

Meeting Minutes
Freedom Board of Selectmen
Date: 12/22/2025

Approved 12/29/25

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

Select Board Meeting

In attendance: Rene Ouellet, Lissa Widoff, Beth Owen-Mishou, Jim Waterman, Tim Turner, Brian Murphy, Bob Kanzler, Joe Freeman, Cindy Abbot, Meredith Coffin (via zoom), Dylan Turner, Stan Taylor, Beth Powell, Patrick Terry, Jim Hayes, Ron and Barbra Littlefield, Heather Donahue, Herman (via zoom), Elaine Higgins (via zoom)

1. Call Meeting to Order / Finalize Agenda: Lissa Widoff called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.
2. Announcements:
3. Review and Approve Minutes: Secretary's Report:
 - **Rene Ouellet moved to approve the minutes as amended and place them on record, Laura Greeley seconded and all approved.**
4. Fire Chief & EMA Director Reports: Jim Waterman
 - On the 20th 17 Christmas boxes were delivered.
 - Friday night some areas in South Freedom lost power.
 - 9 calls for trees on lines.
 - The Emergency Management Director made the appropriate calls to address the trees.
 - There is an opening as of 1-1-2026 for an emergency management director, that has still not been filled.
 - The Fire Department received \$5000 from an anonymous donor. It will go into the reserve account for the fire department.
 - Jim Waterman cannot attend Wednesday night budget committee meetings but can meet on any other night.
5. Treasurer's Report: Contesa Mancini (not present)
6. Public Works: Loren Fitch (not present)
 - The trash truck is continuing its decline.
7. Town Clerk & Tax Collector Report: Cindy Abbott

- Nomination papers are available and they will be due in by Friday 1-16-2025, but will be accepted until the next Tuesday, due to the holidays and town office closures.
 - Cindy will reach out to Jackie to clarify a building on purchased property that is no longer there.
8. Correspondence:
- Received requests for donations and these will be presented to the budget committee.
9. Citizens Issues:
- Patrick Terry: Thanked Lissa and Rene and town employees for their work for the town. He reviewed the history of Beaver Ridge. He suggested reaching out to elders in the town. He stated that the half mile does not refer to the Beaver Road. He is not sure who introduced the idea of a ½ mile. He is not asking any more than what the town already has.
 - Bob Kanzler: The town of Freedom has never bought one piece of property to build a road. The roads were given to the people.
 - Patrick Terry: In 1956 if the town decided based on statute 3028 and 3026, now there is 30 28 A, how the road should be handled. Municipal officers could decide. He would like the townspeople to decide the outcome of the road. In 1956 it said we were not abandoning that road. Discussion ensued regarding public access to land and roads. There was a question about cemeteries in the area of the road.
 - Bob Kanzler: was presented a letter from Tyler Hadyniak for destroying a public easement. He was accused of diverting the water. Steve Bennett allegedly reported that he diverted the water.
 - Lissa Widoff referred to a couple of letters that came in regarding the Beaver Ridge Road. (see attached)
 - Carol Hager Boding: Letter received and read by Rene Ouellet. The letter described sleigh rides taken as a child and adult in Freedom as well as engaging in many other recreation activities.
 - Donald J Hager: Lissa Widoff read the letter. He grew up believing that the Beaver Ridge Road was discontinued from maintenance but not public access. He would like the road to be available to the public to enjoy the environment and recreation. He is concerned that people feel intimidated with regard to using the area.
 - Rene Ouellet reviewed his perspective on what is occurring with the legal process over the road. He appreciates the

citizens' input. He stated that there are other points of view as well.

- Ron Littlefield asked if the town voted not to gate the road, why are we still addressing this. The response by Rene Ouellet was that someone made a lawsuit and that is what we are responding to.
- Tim Turner: If anyone comes into town and loses a lawsuit, why should the town have to pay for the legal fees? Why can't that person not be held responsible for the legal fees?
 - Lissa Widoff will look into this.
- Heather Donahue: thanked the people who spoke tonight. A lawsuit does not have to have any merit to go to court. She feels that that is what is happening.
 - Clarification: 5-21-1996: Letter from Red Mitchell. The road still remains under the Selectman's control.
 - MMA letter claiming that the road reverted. She read a letter from MMA clarifying what was said. She then read the order of discontinuance.
 - A trail system would be good for families.
- Bob Kanzler spoke about the snowmobile trails and how he cleared them. Lissa Widoff talked about a snowmobile club and an ATV club. The clubs can help build relationships with the land owners.
- Heather Donahue: clarified that because there was a decision made it may be necessary to continue with the proceedings.
- Bob Kanzler spoke about snowmobile/ATV clubs and having to work with homeowners. He felt that the trail systems helped increase the revenue for the town.
- Ron Littlefield is concerned that if we close all these roads, all our recreation will end up on the pond.
- Heather Donahue does not want to reinforce bullies.
- Patrick Terry thanked the public servants.

