

Meeting Minutes
Freedom Board of Selectmen
Date: 10/27/2025
Zoom Meeting: Meeting ID: 431 235 8395
Passcode: TownMeet

Approved 11-2-2025

Select Board Meeting

In attendance: Laura Greeley, Rene Ouellet, Lissa Widoff, Beth Owen-Mishou, Elaine Higgins, Richard Bickford, Jim Waterman, Joe Freeman, Brian Murphy, Bob Kanzler, Cindy Abbot, Tyler Hadyniak, Heather Donahue, Mary Ann Bennett, Prentice Grassi, Kevin Malady, Lynn Hadyniak, Clara Alvarez, Steve Bennett, Kyle Price, Charlie Palmer, Tim Biggs, Patrick Terry, Dylan Turner (via zoom), Dan Hallet (via zoom)

1. Call Meeting to Order / Finalize Agenda: Laura Greeley called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm.
2. Announcements:
3. Review and Approve Minutes: Secretary's Report:
 - **Rene Ouellet moved to approve the minutes as amended and place them on record, Laura Greeley seconded and Lissa Widoff abstained.**
4. Fire Chief & EMA Director Reports: Jim Waterman
 - Stop the Bleed: free class at the county EMA office. Teaching people to apply tourniquets until EMR arrives. Call the county EMA office to register for a class.
 - Tuesday Night, Functional exercise for class 2 hurricane. Anyone interested in participating can come the the fire house from 6-8pm
 - Chimney Cleaning: there are some openings still available contact the fire department if you are in need.
 - Be careful of deer.
 - Civil Defense Class: Kyle Price discussed emergency communications. He suggested looking at the county emergency center. He suggested various communication strategies. Aborn Hill has a repeater and Waldo County has an AM broadcast channel.
 - Laura Greeley asked who they should contact if a neighbor has a road that is being blocked and there are cars blocking a right of way, as it prevents people from accessing the house. Jim Waterman offered to meet with Laura Greeley to discuss this further.
 - Charlie Palmer spoke and he would like to put a name on a right of way on his property calling it Woodland Way. He asked how he could go about

doing this. Jim Waterman specified that there needs to be more than one resident off that branch. Mr. Palmer stated that there are two residences. Lissa Widoff asked for a sketch so they can understand what is being requested and by whom. Rene Ouellet agreed that it would be helpful to have more information. Cindy Abbot will help Mr. Palmer create a sketch.

5. Treasurer's Report:

- Laura Greeley was able to connect with Vernice and Ron Smith and Ron Smith has agreed to let Vernice finish her training with Contessa. Then we can have a more accurate Select Board All accounts.
 - Rene Ouellett asked if those expectations had been stated yet. Laura Greeley clarified what was being asked.

6. Public Works: Loren Fitch

- The plan is available with regard the cost comparisons for the garbage truck.

7. Town Clerk & Tax Collector Report: Cindy Abbott

- Laura Greeley asked that each of the select board members would take a third of the tax reports/bills and confirm that all of the assessments were the same as last year. All agreed.
- Information on Veterans: 3 vehicles can be specified under the veteran's exemption and the person's name has to be on the title.
- Pole Permit for the corner of Ayer Ridge Road and Belfast Road by CMP was requested.
 - **Lissa Widoff made a motion to sign the permit request from CMP for one power pole installation on Ayer Ridge Road, Rene Ouellet seconded and all approved.**
- Cindy Abbott expressed concern about the abatements that were not returned by Jackie.
 - **Lissa Widoff moved to approve the abatement for 126 Pleasant Street in the amount of \$266.17, Rene Ouellet seconded the motion and all approved.**
 - **Lissa Widoff moved to correct Account #499 in the amount of \$184.47 to adjust it back to the homestead exemption instead of veterans, Rene Ouellet seconded the motion and all approved.**
 - **Lissa Widoff made a motion to add a supplement assessment in the amount of \$615.75 to account #204, Rene Ouellet seconded and all approved.**
 - Laura Greeley will reach out to Jackie regarding the abatements that are missing.

- **Lissa Widdoff made a motion to abate account R778 in the amount of \$215.47, Rene Ouellet seconded and Laura Greeley abstained.**
- Mailing: Notice of election for November election, rabies clinic and one other item she would like to include. She asked if it would be ok to include those items in the mailing.

8. Citizens Issues:

- Bob Kanzler asked if the town has ever considered a 5 person board? He mentioned that splitting responsibilities 5 ways might be helpful. He does not feel that our select board people are getting paid fairly for the work they have done.

