

Meeting Minutes
Freedom Board of Selectmen
Date: 2-26-2024
Approved 3-11-2024

In attendance: Steve Bennett, Ryan Willette, Laura Greeley, Judy Bennett, Beth Owen-Mishou, Elaine Higgins, Meredith Coffin, Ellie Hess, Erin Bennett, Rhonda Leyden, Joe Freeman, Jim Waterman,

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

1. Call Meeting to Order / Finalize Agenda: Steve Bennett called the meeting to order at 6:01pm.
2. Announcements:
 - Landon Feeney got a 6-pound, 13-ounce bass out of the pond.
3. Review and Approve Minutes: Secretary's Report: Laura Greeley made a motion that the minutes be accepted as amended and placed on file, Ryan Willette seconded and all approved.
4. Fire Chief & EMA Director Reports: Jim Waterman
 - Jim Waterman asked about the Davis Rd by Cummings Cemetery and if the Beavers have been removed.
 - No word from Unity Ambulance
 - 2 chimney fires recently.
 - The fire department can do chimney cleanings and donations are accepted for this.
 - Jim asked what the start date for the bridge work is.
 - Meredith Coffin asked how long the work will take to replace the bridge.
 - Laura Greeley asked who reaches out to us from the state. Peter Coffin was the response.
5. Public Works Director Report:
 - Ryan Willette reported:
 - F350 is being worked on.
 - Edges on the wings are being worked on.
 - Laura Greeley asked if the comparison with the costs of other towns has been addressed.
6. Treasurer's Report: Cindy Abbott
 - Payroll Warrant = \$ 9323.13 A/P Warrant = \$ 75,197.12
 - Camden National = \$623,405.77
 - Municipal Now Checking =\$10,216.98
 - We received County Tax Letter for 2024: has increased
 - Received 1 check from the State of Maine in the amount of \$16,996.45 for revenue sharing.

- Ryan Willette made a motion to pay the A/P Warrant = \$ 75,197.12, Laura Greeley seconded and all approved.
 - Ryan Willette made a motion to carry the payroll warrant that is payable on 2/26/2024 until tomorrow morning and that the payroll warrant be signed 2/27/2024 after the errors have been addressed.
 - Laura Greeley thanked Steve Bennett for setting up the new checking account which earns interest for the town.
7. Town Clerk & Tax Collector Report: Cindy Abbott
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8. Citizen's Issues and Questions
- Meredith Coffin asked about the \$4000 grant for the fire department. Ryan Willette clarified what it was for.
 - Joe Freeman: asked if he would be getting a cell phone and pay stub. Laura Greeley will address this.
9. Review Correspondence
10. Town Officials Reports
- Code Enforcement: Jackie Robbins
 - Assessors Agent: Jackie Robbins
 - Health Official: Patricia Ashland
 - School Board Director: Elenore Hess
 - Ellie Hess asked if the select board received their invitation to the budget workshop. The finance committee would like the select board to be involved in this process 3/26/2024 and April 1, 2024.
 - Paul Penna has been renewed for another year, for 100 days (2 days per week).
 - Freedom will not be involved directly in the consolidation vote. This will be on the 3-11-2024 agenda.
 - There are 10 teachers between Liberty and Brooks. There will be cost savings by consolidating.
 - Laura Greeley asked if the school board is listening to the people and has concerns about how the community members are feeling about closing the schools. She also asked if when this information is presented to the towns if the numbers are going to be shared with the towns? She asked if Liberty takes over their own school, how will that affect us in terms of taxes? Ellie Hess that it is not that much and it will save us money in other areas.
 - General Assistance Officer: Ryan Willette
 - Plumbing Inspector: Jackie Robbins
 - Solid Waste Director: Phil Bloomstein
 - Animal Control Officer: Peter Nerber
11. Town Boards & Committee Reports:
- Planning Board:
 - Laura Greeley asked if there was a planning board meeting tomorrow night with the applicants for the subdivision and the owner of the land. Tyler Hadyniak stated that they are not yet sure who will be attending, tomorrow evening.

