

Meeting Minutes
Freedom Board of Selectmen
Date: 6-12-2023

In attendance: Ron Price, Steve Bennett, Ryan Willette, Jim Waterman, Beth Owen-Mishou, Jasmine Willette, Elaine Higgins, Nathan McCann, Tyler Hadyniak, April Turner (via zoom), Cindy Abbott, Bob Kanzler, Trudy Price, Laura Greeley, Anne-Marie Adamson via zoom, Meredith Coffin (via zoom), Josh Sutor, Raven Carlezon, Kyle Price, Ben Feeney, Heather Donahue, Ron Littlefield, Kyle Hadyniak (via zoom), Elenore Hess, Lynn Hadyniak, Chuck Hadyniak, Phil Bloomstein,

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

- Call Meeting to Order / Finalize Agenda: Ron Price called the meeting to order at 6 pm.
- Review and Approve Minutes: Secretary's Report: Ron Price made a motion to approve the minutes as amended and put on file, Ryan Willette seconded and all approved.
- Fire Chief & EMA Director Reports: Jim Waterman
 - Diane and Mark Winn now have an address for their new house on the North Palermo Road.
 - Knox fire protection. We have not been paid yet from them and it should have been received on the 1st of June. It is paid in thirds.
- Public Works:
 - Ryan Willette reported
 - They continue to work on signs.
 - The program was purchased in 2010 so we can purchase it at a lesser price, approximately \$100.
 - Ryan Willette clarified what the program offers for the town. With the node it will be \$140.
- Treasurer's Report: Cindy Abbott
 - Payroll Warrant = \$6595.02, A/P warrant = \$11,387.88.
 - Ending Checkbook balance: \$208,995.80 March Cash Balance
 - Camden National Balance: \$227,097.04
 - The postage meter needs to be upgraded.
 - Ryan Willette asked if there were other vendors for the postage meter. He found that the software we have will not match federal expectations. Ryan Willette will look into a new postage meter.
 - Cindy is requesting permission to use the credit card to purchase notary supplies from Amazon for Kristy.
 - Received check from Share Owners Services for Black Hills Dividends for \$67.50
 - Steve Bennett stated that this should be credited to the Smithton Cemetery Account. Cindy Abbott stated that it went into the

General Fund. It has to go into the Smithton Cemetery Account. He stated that it has to be fixed and it was requested that it be fixed.

- Cindy provided the Select Board with the amount in the post office fund. Ryan Willette stated that the post office needs a new toilet. It is a triple net lease. They pay the expenses and we get the rent (\$900 per month) There is a \$50,000 post office fund. He thanked Cindy Abbot for getting this information.
- Ron Price asked about the rebate for the heat pumps and Cindy Abbott stated that it arrived today. Ron Price noted that it was not in the report.
- Steve Bennett made a motion to pay the Payroll Warrant = \$6595.02, A/P warrant = \$11,387.88, Ryan Willette seconded and all approved.
- Steve Bennett made a motion that Cindy Abbott use the credit card to purchase the notary materials for Kristy in the amount of \$80, Ryan Willette seconded and all approved.
- Town Citizens can get things notarized for free.
- Town Clerk & Tax Collector Report: Cindy Abbott
 - Voting tomorrow.
- Citizen's Issues and Questions:
 - Tyler Hadyniak: Has asked about the Auditor's report and findings and was concerned that it was going to be shared in an executive session. He feels that debriefing over an auditor's report should be a public process. Just and proper cause for an executive session is needed to have an executive session on this issue.
 - Ron stated that he receives a management letter, and that this letter is for management only.
 - Ron Price responded that the audit problem does not just entail the people in these positions and it involves people not currently in positions. The auditor stated that he did not detect that anyone did anything illegal. It appeared more to be incompetence.
 - Tyler Hadyniak asked about the management letter. Ron Price was not sure if that could be made public.
 - Ron Price stated that the accountant has said it does not now need to be reviewed in an executive session.
 - Steve Bennett stated that Karen Oliverie said that the audit was the final audit and that final numbers were the final numbers.
 - 2001-2002-2003 Management Letter said the Treasurer and Clerk positions should be separate people.
 - He called Ron Smith last Wednesday, and let him know that he and Ryan Willette could not make it.
 - June 23rd at xxx will be the meeting to review the final report.
 - Steve Bennett responded that he contacted Ron Smith and asked why it would be in executive session. Ron Smith stated to Steve Bennett that he did not care if it was in executive session.