9. Review Correspondence:

- Elaine Higgins asked about an email she sent to Contessa regarding a request for information regarding how much money has been spent specifically from the Beaver Ridge lawsuit. Laura Greeley will check with Contessa about why they have not received a response.
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10. Town Officials Reports

- Code Enforcement: Cindy Abbott
 - Laura Greeley asked about the Young property. November 13 at 3pm is the date for the inspection. Mr. Young has received notification.
 - Complaint on the Smithton Road regarding a used car dealership being placed on wetlands. No permit has been issued for a used car dealership. The owner would have to go before the planning board because it is a business.
- Assessors Agent: Jackie Robbins
- Health Official: Patricia Ashland
- School Board Director: Eleanor Hess.
- General Assistance Officer: Rene Ouellet
 - An application was received and was denied.
- Plumbing Inspector: Cindy Abbott
- Solid Waste Director: Phil Bloomstein
- Animal Control Officer: Johnna Hatt
- Town Boards & Committee Reports:
 - Planning Board: Tyler Hadyniak
 - Recreational Committee: Chair yet to be determined
 - Lots of people showed up for the Trunk of Treat, over 60 children came.
 - Veterans Day: Pot Luck and ceremony, It starts at 11am

- Appeals Board: pending new appointment
- Cemetery Committee: Steve Holmes
- Budget Committee: Laura Greeley
- CDAC Committee: Lex Bennett
- Broadband Committee: Phil Bloomstein
- Ad Hoc Policy Committee: Elaine Higgins
- Budget Committee:
- Comp Plan Committee:

11. Old Business:

- Deputy Clerk: Laura Greeley asked if Rene Ouellet has had a chance to look into who can hire a deputy clerk. He had not done that but will do that moving forward.
- Planning Board Appointment:
 - Laura Greeley has been contacted by reporters regarding the planning board and the recall. She prefers to respond to citizens via email. There was also an article posted this afternoon that was concerning with regard to the language used. She was concerned that the article was not verified by the author or the paper.
 - Lissa Widoff spoke about her motion last week and she said she did not feel intimidated and she felt the need to slow the conversation down and take the time to hear what people had to say. She had also requested a letter from Christopher Spaulding, Lindsey Knapp and Richard Bickford. Since that time Christopher has submitted a letter.
 - **Lissa Widoff moved to reappoint Tyler Hadyniak to the planning board for a 2-year term ending in 2027, Rene Ouellet seconded, Laura Greeley was opposed.**
 - Lissa Widoff wanted to acknowledge that the issues around the solar and moratorium were of concern. He was chastised by the planning board and select board and he has subsequently acknowledged he was wrong and apologized. In June the planning board had lost another senior member. She feels that his experience is needed. The planning board works as a team and he was selected by the members of that committee to chair. She feels that he has organized his team to get jobs done. She feels that he has been proactive in responding. She feels they have a functional team and she is not comfortable with withdrawing that expertise.

- Laura Greeley reiterated that had she not been looking out for the town we would not have been sitting here. She feels that there is hypocrisy. She wonders if it was a good sampling of the people around town. She will continue to attend planning board meetings.
- Lissa Widoff reported that she did speak to a lot of people with a variety of opinions. She supports the team that they have.
- Rene Ouellet stated that his point of view was that they had 4 candidates and in the past we did not even have people who wanted to serve on boards. In the past we did not even track terms. He appreciated Chris Spaulding submitting a letter. He made his decision understanding Tyler has made mistakes but overall, he would bring more to the board in terms of his organizational skills. He feels Tyler's skills were stronger.
- Mary Ann Bennett appreciated Laura Greeley attending the meetings. There were at least 3 people on the board who were not in favor of the solar array. She felt that they have very open communication as a board.
- Heather Donahue said that they are reinforcing and affirming a candidate that has repeatedly hurt the town and she feels that he should be disqualified.
 - Bob Kanzler had received what he felt were threatening letters.
- Steve Bennett requested that the board move the vote.
- Clara Alvarez asked about the letters that were sent from the planning board. Laura Greeley confirmed that those letters were read and discussed.
- Heppard's request: Rene Ouellet stated that he has spent time reviewing the history of how they got to this point. There were town ordinances that the town has approved. There were two boards and a CEO who have weighed in on the issue. In June of 99 Mr. Brochu got a permit to put in a sugar house on the property with no plumbing or electrical permits. In 2012 Mr. Brochu put in a permit to enlarge the sugar house and wood shed and was denied. There were additional permits submitted for a septic system. He reviewed all of the subsequent applications. Rene Ouellet asked which buildings the septic was connected to.
 - Laura Greeley mentioned that the one apartment should be the only dwelling. The owner wants to sell it. In the no action letter the