10. Town Officials Reports

- Code Enforcement: Cindy Abbott
 - January 14, 2026 at 4pm there is a proposed meeting with Atty Kelly regarding the Young Property. Lissa Widoff will check with Laura with regard to who will be contacting the property owner.
- Assessors Agent: Jackie Robbins (not present)
- Health Official: Patricia Ashland (not present)

- School Board Director: Eleanor Hess (not present)
- General Assistance Officer: Rene Ouellet
 - No applications in the last week.
- Plumbing Inspector: Cindy Abbott
- Solid Waste Director: Phil Bloomstein (not present)
 - Letter regarding state laws for recycling communities. Rene Ouellet would like to get a copy of the letter to Phil.
 - No trash pick-up this week. The next trash pick-up will be January 2, 2025.
- Animal Control Officer: Johnna Hatt (not present)
- Town Boards & Committee Reports:
 - Planning Board: Tyler Hadyniak
 - Meeting on the 30th at 6pm to determine if the used car lot is a business or home occupation.
 - Recreational Committee: Chair yet to be determined
 - Cindy Abbot reviewed the Holiday Party and thanked those who helped.
 - Winterfest will be the next event. First Saturday in February.
 - Fishing Derby: we need a volunteer to help plan and coordinate this.
 - 250th anniversary.
 - Appeals Board: pending new appointment
 - They are supposed to meet every 3 months.
 - They need to appoint a chair.
 - Cemetery Committee: Steve Holmes
 - Have received \$310 toward Levi Temple's memorial.
 - Budget Committee: Laura Greeley
 - Meeting in the beginning of January
 - CDAC Committee: Lex Bennett (not present)
 - Broadband Committee: Phil Bloomstein (not present)
 - Ad Hoc Policy Committee: Elaine Higgins
 - Comp Plan Committee:
 - Looking to partner with the grange.
 - Developing a calendar of activities for the year. Having a joint meeting with the recreation committee.

11. Old Business:

- Greeley Road: there will be another conversation with the parties to see if they could come to some agreement. Rene and Lissa will reach out to the parties involved. Before the budget committee meets on the 7th of January was suggested. The 5th would also be a possibility.

- Albion Road: That issue was resolved. He has written documentation from the owner that he has given the people permission to use the utilities and be on the property.
 - She hand delivered a pre-45-day letter for taxes and it may be a GA issue and poverty, with regard to the property owner. Food was donated to that family. Trash stickers and bags were donated as well for that family. If anyone else would like to donate they can reach out to Cindy.
 - Valuations of the properties across the town cannot be relied upon as accurate. There is a need for townwide valuations. A request for proposals document has been created and they would like to send it out to a number of different property tax assessing agencies.
 - **Lissa Widoff moved to approve the RFP (Request for Proposals) that they have been working on to get bids on a re val, Rene Ouellet seconded and all approved.**
 - Rene Ouellet will develop a cover letter to send with the request for proposals. He will bring in the cover letter and requests to the meeting next week.
 - Board and Committee Vacancies: anyone can write a letter of interest to the select board members. The following are the positions available.
 - Appeals board
 - Recreation committee
 - Comprehensive planning committee
 - Port a Potty: Cindy called and left a message and is waiting for a response from the company.
 - Copier Contract:
 - **Lissa Widoff moved to approve and sign the new contract for the copier lease with Westbank Equipment Finance, Rene Ouellet seconded and all approved.**
 - Direct Communications: Lissa Widoff continues to negotiate with the vendor regarding fiber optics
 - Trio: Lissa Widoff is reviewing the options available.
12. New Business:
13. Date of Next Meeting: Monday December 29, 2025 at 6:00 pm.
15. Adjourn: **Rene Ouellet made a motion to adjourn at 8:00 pm., Lissa Widoff seconded, and all approved.**

Recording Information:

https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/d6VGbHdW1qKJa0wPE0VEIaQxWKTwwWS_qGvPmKMxWqR6SCA5uUaFFeEf2a8n_rPc.-yQzKDnSnMqV8GUI

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