

Meeting Minutes
Freedom Board of Selectmen
Date: 12/26/2023
Approved 1-2-2024

In attendance: Steve Bennett, Ryan Willette, Laura Greeley, Cindy Abbott, Beth Owen-Mishou, Phil Bloomstein, Kevin Greeley, Chris Byers, Elaine Higgins, Jim Waterman, Brian Murphy, Tyler Hadyniak, Vernice Boyce, Anne Marie Adamson (via zoom), Kyle Hadyniak (via zoom)

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

1. Call Meeting to Order / Finalize Agenda: Steve Bennett called the meeting to order at 5:58pm.
2. Announcements:
 - LS Power was removed by the PUC last week.
3. Review and Approve Minutes: Secretary's Report: Ryan Willette made a motion that the minutes be accepted as amended and placed on file, Laura Greeley seconded and all approved.
4. Fire Chief & EMA Director Reports: Jim Waterman
 - If there was more than \$3800 worth of damage the town can apply for compensation through the state fund for the event, but we did not come close to meeting that minimum.
 - There were many calls that had to do with wires. Thank you to public works to help with trees after the storm.
 - The fire dept had a thank you from Larabee farm for saving their barn.
 - Regional mitigation plan needs to be reviewed. It is intended to get towns participating to put forth a regional mitigation plan. He is looking for someone to step up and take the lead on this. The decision may need to be made by 1/6/2023. This would be run by the towns.
5. Public Works Director Report:
 - Ryan Willette reported:
 - Steve Bennett wanted to confirm that Ryan Willette is working with Isiah to research available grants. This would be for the Hustus Brook bridge.
6. Treasurer's Report: Cindy Abbott (not present)
 - Payroll Warrant = \$4335.15 A/P Warrant = \$5088.43
 - Ending Checkbook balance \$208,995.80 March Cash Balance
 - Camden National = \$248,729.14 as of 12-26-2023
 - Waterville Humane Society Agreement
 - Refund for boots.
 - Steve Bennett made a motion that they reimburse Joe Freeman for his boots for a total no more than \$147, to be taken out of the solid waste supplies budget, Ryan Willette seconded and all approved.

- 3 checks received:
 - Treasurer state of Maine \$280. For Stabilization Mandate Reimbursement
 - Treasurer State of Maine for \$12,307.66 for State Revenue Sharing
 - CPV Mountain Wind Holdings, LLC for \$3000 for heating assistance
- Ryan Willette made a motion to pay the Payroll Warrant = \$4335.15 and the A/P Warrant = \$5088.43, Laura Greeley seconded and all approved.
- 7. Town Clerk & Tax Collector Report: Cindy Abbott
- 8. Citizen's Issues and Questions
- 9. Review Correspondence
- 10. Town Officials Reports
 - Code Enforcement: Jackie Robbins
 - On the Albion Road there is a driveway, stone and prep for building.
 - Steve Bennett requested that they have a workshop Monday the 8th at 8 am with Jackie to address a number of issues.
 - Assessors Agent: Jackie Robbins
 - Health Official: Patricia Ashland
 - Has requested a meeting. Steve Bennett will ask if they can do that the same day. 9:30 am
 - School Board Director: Elenore Hess
 - General Assistance Officer: Ryan Willette
 - There was an application submitted today.
 - Plumbing Inspector: Jackie Robbins
 - Solid Waste Director: Phil Bloomstein
 - 12% increase in the recycling center. This will allow them to maintain employees.
 - Animal Control Officer: Peter Nerber
 - Ryan Willette spoke with Peter regarding working with a new shelter in Augusta. Ryan Willette will reach out to him about coming to a Monday evening meeting.
- 11. Town Boards & Committee Reports:
 - Planning Board:
 - The select board now has the solar array ordinance. Tyler Hadyniak suggested that they schedule a town meeting and public hearing. He suggested having the meeting the first week of January. Laura Greeley expressed concern with some portions, specifically that when a waiver is granted that it should be a vote of the people. She also had concerns with the wording "to the greatest extent practical" feeling that it was ambiguous. Ryan Willette asked if the select board and the planning board could meet to discuss the proposed ordinance. Steve Bennett expressed concern that the wording in the ordinance does not reflect current Maine statutes. The select board would like to be on the agenda for 1-9-2023 for their next meeting.

