \$24,616 out but have Ms. Lewis readjust for the two new out of district placements in order to avoid an over-projection. Ms. Lewis said she would look at all of the out of district programs again and see if the number can change.

Mr. Lander clarified that the line item can move to \$290,491.

Ms. Keane withdrew the \$34,000 deduction from line 5564 based on Ms. Lewis' explanation.

Ms. Pinkham asked if Ms. Lewis needed to add to the line. Ms. Lewis said she would be ok with the final number. Mr. Lander said that it could be adjusted at the District Meeting if necessary.

Mr. Lander clarified that there will be a reduction in the 1200 line of \$24,616.

Gifted and ESL:

Ms. Keane asked if money could be used for ESL tutoring for a student who does not need a full time ESL person but who may need tutoring. Ms. Lewis said no, they can only use that money for a teacher (not for tutoring). This is how the grant is written Ms. Lewis said.

Ms. Lewis said that she was comfortable with the number.

Assembly Programs:

Ms. Lewis said that Full Spectrum Wellness comes under IDEA. IDEA would not cover program supplies for everyone in the building since it is just for identified students.

Ms. Genthner asked if they were comfortable with the \$6500 number.

Ms. Keane said she suggested cutting the Assembly Program because she thought it would be a place to use community involvement to remove an expense from the line. Mr. Safina said he and Ms. Lewis were comfortable with that. Consensus was to cut the Assembly Programs line.

Salaries:

Mr. Lander's concern about cuts in salaries was that some teachers who will get a 3% raise based on the contract (except those at the top) and some who won't. Ms. Keane said that others in Town have not had raises. Mr. Lander felt that internally, professionals working side by side with people getting raises might look elsewhere.

Ms. Genthner understood both sides but she was concerned about the turnover in staff over the past seven years. She said she did not want to go backwards now that there is a full staff.

Mr. Rowell said there seemed to be a management concern about loss of staff and the possible repercussion of that.

Ms. Pinkham agreed that this percentage would irk a lot of voters. Ms. Keane said that there was an \$11,747 total for all raises. Ms. Pinkham suggested leaving that in the budget for the March 13 vote to see what support would be. Ms. Keane agreed it would be a "bone of contention". Ms. Pinkham felt that the Board should not have granted raises last year that weren't funded. That is why she wanted to keep the funding in this year. Mr. Rowell felt it was important to go on the record and explain why it was included.

Ms. Keane said to cross off any salary freeze lines as a part of the request for reduction on the spreadsheet.

Psychological Supplies:

Ms. Lewis had a concern about protocols, which are getting more expensive each year. These come under psychological test materials and not supplies. She said she would see if they have enough to finish the year and what can be used next year.

Ms. Keane suggested getting rid of the reductions she had suggested and leaving this psychological supplies line item as it was budgeted originally.

BREAK @ 11:45 AM

Improvement of Instruction:

Ms. Keane suggested taking off the deductions of the FICA and retirement for lines 5220 and 5232 since they are supposed to be stipend positions.

In-Service Workshops, Out of District Workshops and Staff Development: Mr. Rowell asked if it's proper to have these budgeted in numerous places. Mr. Safina said that Staff Development

could mean having a consultant come in to do something like CPR training. Mr. Lander said the in-service workshop line could be cut by \$2,000.

Ms. Keane said that, for line 5112 Staff Development, people need to note for next year that it's not a coordinator position.

Professional Books: \$2400 decrease.

Library Books: take out \$1000. Ms. Keane suggested doing more creative things such as donating books to the school. Mr. Safina said they could make do with that.

School Board Supplies:

Ms. Pinkham said that this account was created as a place where Board members could submit for reimbursement for printing cartridges, etc., though no one has put in for it.

Ms. Keane said that 5110 and 5220 is taken off due to a raise situation.

SAU office rental: Mr. Rowell said that the Board could tentatively agree on projected proposal.

There was a discussion of ways to reduce cost associated with the School Board and meetings, such as the cost of putting together/printing the Budget books and the cost of the folders used at meetings.

Administrative Conferences:

Ms. Lewis said conferences with regard to Special Education are important to learn about new regulations, etc., especially when it is difficult for her to be away from school. Others can attend in her place. Ms. Keane suggested that Special Education Law Conferences should then not be under the 2400 line. Mr. Safina said it is not budgeted twice.

