

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Freedom Board of Selectmen**  
**Date: 5-30-2023**

**In attendance:** Ron Price, Steve Bennett, Ryan Willette, Jim Waterman, Beth Owen-Mishou, Jasmine Willette, Tim Biggs, Joe Freeman, Elaine Higgins, Nathan McCann, Tyler Hadyniak (via zoom), Jacob Brugger via zoom, Kirk Thomas, April Turner via zoom, Cindy Abbott, Bob Kanzler, Trudy Price, Barbara Littlefield, Ron Littlefield, Sigmund Dziurdz, Laura Greeley, Anne-Marie Adamson via zoom, Dawnella Sutton via zoom, Ben Feeney, Meredith Coffin via zoom

**New Zoom Meeting: Meeting ID: 431 235 8395**  
**Passcode: TownMeet**

1. Call Meeting to Order / Finalize Agenda: Ron Price called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.
2. Review and Approve Minutes: Secretary's Report: Steve Bennett made a motion to approve the minutes as amended and put on file, Ryan Willette seconded and all approved.
3. Fire Chief & EMA Director Reports: Jim Waterman
  - o Major fire at 32 Patterson Ridge Road in Thorndike. They were there until 9:30pm. 6-7 towns responded. Building was a loss.
  - o Attended the Memorial Day parade in Unity
  - o There is an Elliot Lane sign that needs to be removed.
4. Public Works:
  - o Ryan continues to work on grading. Cold patching and crushed stone base appears to be the next things to be done.
  - o Steve Bennett asked Ryan Willette to ask about the road inventory app, and to create a list of all current public works equipment and any equipment he personally owns and what is most needed.
5. Treasurer's Report: Cindy Abbott
  - o Payroll Warrant \$7029.04, A/P warrant \$75,321.08.
  - o \$208,995 is the March checkbook, check book remains unbalanced
  - o Ron Price made a motion that 100,000 be transferred from the tan note to the checking account tomorrow, Steve Bennett seconded and all approved.
  - o Alexis Bennett asked if the town was doing a mailing so that the notice for the Charter Letter and the upcoming vote.
  - o Steve Bennett made a motion that the letter be sent out and Cindy Abbott be authorized to use the credit card to pay for the mailing, Ryan Willette seconded and all approved.
  - o Cindy Abbott would like to have the mailing go out tomorrow.
  - o Received a check for \$22,639.37 for revenue sharing.
  - o Steve Bennett commented on the tan note and the total cost was \$399. It is now complete. 7.95% interest rate, 75 BP above the rate for a non-profit,

- Steve Bennett made a motion to approve the treasurer's report and pay the Payroll Warrant \$7029.04, A/P warrant \$75,321.08, Ryan Willette seconded and all approved.
- 6. Town Clerk & Tax Collector Report: Cindy Abbott
  - Certified 30-day notices will be sent this week.
- 7. Citizen's Issues and Questions:
  - Timm Biggs asked that we start the work on Mitchell Road due to its poor condition.
    - Ron Price reported that they did not condemn the bridge but it is a level 4. Two grants were submitted and failed.
  - Joe Freeman asked why the road work has been skipped although the town approved it. The select board members stated that a crushed stone base would be added. Three reasons: (1)The SB decided that it didn't make sense to pave either Main or Pleasant Street due to the bridge in front of the Grange Hall being replaced next year and the state diverting traffic during construction onto High Street. (2) The other project discussed as a possibility was paving a large portion of Raven Road but the SB decided that there was not enough money in the budget to do that. (3) The SB decided that the money in this year's budget would be better spent putting down a crushed stone base (CSB) on a number of town roads, particularly the Mitchell Rd, and that these projects would benefit most of the town.
  - Elaine Higgins reported that she has the posters to be placed around town for the charter. The vote is on the 13th
  - Elaine Higgins wanted to express that she has developed a sheet to collect email addresses for town mailings. This would be for town mailings and emergency contacts.
  - Ryan Willette had a call from a citizen in Albion and this individual asked if we could put a no parking sign at the front spot at the landing so boat trailers can be turned around.
    - Ryan Willette and Ben Feeney will wrap the trees down by the landing to prevent the beavers from taking down any more trees.
    - Ryan Willette made a motion that no parking signs go on the end of the boat landing to allow for turning, Steve Bennett seconded and all approved.
  - There were several phone complaints regarding the clean up as people felt everything was being picked up on Friday, but it was only supposed to be metal on Friday.
    - Joe Freeman has been to Norridgewock everyday with collected junk.
    - Ryan Willette suggested that Joe Freeman could pick up any additional junk on Thursday, within the limits of the trash truck. Ryan Willette will try to find someone to help. Joe Freeman will look around and see if there is more metal out there. He suggested that people drop off the metal.
- 8. Review Correspondence