- Laura Greeley wanted to thank both individuals for applying for the planning board position.
 - Laura Greeley nominated Brian Murphy for a position on the planning board and it was a unanimous vote.
- Recreational Committee: Alyssa Brugger
- Appeals Board: Michael Smith
- Historical Society: Wilson Hess
- Cemetery Committee: Steve Holmes
- Budget Committee: 12/27/2023 meeting
- CDAC Committee: Lex Bennett
- Broadband Committee: Phil Bloomstein
 - The grant was approved and the website now has a projected timeline. The project should be completed 2 years from now. If you have telephone poles you should be getting broadband. Residents will have to buy their routers. There is a question about where they will be housing an office where they will house equipment.
- Ad Hoc Policy Committee: Rene Ouellet
 - 1-3-2023 next meeting 6pm
- Education and Enrollment Ad Hoc Committee: Laura Greeley
 - Next meeting 1-8-2024 at 6pm
- High Impact Transmission Line Ad Hoc Committee: Heather Donahue

12. Old Business

13. New Business:

- Vernice Boyce: Consulting Bookkeeper, suggested:
 - The revenue for the cost recovery should have been input as a recovery and had been put in the books incorrectly when it was entered in 2018. She has corrected this.
 - 1660 spent in February should have been marked as grant revenue.
 - That changes what is left in the capital reserve account for the fire department.
 - Jim Waterman asked what will be in the reserve account after the changes.
 - Vernice asked if at the end of the year if there is any money left in the Fire Department account does that money go into the fire department reserve account. The response was yes.
 - She asked if that was the case for the public works department as well. There would have to be a vote by the town's people if they wish to do that. There is an article in 23 that says that any leftover goes into the Capital reserve account for the Public Works Department.
 - Vernice asked about the LRAP funds, Cindy Abbott stated that she is not sure if we have received it yet. These have to be spent on Capital improvement. This money can only be used to offset taxes. Typically, towns use it in the public works department. When it comes in it goes into the revenue account.

- Ryan Willette made a motion that Vernice Boyce post the journal entries 480/481/482/483, Laura Greeley seconded and all approved.
- Vernice Boyce printed the balance for Jim Waterman for the Fire Department's Capital reserve account.
- The fire department was charged for 2 lease payments that were from public works. What is the Toshiba payment and which account does it belong to (6004 payment? 13-foot body) She suggested that in the future it be placed under debt services.
- Vernice asked Cindy about the NSF check. 7-2-2020 Has this money been paid? There were two other checks that were returned as well.
- A general ledger summary report was created with an auditor fix and was discussed.
- The debit card should not be connected to the primary checking account. There is a \$203.89 withdrawal that is not accounted for.
- Vernice asked about the health insurance reductions and when it came out.
- Vernice would like clarification on NSF checks. There are 3 checks from the treasurer state of Maine that she would like to know what they were for.
- There are many checks that were not cashed, \$31000 that are greater than a year old. There is no expiration on the checks. When new checks are ordered there needs to be something that says void after 90 days. The plumbing payments to the state should be paid quarterly.
- Ryan Willette will reach out to Ron Smith regarding a payroll company to start as of 1-1-2024
- Ryan Willette will join the zoom for Delta Ambulance.
- Ryan Willette made a motion for an executive session with the town attorney for tomorrow afternoon with the town attorney for a legal issue, Laura Greeley seconded and all approved.
- Repairs to the post office building were proposed by MCore which manages the post offices.
 - Nicks in the wall in the lobby.
 - Mark on the opposite wall.
 - Break room has a leak in the ceiling that needs to be fixed. Appears to be sheetrock.
 - The gutter on the right roof of the building.
 - Crack in the window in the lobby on the upper sash.
 - They would like the ceiling fan removed.
 - The toilet is not secured to the floor.
 - Steve Bennett provided some suggestions of individuals that could make the repairs.

14. Date of Next Meeting: Monday, January 2, 2024. 6pm

15. Adjourn: Ryan Willette made a motion to adjourn, at 9:35pm, Steve Bennett seconded and all approved.