

Town Charter Commission Meeting Freedom, Maine

Minutes of February 7, 2023

DRAFT

Present: MaryAnn Bennett, Meredith Coffin, Rene Ouellet, Tyler Hadyniak, Phil Bloomstein

Absent: Tim Biggs, William Pickford, Alexis Bennett

Guests: Ron Price, Steve Bennett, Elaine Higgins

Assignments for next meeting on March 7 , 2023

We WILL NOT MEET FEBRUARY 21, 2023

Continue to welcome the Select Board who we have invited to our meeting.

Phil to send Select Board updated version of the Draft Charter including changes made on February 7.

Agenda 1. Meeting called to order by Tyler at 6:03pm. Quorum achieved.

Agenda 2. Review of meeting minutes of January 17, 2023.

MaryAnn moved and Rene seconded to accept the minutes as written. Motion Carried.  
three yeas and two abstentions.

Agenda 3. Welcome Select Board.

Elaine remarked she has no issue with being referred to as a "Selectman". The committee remarked that it has decided to be consistent and will use "Select Board Member".

Tyler introduced the committee's reason for meeting with the Select Board. The writing of Freedom's charter encompasses law and tradition and the Select Board feedback is needed for clarification.

Steve thanked the committee and stated the committee work is appreciated. The Select Board

(SB) met for three hours reading through the draft charter in preparation for this meeting.

Read through began:

Article 105 Amending the charter.

Tyler pulled up the State Statute which provides for amending the charter: State Law trumps Town Law. SB asked about what happens if a new position is wanted , for example an assistant to the SB or if the clerk position needs to be appointed. Committee responded that these examples need not require amending the charter.

The charter can refer to ordinances. Ordinances can be changed without changing the charter

Article 201 Select Board

Committee's thinking is that a SB member needs to have been a resident of the town of Freedom for one year and a registered voter. It was remarked that this might be discriminatory against residents that choose not to vote, for example, for religious reasons. Plan is to ask attorney if this would be discriminatory.

Employee manual. Currently MMA manuals are used for clerk and treasurer. There is not one for public works or trash positions. Those manuals are being created and are forthcoming.

SB as licensing authority. Agreed to keep language as currently dogs have licensing. Could be in the future there will be cannabis and alcohol licensing.

SB Policy Manual. This can be amended or new ones created through out the year.

201.4 Limitations of SB

Discussed is it appropriate for SB members to receive a stipend for doing other than SB work. Would like to remove "stipend" and put in "temporary". This would accept a SB member doing some contractual work with the public works, setting up equipment, driving to

haul salt or do some clerk work. It does not cover a more fixed commission income as seen with Steve's brokering the retirement account. This would be a conflict of interest.

#### 201.5 Vacancies of SB

Our recall procedure will be looked at. Steve shared the history of recall in Freedom. Though the State/MMA has a model of recall it may not be what Freedom wants.

If there is a vacancy in the SB it needs to be voted in. It cannot be appointed by the SB.

If there is a vacancy in the Chair of the SB, the current SB can vote on who will be the Chair.

201.7 SB Compensation. Currently compensation of SB members is equal, though historically it wasn't.

#### Article 203 Administrative Organization

Vacancy in elected positions can be filled until the next town meeting.

Discussed pay scales of positions :to be established by the SB

Fire Department. Need to keep clear when referring to the Fire Chief. Note when it is needed to refer to the Freedom Fire Chief.

#### Article 301 Town Meetings

Though we have 2 days, we only have 1 warrant. Committee will work on rewording.

Registrar of voters is the moderator for the 1st

day of the secret ballot. Registrar of voters can

appoint another person to be the moderator. Committee will look at State Law regarding moderators.

A bulk mailing, at about \$49, can be done to mail the warrant to all residents. Wording is already in place to allow this.

A non resident can be allowed to speak at the town meeting with a 2/3 vote, not majority.

Agenda 4. Adjournment.

It was agreed that since this process is going to continue after March, that we need not meet on February 21. The SB is quite busy. They will be able to join us on March 7.

We will continue to read through with the SB beginning with Article 302.1

Tyler moved and MaryAnn seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 pm. Motion Carried

Next meeting : Tuesday March 7, 2023

Respectfully submitted, Meredith Coffin