- Post office sent out a report regarding a leak in the toilet that needs to be repaired, and the back door is not closing properly. Ryan Willette will fix both issues and be paid to do it. Steve Bennett made a motion to have Ryan Willette fix the items and be paid for it, Ron Price seconded and all approved.
  - MMA appraised the sand and salt shed at \$343,000 which is a \$90,000 increase.
  - Dennis Morrelli expressed, that if we are looking for another ACO he is interested in the job.
9. Town Officials Reports
- Code Enforcement Officer: Jackie
  - Waste Management:
  - Health Official
  - Animal Control Officer: Peter Nerber
  - Planning Board:
  - Recreational Committee: Meeting this Sunday at 4:00 at the town office
    - Field Day July 29th
  - Appeals Board:
    - Increasing the membership from 5-7 to more easily achieve consensus within 2 weeks. That would require an ordinance change.
  - Charter Committee: Tyler Hadyniak
  - Historical Society
  - Cemetery Committee:
  - Budget Committee:
  - CDAC Committee:
    - KVEC Cog came and offered assistance
  - School Board: Elenore Hess
10. Old Business
- Water test results were all good. Post office and public works came back good. Waiting on T.O. and F.D.
11. New Business
- Steve Bennett made a motion that they go into executive session at 6:45 for a personnel issue, 1 MRSA 405 (6) A, Ron Price seconded and all approved. They came out of executive session at 7:25pm.
    - Ryan Willette made a motion that they accept Travis Price's resignation letter, Steve Bennett seconded.
    - Ryan Willette made a motion that Cindy Abbott write up an advertisement for an open job position, Steve Bennett seconded and all approved.
  - Ron Price made a motion to have Steve Bennett contact Josh Wellman, to get a quote on the price to clean up the Fisher property, Ryan Willette seconded and all approved.
  - Ron Price made a motion that they have a working meeting on Monday June 12th at 8:00 am to go over the commitment books and the errors with Jackie Robbins,

- Steve Bennett would like to file a 706-A (To send a letter to a taxpayer to assess the value of a property to see if they are being properly assessed.) Bill Van Tuinen, assessor, did not provide a price. This is in regard to the wind mills. He would like accurate answers as to the value of the wind mills and the property. Ron Price reported that The Federal Energy Commission requires all generation companies to register if they rated at 5MW or more. They make 4.5 and that is why the information cannot be found. The depreciation comes off of the town value.
  - Steve stated that any generator with a rating of 1 MW or 1000 kw more have to report to FERC.
  - Tim Biggs asked when we increased the town's property values but we did not do that with the windmills? Steve answered yes to Tim's question; that the town has lowered the property values of Beaver Ridge Wind by a total of 44% the last eight years, amounting to a cumulative amount of \$448,000 in lost taxes. We have also increased the value of all other improved properties in town by a total of 21% the last three years. we didn't lower, then raise the same property. He further stated that the increases in home values are required by state law in order to stay within the state tax ratio. Industrial wind turbines are not valued by the state of Maine because the state has no capacity to do so, therefore the state accepts whatever the company, or in this case, the town, tells them.
  - Elaine Higgins stated that because the company is making more money that they should be paying more in taxes?  
Steve stated that the town does not have an income tax and that we do not value properties using the Income Approach. Properties in general are valued by one of three different methods: Income Approach, Market Value Approach, or the cost Approach. In Freedom, we have only used the market value approach for homes. It is his understanding that all wind turbines in the State of Maine, unless they were built in the Unorganized territories (UT's) and therefore approved by the state, have been valued using the Cost Approach, not the Income Approach nor the Market Value Approach. The state of Maine will admit that they have no capacity to value any industrial wind turbines and never have. In the UT's the state simply agrees with the turbine company upon a value and then also agrees with the company on a proprietary basis never to divulge that value to the public. He also stated that he only learned about Form 706-A over the winter as it has only been effect for a few years. Towns in Maine now file these briefs quite frequently as it is a way to get real answers, and if the company fails to provide the answers to the questions, they are prevented from arguing their case before the Maine Tax Review Board. Steve Bennett made a motion that he be allowed to consult with Bill Van Tionen to

determine how much it would cost to file a 706-A, Ryan Willette seconded and Ron abstained from the vote.

- The auditor will be here next week with a review of the 2022 audit with Cindy and the select board. Ron Price asked what days would work best. This would be open to the public. He will let everyone know when.

12. Date of Next Meeting: Monday June 5th, 2023 at 6pm

13. Adjourn: Steve Bennett made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:58 pm. Ryan Willette seconded all approved.