

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Freedom Board of Selectmen**  
**Date: 10-30-2023**  
*Approved 11/6/2023*

**In attendance:** Steve Bennett, Ryan Willette, Laura Greeley, Beth Owen-Mishou, Jim Waterman, Cindy Abbott, Samantha Turner, Willa Smith, Mike Smith, Elaine Higgins, Brian Murphy, Tyler Hadyniak, Meredith Coffin, Dylan Turner (via zoom), Heather Donahue, Joe Freeman, Nathan McCann, Anne Marie Adamson (via zoom), Kyle Price (via zoom) Chris Byers, Kevin Greeley, Dylan Smith

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

1. Call Meeting to Order / Finalize Agenda: Steve Bennett called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.
2. Announcements:
  - Steve started the meeting by asking for a minute of silence for the individuals and community in Lewiston, Maine.
  - November 7th is election day.
  - November 11, Veterans Day
3. Review and Approve Minutes: Secretary's Report: Ryan Willette made a motion that the minutes be accepted as amended and placed on file, Steve Bennett seconded and all approved.
4. Fire Chief & EMA Director Reports: Jim Waterman
  - Steve Bennett mentioned that the contract will be expiring with the town of Knox in terms of fire coverage. It is a renewable contract every three years.
  - Concern was expressed regarding the South Freedom Road and the bridge detour. Steve suggested someone contact the DOT.
  - Steve Bennett made a motion that Ryan Willette call the DOT regarding the detour on the South Freedom Road, Laura Greeley seconded and all approved.
  - The fire house is now enclosed and the wall has been repaired.
  - Jim Waterman asked why we are not pre buying our fuel oil, we are now paying cash price. There are several companies that would allow us to pre-buy.
  - Jim asked about ordering the water filters. Ryan Willette stated that he will sit with Cindy Abbot and order it.
  - Hunters Breakfast on Veterans Day: 5am-10am at the firehouse. \$10/person, Veterans are Free.
5. Public Works Director Report:
  - Ryan Willette reported:

- Steve Bennett commented that the dirt roads are in good shape.
- Grading was finished last week.
- The public works team asked about shoveling.
  - We do not plow the post office
  - We do plow the town office and fire department
  - Public works will continue to shovel.
  - Letter of donation for Bo James Spaulding
  - Salt is coming tomorrow
  - Grader survived: Loren has a repair plan for it.
  - Tires have been mounted for spares for the winter.
  - Loren is assessing the equipment for repairs.
  - Ryan Willette asked if the town wanted to put a crushed stone base on the town office driveway. He estimates it would cost about \$400. Steve asked what category that would go under.
  - Ryan Willette made a motion that we purchase 3 loads of gravel/crushed stone based at a cost of approximately \$400, Laura Greeley seconded and all approved.
  - Ryan Willette made a motion that the public works department make purchases needed for tools not to exceed \$2800 and it come out of the summer roads and maintenance budgets, Steve Bennett seconded and all approved.
  - Sullivan's Trash is out of the garbage business as of November 1, 2023. This would be an opportunity for our town to provide Knox trash service. In order to do this we would need a town vote.

6. Treasurer's Report: Cindy Abbott

- Payroll Warrant = \$ 5,453.36 A/P Warrant = \$ 70,544.77
- Ending Checkbook balance \$208,995.80 March Cash Balance
- Camden National = \$248,967.19
- post office fund \$48,967.19
- Vernice will be coming on 11/1/2023
- Ryan Willette made a motion that the Payroll Warrant = \$ 5,453.36 A/P Warrant = \$ 70,544.77 be paid, Laura Greeley seconded and all approved.
- Vernice would like copies of all of the reconciliations for 2023. Steve will e-mail RH Smith and make that request.
- Flags are going to be at half-mast for the next 18 days in honor of the people killed in Lewiston.
- Cindy Abbot mentioned that the 2022 acceptance letter needs to be signed but has not yet been received by RH Smith.
- Ryan Willette made a motion to allow Cindy Abbot to use the credit card to pay for the mailing for the moratorium and town meeting, Laura Greeley seconded and all approved.