Supplies:

Line 5155 is \$1900.

Mr. Safina said he would use next year as a time to study how to do more with Web to School to consolidate data, etc.

School Postage: meter is listed twice so Ms. Keane took out \$1,000.

Principal Travel: current spend times 2.

Office Supplies (line 5610): Cost was \$6,500 previously. They moved paper there. Ms. Keane put a reduction of \$2,000 since there was some wiggle room in the total cost.

There was a discussion about fundraising and 8th grade graduation (using caps and gowns or not, etc.)

Special Education Transportation:

Mr. Lander said that the District had a \$99,000 contract but one child was not budgeted in it. There is a cost for that, as well as: community service, summer school transportation, an estimated cost for a monitor at \$10,000 and 2 potential Special Education runs. The total cost came to \$34,000 less.

Mr. Lander listed the agreed reductions to the budget:

\$10,200 from 1100 line
 \$24,616 from 1200 line
 \$9,609 from Gifted and Talented line
 \$1,500 from 1400 line
 \$1,700 from Speech line
 \$1,250 from O/T line
 \$2,400 from Improvement of Instruction line
 \$1,150 from Library and Media line
 \$300 from School Board line
 \$3,250 from Superintendent's Office line
 \$1,900 from Psychological Services line
 \$6,800 from School Administration line
 \$34,000 from Special Education Transportation line

 \$98,675 total reduction

BUDGET: \$10,871,719

Mr. Safina suggested putting back into the budget the cut of \$2,500 in the Computer Software line for NEWA testing and AimesWeb (sp ?)

New reduction total is now: \$96,175.

Mr. Rowell suggested having Ms. Sandstrom run the new numbers before the Board votes on the budget amounts.

(Ms. Lewis left the meeting)

Ms. Pinkham felt that the Budget Committee would stay with their number and take the School District's cuts on top of that. The Budget Committee's rationale is to keep the tax level equal now.

Mr. Safina said they made other cuts in order to keep the two positions but he said that the District was only about \$117,000 more than the Budget Committee's number. He attributed this to the Sanborn tuition. He said that the Budget Committee is banking on the contract not passing in Sanborn. Ms. Pinkham said that the contract vote will happen 4 days before the District Meeting (or election?) in Fremont so that will be helpful.

PREVIOUS MOTIONS DURING THIS MEETING:

Ida Keane made a motion to accept changes that are recommended for the current operating budget. Sharon Girardi seconded the motion.

Ida Keane amended her motion to take \$20,000 (that can only be used for Title I students) off of the cut for line 5330 and to put back \$8,000 in line 5121.

FINAL VOTE:

Ida Keane made an amendment to her motion to read a total reduction of \$96,175 adjusting the operating budget to \$10,775,545. Sharon Girardi seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0.

Ms. Genthner was hesitant as she thought about what other cuts might be made but she wanted people to vote on March 13.

Mr. Lander asked if the Board wanted to keep the 180 days for late bus transportation or reduce it to 150 days. The Board suggested keeping it at 180 days and seeing if that passes. Mr. Rowell said they should get out the information on having the late bus run at a different time to generate more usage (5 PM run rather than the 4:30 PM run).

Ms. Pinkham said that the Town voted that the School Board needs to vote on each Warrant Article.

Warrant Article 1: 5-0 aye

Warrant Article 2: 5-0 aye

Warrant Article 3: 5-0 aye

Warrant Article 4: 5-0 aye

Warrant Article 5: 4-1 aye (saying up to 180 days)
(Peg Pinkham nay: she didn't feel the School Board should recommend it as a Warrant Article)

Warrant Article 6: 5-0 nay
(to see if District will vote to raise and appropriate the Budget Committee's recommended amount) Mr. Lander will update the number.

IV. NEXT MEETING: FEBRUARY 11, 2010

V. ADJOURNMENT

Deb Genthner made a motion to adjourn at approx. 12:40 PM. Ida Keane seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Perry,
School Board Secretary

QUESTIONS
2/6/2010

1. Ms. Pinkham suggested taking the \$24,616 out but have Ms. Lewis readjust for the two new out of district placements in order to avoid an over-projection. Ms. Lewis said she would look at all of the out of district programs again and see if the number can change.