

Meeting Minutes
Freedom Board of Selectmen
Date: 5-15-2023
Approved 5-22-2023

In attendance: Steve Bennett, Ryan Willette, Jim Waterman, Beth Owen-Mishou, Bob Kanzler, Jasmine Willette, Tim Biggs, Joe Freeman, Laura Greeley, Elaine Higgins, Anne-Marie Adamson (via zoom) Brandon Sutor, Raven Carlezon, Josh Sutor, Kirk Thomas, Nathan McCann, Jason Young, Elenore Hess, Tyler Hadyniak (via zoom), Kristen Collins (via zoom)

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

1. Call Meeting to Order / Finalize Agenda: Steve Bennett called the meeting to order at 6:03pm.
2. Review and Approve Minutes: Ryan Willette made a motion to approve the minutes as amended, Steve Bennett seconded and all approved.
3. Fire Chief & EMA Director Reports: Jim Waterman
4. Public Works
 - Out grading: Clark Road and Raven Rd are done. They are continuing with the other roads.
 - Jim Waterman asked about the Dead-End signs and when they would be installed. Ryan Willette will look into it.
 - When sweeping on Ayer Ridge Road across from the old craft shop an open well was found full of water. Jackie will be informed.
 - Ryan Willette suggested getting some grading ahead signs.
5. Treasurer's Report: Cindy Abbott
 - \$5457.31 Payroll, A/P =\$11,036.30
 - \$208,995.80 checkbook balance in March still not balanced but Trio is working on a fix as well as Karen.
 - Doug Thomas has requested an abatement due to an error.
 - Cindy will be out at trainings on 5/18/23 and 5/22/23. These are for customer service and tax collector certification
 - Ryan Willette made a motion to accept the payroll warrant for \$5457.31 Payroll, and the A/P warrant for \$11,036.30, Steve Bennett seconded and all approved.
 - Steve Bennett stated that we are about 38% through the year and 35% percent of the budget has been spent.
6. Town Clerk & Tax Collector Report: Cindy Abbott
7. Citizen's Issues and Questions
 - Laura Greeley talked about how we could look at why the 200 students are leaving. She was not happy that she was shut down because she is not getting answers to the questions she is asking, about what is being taught in the health classrooms. She has attended the meetings and has not gotten answers.

- Laura Greeley asked about our drug policy in town. Whose responsibility in town is it to protect our town from liability with regard to drug use. Steve Bennett responded that we are required by law to write policies and that many were written and that many have disappeared over time. More should be written. Elaine Higgins and Rainy Oulette will be working on writing new policies. She asked if the town was negligent in not having the appropriate policies.
 - In 2007 the board did not renew the policies that had been developed.
 - Our public works department is comparable to the DOT in the tasks that they complete. Should our town have a 0-drug tolerance policy so there is no liability to the town?
 - Ryan Willette and Steve Bennett have stated that they cannot discuss the situation, in reference to personnel issues.
- Kirk Thomas asked if we need a director at the public works. It was stated there are two people working there now.
- Ben Feeny asked if citizens can repair roads. No was the answer, it has to be a town employee.

8. Review Correspondence

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9. Town Officials Reports

- Code Enforcement Officer: Jackie
 - Someone is going door to door and Jackie is looking into it.
- Garbage:
 - Tires without stickers at the end of Beaver Ridge Road.
 - There were originally 70 tires out there and now 56 and Chuck Hadyniak will put stickers on the remaining.
 - Carpets were not cut up.
- Animal Control Officer: Peter Nerber
- Planning Board: Tyler Hadyniak, had a site visit at the Curra Farm to look at the solar array.
- Recreational Committee
- Appeals Board
- Charter Committee: Tyler Hadyniak, finalized the draft after the public hearing. May 14th it was submitted to the town and waiting for the June 13th vote. It has to be posted before May 30th. Posters and flyers will be posted at least 7 days prior to the vote.
 - Tyler Hadyniak clarified a concern about a conflict of interest. The charter would be the hardest thing to change. The charter purposely addresses conflict of interest. Amending the charter is easier than revising the charter and this is per Maine law.
- Historical Society
- Cemetery Committee: Cindy Abbott reported that next Tuesday at 3:30 they would be looking at the cemeteries and placing flags. Jeff takes care of all the cemeteries in town.
- Budget Committee: 6pm on the 23rd of May.