- Tyler Hadyniak asked that the management letter be made public. Steve Bennett agreed that he would like to see that public as well.
 - Heather Donohue: is concerned about parking in her driveway on Beaver Ridge and she has been parking in the turn around. It was flat and now it is a ditch. There are now no parking signs in the turn around. She put in a driveway permit and was told that she could not do it due to the drainage ditch. She was told she could put in a culvert. Ryan Willette would like to go and see it. The turnaround is on Tina Ward's land. She stated that there was not a request to take that much of her property.
 - Steve Bennett stated that the town has a right to divert the water.
 - Elaine Higgins: Wanted to remind people that there is voting tomorrow and she will be collecting emails at the meeting in order to share town notices and emergency information. In order for there to be lists the fire department and the town will need to have separate lists.
 - Laura Greely: reminder for the school board vote. She is encouraging people to vote against it for the kids and teachers.
 - Nathan McCann agrees with Laura that we should vote against the charter and school board budget.
- Review Correspondence
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- Town Officials Reports
 - Code Enforcement Officer: Jackie Robbins
 - Emergency Management Officer
 - Waste Management:
 - Health Official
 - Assessors Report
 - Animal Control Officer: Peter Nerber
 - Health Committee
 - Planning Board:
 - Recreational Committee:
 - Appeals Board:
 - Charter Committee: Tyler Hadyniak
 - Historical Society
 - Cemetery Committee:
 - Budget Committee:
 - CDAC Committee:
 - BroadBand: Phil Bloomstein.
 - There was a coalition that voted in favor in forming a Broad Band utility district. So the towns would own the equipment and fiber. Then the towns would have more say. The state promoted these utility districts. The coalition applied for the grant and were told they would not qualify for revenue bonding. They met with MCA and they said they would work with the coalition to get the funding. They

met with them and FAME and the Maine Municipal Bond Bank and they discovered that no agency was going to help. They formed an alliance with the Island Institute and KBCOG and the Midcoast Council of Governments were involved. There is about \$53,000 still available. He contacted Chip Curry and others and recently Chip Curry cornered the chairman of FAME and called and put the person on speaker phone. The next day he followed up and there is a foundation called Artaris and that it funds broadband across the country. He set up a meeting. Sewall foundation also promotes broadband and they are also meeting with the committee. There is \$12 million left in the sweep at the state level. The chairman of the broadband committee was asked to speak at a state level. We can only be patient for so long, he suggests waiting til September and waiting to see if funding is achieved. They continue to talk to broadband vendors. Maine Municipal Gigabit was not funded. Chip Curry is working to get this funded. If it does not work out by September he will push for a public/private partnership.

- Steve Bennett: stated that he feels that it was a failed effort to begin with but thanked Phil for his efforts.
 - Phil Bloostein said we had a 3-year bill, they thought that the \$11 million would build out the project until the third quarter of the second year. The rule changed and said you had to build in one year. You would need the revenue bond in one year. He felt Steve's criticism was valid.
 - Steve Bennett stated that Direct Communications' goal was to provide broadband to rural communities, as it is stated in their mission statement.
 - Elaine Hlggins: Direct Communications will not go to every residence and they will own everything and their pricing will change.
 - Ron Price: Good report from Phil Bloomstein.
 - Steve Bennett made a motion to have Direct Communications come and make a presentation to the town, Ryan Willette seconded and all approved.
 - Phil Bloomstein stated that they may want to check the agreement that they had signed. Ron Price reiterated that it would just be a presentation. Phil will contact them and set it up.
- Solid Waste Director: Phil Bloomstein
 - We are a bind in that the Hamden facility is closed. They may have a buyer for the Hamden Facility. PERC is in insolvency. There may be optimism if the Hamden Facility opens again.
 - Steve Bennett stated that they stated that MRC is part of the reason they are going under and what they are being paid to generate electricity, as was stated in the Bangor Daily News.