Atty stated that we be very specific. Lissa Widoff reviewed the septic issues and permitting. The vagueness in all of this is what warrants a compassionate response. How do we make sure this does not occur again? It was suggested that our ordinance be strengthened by clearly clarifying expectations. Lissa Widoff would like clarification as to which will be the dwelling and which is the septic connected to. She would like to be very specific about what is allowed to remain and in what capacity. Lissa Widoff is comfortable allowing the owner to determine which building would be their primary dwelling. Once they have this information, she is comfortable with a non-conforming lot.

- Lissa Widoff moved to support the board writing a letter for a non-conforming lot including information regarding which will be the primary dwelling and which is connected to the septic system and that no further modifications could be made.
 - Is there a kitchen in the sugar shack? There will only be one residence.
 - Lynn Handyniak asked what defines a kitchen?
 - Rene Ouellet said that he felt they just needed a consensus not a motion.
 - Laura Greeley will speak to the owners tomorrow.

12. New Business:

- Mary Ann Kenney: Will be the moderator for the town meeting to allow Rene Ouellet to respond to the recall letter. Laura Greeley will send Rene Ouellet the contact information for the moderator.
- Application for Special Events was reviewed: It is an addendum to the special event policy.
 - **Rene Ouellet moved to approve the town of Freedom Special Event application as an addendum to the Special Event Policy, Lissa Widoff seconded and all approved.**
- Disband the Policy Committee: Laura Greeley would like to disband the committee. Lissa Widoff would like to see the committee finish the personnel policy manual. She would like to see that finished and then look at what else needs to be done. This could be a good way to delegate the responsibilities with others that are capable.
- Proposal for reeval of town properties: Rene Ouellet stated what a mess it was this year. It is a mess in part because we do not trust our evaluations. Jim Murphy suggested that we hire someone and he could train them to do a townwide valuation. We could also hire a company that has trained individuals and a track record. Rene Ouellet suggested

exploring both options. He suggested we send out a request for proposals.

- Bob Kanzler stated that when a place is sold that there should be a reevaluation.
 - Laura Greeley reviewed what occurred this year and that things have not been done correctly in Trio. Lissa Widoff clarified what an assessor would do.
 - Lissa Widoff will start the request for proposal for the assessor.
 - Brian Murphy asked how often reevaluations should occur. Laura Greeley said the state suggests every 3 years.
 - Rene Ouellet suggested putting money in reserve to support this.
 - Kyle Price spoke about assessments.
 - Town Meeting: March 13-14 is the proposed date. February 16th the warrant would have to be ready. It needs to be scheduled with Mount View and a moderator needs to be chosen.
 - MMA regarding deductible on law suit: Laura Greeley followed up. Molly let them know that they have 2 attorneys. \$2500 will cover what has already been done and this bill needs to be paid.
 - Employer access second notice, Laura Greeley will pass that on to Contessa
 - Travis Price: Maine Revenue applied penalties and interest. We received almost all of the money back from the IRS. Bill Kelly said that Laura Greeley can generate a letter for Travis Price to release him from liability. Next Monday evening she will bring a letter to be reviewed and witnessed
 - RH Smith: We are waiting for a response from them regarding requesting fees to be returned.
 - Workers Compensation: waiting for more information on rates.
 - County Budget Committee: Laura Greeley is concerned about the lack of transparency regarding where the money is and how much has been spent.
 - Maine State Bar Association on November 14 at 9am. For Mediation for the Beaver Ridge Lawsuit. Derwood Parkinson is mediating. Our atty will send the notice of mediation when he receives it.
 - Assessment review: the select board members will take 1/3 each of the total properties and be prepared to discuss it next week.
13. Date of Next Meeting: Monday October 27, 2025 at 6:00 pm.
15. Adjourn: **Rene Ouellet made a motion to adjourn at 9:00 pm., Laura Greeley seconded and all approved.**

Recording Information:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/SETVpZ4b0tKrUYkYWZn9jVZoNCIGTRp2s87yDOZdvE8oe t9FwAb1gBYFDNoz-ngF.-558miYLglBCswRH>

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