- Recreational Committee: Alyssa Brugger
 - Ryan Willette reported that the Fishing Derby went well.
- Appeals Board: Michael Smith
- Historical Society: Wilson Hess
 - The Freedom Follies was a success.
 - Anticipating readings at the meeting house this summer.
- Cemetery Committee: Steve Holmes
- Budget Committee:
 - Next meeting is May 15th.
- CDAC Committee: Lex Bennett
 - They met with Kaylee Ward who will be doing the analysis of the Canary Lot.
- Broadband Committee: Phil Bloomstein
- Ad Hoc Policy Committee: Rene Ouellet
 - The select board met with the policy board committee and have established some new ones.
- Ad Hoc Education Committee: Laura Greeley
- High Impact Transmission Line Ad Hoc Committee: Heather Donahue:

12. Old Business:

- The Electric Facilities and Transmission Ordinance has a final version that was edited but Meredith Coffin and Steve Bennett. The only ones they feel should be on the website are the final version with the edits and the original one.
 - Ryan Willette made a motion to put the final version of the EFTC ordinance as well as the originally voted on ETFC ordinance on the website and remove any other copies, Laura Greeley seconded that.
 - Ryan Willette made a motion that the select board be allowed to nullify the vote on this from tonight, tomorrow morning if MMA states that we need to post the red line version.
- The town Budget was lowered by approximately \$150,000.
 - Steve Bennett made a motion to sign the warrant for the budget and pass it on to Cindy Abbott for the town meeting, Laura Greeley seconded and all approved.
- Meredith Coffin asked if the warrants were going to be sent out to the town members prior to the town meeting. It does not appear that these could be sent prior to the town meeting. It was stated that they are available in the town report which can be picked up by any resident at the town office.

13. New Business:

- Steve Bennett introduced Rhonda Leyden, who is new to town. She had done research on solar panels. She has concerns with commercial solar panels. She is not opposed to personal solar use. An article was distributed.
- Steve Bennett made a motion to go into executive session at 6:28pm for 1MRSA 405 (6) A, for personnel issues, Ryan Willette seconded and all

approved. They came out of executive session at 6:50 pm and no decisions were made.

- Laura Greeley made a motion to proceed with a just cause hearing against appeals board member Eleanor MacMakin, Ryan Willette seconded and all approved.
- The Bryant Road agreement: there is a request that he be able to access a driveway. They will meet with that resident.
- Steve Bennett presented his history as a Selectman in the Town of Freedom
 - He started the 3-year rotation, wrote that ordinance.
 - Determined who owned the sandy pond dam.
 - He has been opposed to closing our public works department and not contracting out. It saves the town money.
 - 2007: he did not run so he could oppose the wind turbines and he is opposed to high power transmission lines, he is opposed to industrial solar arrays on farm land.
 - 2008 he ran again. The rate of tax increase has decreased.
 - 2015 he brought back a spreadsheet for bookkeeping as he feels this increases transparency.
 - 2016: 7 member budget committee membership. There needs to be a revenue streams to decrease taxes. Renovated the post office and created a lease and a capital reserve account.
 - In support of the improvements in the public works department.
 - Believer in the application of the crushed stone base for the roads.
 - Acquired 14 acres of land around the town garage.
 - 2016 created their own solid waste department
 - Joined the MRC
 - 2018 town voted to join the MMA and employee's health fund
 - 2020 set up a retirement account for town employees
 - Acquired a grant initially for the Canary property.
 - 2023 town adopted a town charter, proud of the town for supporting it.
 - He encouraged the town to continue to find ways to increase our revenue streams. He also suggested:
 - 1. Use the extra revenue to hire a part time town manager.
 - 2. Buy some land next to the town post office for safer parking.
 - He has been amazed by Laura and Ryan's knowledge and work on the board.
 - He has enjoyed working for the town as a member of the Select Board.
- Ryan Willette stated that he has enjoyed working with Steve Bennett.
- Steve Bennett was thanked for his service.

14. Date of Next Meeting: Monday March 11 2024. 6pm

15. Next Select Board Workshop 7:30 am on 3-4-2024

16. Adjourn: Steve Bennett made a motion to adjourn, at 7:45 pm, Ryan Willette seconded and all approved.