- He has written to Mike Carrol and he gets the same response and will come and meet with the Select Board if we requested.
- School Board: Elenore Hess
 - Yesterday was graduation, 67 graduates. 2 graduates from the alternative ed program.
 - She shared the variety of colleges that students would be attending.
 - Wednesday night's meeting has a full agenda.
 - Ben Grassi has spent 8 weeks in France and is speaking to the board about the report.
 - Closing the Unity Elementary School and moving the pre K up to the complex.
 - The Elementary School is being closed but not the Central Office at this time.
 - Closing of the Brooks school in 2025. It has about 100 students.
 - All the 11 Towns vote for the directors for all 11 towns. Wayne Marshal from Walso is a write-in.
 - She shared how hard it is to create a budget. There is a chart in the town book. The school has progressively gone down in how much they have requested of the town budget. They are working hard to maintain the budget.
 - She is concerned that people may be making negative comments about Mt. View and that may be why people are choosing to go other places.
 - Elenore Hess: looked into the Unicorn education. She feels we should approach things with knowledge and not hearsay.
 - She reported on some of the scholarships that were granted.
 - Carlezon Raven had a question about the abroad program.
 1. Various citizens reported that it is funded through fundraising and that they stay with host families.
 - Laura Greeley: asked if a committee could be formed to speak with parents about why people are pulling their children. Perhaps that this would help to address some of the issues the parents are experiencing.
 1. Building Excellence committee has been formed and hopes to bring in more families to address this.
 - Steve Bennett: spoke about the school budget in comparison to the town's budget. The state is funding 55% and that is a big contribution. He was happy to

hear about the Tanya Hubbard Scholarship, as he knew her. He expressed appreciation to Elenore Hess.

1. Question: Future RSU3. Is anyone making an effort to continue this organization? He has financial records in his barn. He would like to know if space could be found for these records.
 - Elaine Higgins suggested that they put a notice in the school flier and perhaps some younger people would like to join this group.
- Old Business
 - Steve Bennett reported on the quote from Waste Management 28-32 thousand. DM and J was 18,000. The fill for the foundation was 1000 and we can provide our own fill so it would be 17,000. If we take down the barn the cost would be \$14,000. DM and J are DEP certified. Ryan Willette suggested contacting Central Maine Disposal and thought they could provide a quote.
 - Rule 706-A. Bill Van Tounan tax assessor, highly recommended by Bill Kelly and Jackie Robbins. He sent 3 706-A forms as samples. He is well prepared to write these. He wrote a request for us and Steve ran it by the town attorney. The cost would be 0 for the town. He agreed to do it out of courtesy. The papers were prepared for the Select Board to Sign. Steve has reviewed the paperwork as well as Bill Kelly.
 - Nathan McCann asked why he was doing without cost.
 - Steve Bennette stated that we did not have a TIF agreement. Towns have these because then the schools cannot have any benefit. The majority of wind turbines are in unorganized territories. The value of these is proprietary information. Every wind turbine project that was approved by the state of Maine has a requirement for a decommissioning bond. There is no decommissioning bond for these.
 - Trudy Price expressed concern about continually complaining about the wind turbines.
 - Ron Price would like the opportunity to read the 706-A, and is not signing it at this time.
 - Steve Bennett made a motion to sign the 706-A, Ryan Willette seconded. Ron Price recused himself from the vote.
 - Ryan Willette repaired items at the post office today.
 - New Business:
 - Bob Kanzler and Ben Feeney expressed concern about the way the Select people are talking with one another.
 - Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday June 20th, 2023 at 6pm
 - Adjourn: Ron Price made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:05. Steve Bennette seconded and all approved.