- Laura Greeley asked if anyone can attend, the response was yes. This will be discussed on Tuesday. She feels this is another reason for a line-item budget.
- CDAC Committee:
- School Board: **Elenore** Hess (her report is attached)
 - The school board meets one time per month. If not invited she only attends the town select board meetings about every 2-3 months.
 - June 11th graduation. Students can choose the color of their graduation robes.
 - Wednesday May 17 at 6pm is a school board meeting and she encourages the select board to attend. They will be covering facilities.
 - May 24th at 6pm is the budget meeting. Montville has requested information regarding the costs of the community embedded schools and is asking that some of them be closed to save money.
 - There are about 60 students in each of the outlying schools and 100 in Brooks. Many of those buildings were built in the 1930's. A Hariman report will be presented and this discusses the amount of money it will take to update the schools.
 - The state calculates the cost to run a school based on the number of students who are attending that school. The children who participate in school choice affect the number of students going to Mt View. The number of children attending has decreased. Essential Programs and Services (EPS) calculates the money needed per student. There are different reimbursements for different populations. Based on 1016 students, 16.4 million. Freedom has 5.7% of the student population. Therefore the state allocates to Freedom \$936,000 for our students. The amount charged to the students is based on the mill rate which is 6.97. 65.2 million dollars which is up 3.7% from last year. Freedom's contribution is about 1/2 million dollars. Freedom pays 48% of what it costs. We are paying slightly higher than other towns. The budget for the district is 21 million. The district is asking the towns to contribute another 4 million dollars. This includes the nutrition program and adult education. Total evaluation is 931 million dollars for all the towns. Freedom's is 65.2 million. 7% of 4 million is \$272 thousand. \$726,892 = what is due as the difference.
 - Steve Bennett asked if there can still be changes made to reduce these amounts. Specific lines can be adjusted at the upcoming meetings.
 - Laura Greeley asked if a drop in enrollment will change what we are paying? She also asked if Mr. Brown has broken down the increases in the electric bills and gas etc.. to show how much each area has increased.
 - The new bus barn will not have offices in it.

- Cindy Abbott asked about the vans that take kids from one place to another, should they be out on Sundays. If she were to ask about this, what article should she refer to? She asked who keeps track of when the vans were used and Ellie stated that Peter Quimby is in charge of this.
- Laura Greeley stated that she thinks that the school board information is really important and is glad that Ellie was here tonight.
 - She asked about the NEWIA testing that is currently taking place and she would like to know how parents are supposed to know that the children are improving. How are we measuring student progress?
 - Ellie Hess stated that this district is still using the MEA's.
 - Curriculum questions: Unicorn gender in the health class and if the school board has access to the materials being taught in the classrooms. Is there a curriculum that covers gender questions? Ellie responded that yes parents can access the curriculum. There have been 3 public forums.
 - Transgender bathroom questions?
 - Building Educational Excellence committee. It includes the employed educators and Ellie hopes that it will eventually include public members.
 - Ryan Willette asked if there is a breakdown of the number of students from each town. Ellie stated that the ED279 states how many students from each town.
 - Steve Bennett asked the number of children that are homeschooled now and or utilizing school choice. That is about 200 students. That is a loss of about 1.4 million. The board has asked the superintendent to decrease the number of superintendent agreements issued.

10. Old Business

- Tentative application for a Tan note. We have been approved for \$400,000 Steve Bennett feels we will only spend \$100,000. It is less expensive to put it through as a taxable loan rather than from a tax exempt entity.
- Ryan Willette made a motion to have this signed as a docusign, Steve Bennett seconded and all approved.
- Audit: We have the final audit but we don't have the complete audit. The audit is in the town report but it is not the complete audit. The final numbers are accurate.
 - When will the complete audit be available with recommendations?
- The tax budget is still not set due to the school budget.
- The town warrant was signed and was approved on May 1st.
- The bridge on the Mitchell Road needs repair. Elaine Higgins suggested looking at grants to cover the repairs. Ryan Willette stated that we failed all four categories for bridge conditions. He is concerned about the

bridge's condition. Laura Greeley stated that the Mitchell Road is the most used road in town.

- Traffic in town due to The Lost Kitchen. There were many complaints about people blocking driveways and the limited space when cars are parked on the roads. They asked to use the church parking lots on Tuesdays. Steve Bennett said he would talk to the code enforcement officer. Blocking the fire hydrant was also discussed.
- Kirk Thomas asked about the Wind Mills: if they put in new generators should that be considered a capital improvement therefore their evaluation should increase. Steve Bennett stated that the evaluation of the wind mills has been decreased by 44% while everyone else's taxes have been increased. This will be brought up in the budget meeting. Law 706A is a request to the owner of a company and you ask questions regarding their value. The owner would have a specified amount of time to respond.
- Bob Kanzler asked if the town has a map of PFAS. Elaine Higgins stated that there is a map on Maine.gov and Steve Bennett stated that there is only one site in Freedom on Beaver Hill. There is another site as well, Peace Ridge.
- Jason Young asked if the town had seen his letter and Steve Bennett stated that he would be getting a letter of reply. Kristen Collins asked when it could be discussed. Steve Bennett suggested that she contact Atty Kelly. She requested that this issue be put on the agenda for next week. Steve asked her to contact Atty Kelly and also stated that Monday may work. Atty Kelly will be in town at 3 on Monday. She would be available at 4:30 on Monday. She is concerned about time. She will contact Atty Bill Kelly.
- Steve Bennett is going to ask Phil Bloomstein to attend the next meeting to discuss the broad band.
- Raven C. asked about the structure that is now in the middle of the tarred hill on Smithtown Road.

11. New Business

12. Date of Next Meeting: Monday May 22 , 2023 at 6pm

13. Adjourn: Steve Bennett made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 pm. Ryan Willette seconded all approved.