

Meeting Minutes
Freedom Board of Selectmen
4/3/2023

Approved 4/10/2023

In attendance: Ron Price, Steve Bennett, Ryan Willette, Elaine Higgins, Travis Price, Jim Waterman, Beth Owen-Mishou, Clint Spaulding, Christine Spaulding, Jasmine Willette, Jacob Brugger, Laura Greeley, Tim Biggs, Josh Sutor, Joe Freeman, Jasmine Willette, Tyler Hydiniak, Nathan McCann, Cindy Abbott

New Zoom Meeting: Meeting ID: 431 235 8359
Passcode: TownMeet

1. Call Meeting to Order / Finalize Agenda: Ron Price called the meeting to order at 6pm.
2. Review and Approve Minutes: Secretary's Report: Steve Bennett made a motion to accept the minutes as amended, Ryan Willette seconded and all approved.
3. Fire Chief & EMA Director Reports: Jim Waterman
 - o No calls this past week.
 - o Asked about reports from Jackie Robbins and Ron Price stated that Jackie is on vacation.
4. Public Works Director Report: Travis Price
 - o Paul Pare from Dixmont, worked on the engine in the grader.
 - o Ryan Willette asked about repairs. Travis Price shared that he has been working on repairs this week. He needs a Portapower Piston.
 - o Clint Spaulding asked if the grader is on or over budget. Travis Price stated that it is over budget at this time, by about \$1000.
5. Treasurer's Report: Cindy Abbott
 - o Ron Price read the treasurer's report.
 - o Cindy Abbott will not be here tomorrow morning due to training but will be in tomorrow afternoon. Christie will be in the office tomorrow so it will be open.
 - o Payroll warrant \$8,678.06 and A/P warrant \$7,610.75
 - o The check book is still not balanced but Cindy is continuing to work on it.
 - o She will be participating in a Trio training tomorrow.
 - o Steve Bennett made a motion to accept the treasurer's report, Ryan Willette seconded and all approved.
6. Town Clerk & Tax Collector Report: Cindy Abbott
7. Citizen's Issues and Questions
 - o Travis Hydiniak asked if the final auditors report was completed and if it would be available to the public. Ron Price stated that it will be done in mid may and will be available to the public.
 - o Laura Greeley: mentioned that she would like any money that is in excess of what is needed for the budget be used toward property taxes. She stated that based on our incomes we are the 3rd most heavily taxed state

in the nation. She feels that our residents are overtaxed. She feels that 2 months of reserve money could be withheld for the budget.

- Steve Bennett responded, looking at the preliminary audit and fund balance. The eight-year average was a 1.7% increase in our taxes over the last 8 years. He reviewed numbers and stated that the 1.7% increase was in line with inflation. The fund balance is not big enough to pay for a refund of taxes during the year. There is a general fund balance and a He is not expecting the tax increase to be greater than 2.5%
- Clint Spaulding asked if the town budget was higher or the school budget. Steve Bennett stated that the current school budget is \$822,000 and the town is \$879,000. Clint Spaulding stated that he is concerned that the town budget is higher than the school budget. Steve Bennett stated that it fluctuates.
- Elaine Higgins asked about the town hall being closed on Wednesdays. Ron Price stated that they had to go to the training. Jacob Brugger suggested that they open the town office on another day if we have to close during the week.
- Laura Greeley asked about the school board meetings. She discussed that Mr. Brown had stated that they have an extreme back up that involved teacher cuts. Could the people vote down various articles in the school budget so that they did not cut teachers?
- Jacob Brugger stated that it took forever for Unity to respond to a call in Troy and that their response activities were concerning.

8. Review Correspondence

9. Town Officials Reports

- Code Enforcement Officer
- Health Official
- School Board Director
- General Assistance Officer
- Plumbing Inspector
- Solid Waste Director
- Animal Control Officer

10. Town Boards & Committee Reports:

- Planning Board
 - Meeting this month, working on a solar farm ordinance (3rd Tuesdays of the month)
- Recreational Committee: April 8th the Easter Bunny will be coming again at 10am - 2pm.
- Appeals Board
- Charter Committee: Meeting tomorrow night at 6pm
- Historical Society
- Cemetery Committee
- Budget Committee: When the final audit is back, they will meet to discuss it.
- CDAC Committee

11. Old Business

- Tax map: The Select Board Members have been meeting to revise the tax maps. It is taking about 3 hours per map. There are 11 maps and they have gone through 6. They plan to meet to talk with Jackie Robbins when they are done.
 - Monday April 10th at 8 am at the town office to work on tax maps.
12. New Business
- Maine Town and Country Magazine: needs to reflect Ryan Willette's name.
 - Gutter guards: Ron Price mentioned that the gutters on the Post Office need to be addressed and would like gutters on the town hall to stop the water from leaking on the walkway between buildings. Ryan Willette made a motion that Ron contact the company and get an estimate on the cost. Ron Price seconded and all approved.
 - Ryan Willette was contacted by Scott Anderson who was wondering if he could go into the barn, at the Fisher property and retrieve some doors and calf feeders that are in the barn prior to the building being demolished. Steve Bennett would want a waiver from the person stating that they are entering at their own risk. With a waiver they were ok with this.
 - Ryan Willette made a motion that they go into executive session under 1 MRSA 405 (6) A at 6:45 pm and Ron Price seconded. They came out of executive session at 6:55pm.
 - Steve Bennett made a motion that they pay Beth Mishou to transcribe a document for the town, Ryan Willette seconded and all approved.
 - Steve Bennett made a motion to increase Joe Freeman's pay by \$3.00 per hour, Ryan Willette seconded and all approved.
13. Date of Next Meeting: 4-10-2023 at 6pm
14. Adjourn: Ron Price adjourned the meeting at 7pm, Ryan Willette seconded it and all approved.