- Laura Greeley asked why the select board has not been receiving copies of the IRS paperwork. Steve Bennett stated that all of the IRS paperwork has to be placed in the personnel files.
- 7. Town Clerk & Tax Collector Report: Cindy Abbott
- 8. Citizen's Issues and Questions
  - Chris Buyers: Solar Developer and Consultant and Dylan Smith, developer. They had come to a planning board meeting. He would like to be a resource for the town.
    - Steve Bennett asked what the output of the proposed solar array by the Cary Road. Mr. Buyers stated that it would be the equivalent of providing power to approximately 80-100 homes. They would be doing 600 kw. They would be doing it "in front of the meter". This is different from what a homeowner would do, behind the meter.
    - Laura Greeley stated that she was concerned that the planning board did not share with the select board that they had met with the individuals who submitted the pre application. Mr. Buyers stated that they are at a pre application phase. There is currently a system impact study being done and they would not submit an application until after that is completed, probably after January.
    - Steve Bennett stated that he is prejudiced about solar arrays being anywhere near good agricultural land.
    - Elaine Higgins asked about the viability and any chemicals or any reason the solar array would be detrimental to the environment.
    - Mr. Buyers spoke about impact. He has been speaking with manufacturers of solar panels to provide statements about being PFAS free. He reported that there is a recycling industry that is beginning to recycle solar panels.
    - Steve Bennett spoke about the Skidgel lot and the wetlands there and solar, regarding wetlands. Mr. Buyers stated that it is difficult to maintain a solar array in wetlands. It can be buffered for the view. He discussed land banking. When it is decommissioned, the materials would be pulled out. The lease would be for 30 years. Meadow grass is planted around the solar panels.
    - Samantha Turner asked how often the people managing the solar array check the area. She mentioned that that area is providing food for local wildlife. She would like to know what the impact would be to wildlife. She also asked what happens with the restoration and what protects the town.
      - Mr. Buyers stated that this array would not be near the trees. There is an operation and maintenance plan. The sites are remotely monitored. He stated that deer are adaptive. He was not familiar with the history of the field. He thought it was just a hay field. The fence is raised 6 inches. They consult with Maine fish and wildlife. DEP has a solar decommissioning permit. This needs to be obtained and a bond is held before the construction and that covers the

decommissioning. They are required to remove the equipment as per the lease. Ryan Willette asked if the company has a standard operating procedure for removal of a solar array. Mr Byers stated yes they do.

- Brian Murphy asked what the life expectancy was of a solar panel and the response was about 30-40 years. They are warranted for 30 years. How many places have they had moratoriums against solar panels? Mr. Byers said that they like to work near towns with infrastructure. He estimates about 5-10 towns have had moratoriums. There is only one town in Maine whose ordinance was so restricted that solar could not be established.
- Willa Smith provided a disclaimer that her property abuts the proposed array. She is concerned about the view. She is concerned about what will happen to her property value. She asked about power production. It is a flight way in the spring and fall.
- Heather Donahue asked what the actual output was and asked what the distance from a home is. She also felt that aesthetics is a factor. How would they address weeding and maintenance?
  - Elaine Higgins: would like a copy of the letter of recommendations that went with the audit.
  - Elaine Higgins asked if the town could enter into an agreement/contract with other towns based on a town vote that occurred at our annual town meeting.
    - Steve Bennett will look into this.

## 9. Review Correspondence

### 10. Town Officials Reports

- Code Enforcement: Jackie Robbins
- Assessors Agent:
- Health Official:
- School Board Director: Elenore Hess
- General Assistance Officer: Ryan Willette
- Plumbing Inspector:
- Solid Waste Director: Phil Bloomstein
- Animal Control Officer: Peter Nerber

### 11. Town Boards & Committee Reports:

- Planning Board: October 24th is their next meeting
  - Tyler Hadyniak reported that their next meeting is November 14th.
- Recreational Committee:
  - Trunk or Treat went well.
- Appeals Board:

- Mike has received a draft of amendments to the charter for the appeals board.
- Historical Society:
  - Auction: complete, raised approximately \$2000.
- Cemetery Committee
- Budget Committee: November 1st at 6pm
- CDAC Committee:
- Broadband Committee:
- Ad Hoc Policy Committee:
  - Needs to meet to finalize the drug and alcohol policy. They will contact Rene to set up a meeting. They would like to meet on the 8th of November at 6pm.
  - Education and Enrollment Ad Hoc Committee: Laura Greeley
  - Meeting next week, November 9th.
- High Impact Power Line Ad Hoc Committee: Heather Donahue
  - PUC Website: mentioned that LS Power has missed their deadlines in Massachusetts.
    - 202100369 docket number for PUC. Please file a comment with the PUC.
    - Preserve Rural Maine Website

12. Old Business

13. New Business

- Warrant for a hearing for a special town meeting on Monday November 6 at 6pm prior to the select board meeting. The town meeting will follow. Rene Oulett said he would be the moderator.
- Laura Greeley made a motion that we approve a public hearing and a vote of the citizens on a proposal to adopt a Solar Facilities Moratorium Ordinance for the Town of Freedom for Monday November 6 at 6 pm prior to the select board meeting, Ryan Willette seconded and all approved.

14. Date of Next Meeting: Monday, November 6, 2023. 6pm

15. Adjourn: Steve Bennett made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:40pm. Ryan Willette seconded and all approved.