

Meeting Minutes
Freedom Board of Selectmen
Date: 1/5/2026

Approved 1-12-2026

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

Select Board Meeting

In attendance: Laura Greeley, Rene Ouellet, Lissa Widoff, Tim Biggs, Meredith Coffin, Brian Murphy, Bob Kanzler, Joe Freeman, Cindy Abbot, Stan and Kerrie Taylor, Erin French, Michael Dutton, Kirk Thomas, Julie Thomas

1. Call Meeting to Order / Finalize Agenda: Laura Greeley called the meeting to order at 5:59 pm.
2. Announcements:
 - **At 6:00pm Rene Ouellet moved that they go into executive session for 1MSRA 405 (6) (E) legal consultation, Lissa Widoff seconded and all approved.** They came out of executive session at 7:06 pm with no decisions made
3. Review and Approve Minutes: Secretary's Report:
 - **Lissa Widoff moved to approve the minutes as amended and place them on record, Rene Ouellet seconded and all approved.**
4. Fire Chief & EMA Director Reports: Jim Waterman
 - Central Maine Cost Recovery: Jim would like the Select Board to sign the letter; he will bring in a copy next week.
 - He asked about a date for the Budget Committee. Laura Greeley stated that it has not been scheduled yet and she will let him know as soon as it is.
5. Treasurer's Report: Contesa Mancini (not present)
 - **Rene Ouellet moved that they approve the accounts payable warrant for the week of 1-5-2026 in the amount of \$32,438.05, Lissa Widoff seconded and all approved.**
 - \$3000 donation from the Windmill Company to assist with town citizens who do not qualify for General Assistance, specifically for heat.
 - Tim Biggs asked if the company had been approached regarding the dam repairs. The response was no.
 - Camden National Checking account: \$905,539.20

6. Public Works: Loren Fitch (not present)

- Trash Truck and options: Laura Greeley agrees that we should purchase the second-hand truck found in Pennsylvania. We have a little over \$20,000 in the capital reserve account for trash. Loren Fitch will call them and gather more information regarding travel costs and electronic funds transfers.
 - ***Rene Ouellet made a motion to approve/designate Loren to develop a budget for the cost of going down to buy the new trash truck in Pennsylvania, Lissa Widoff seconded.***
 - ***The motion and second were withdrawn.***
 - **Rene Ouellet made a motion to approve Loren Fitch spending up to \$30,000 for a new trash truck to be purchased in Pennsylvania and the travel expenses for this, Lissa Widoff seconded and all approved.**
- Town Clerk & Tax Collector Report: Cindy Abbott
 - 2025 Taxes: 108 bills are pending, \$120,006.20 is outstanding
 - 2024 Taxes: 26 bills are outstanding
 - 2023 Tax pre notices for 45-day notices for foreclosures have gone out. 14 bills are outstanding
 - Pre Payments for 2026 taxes.
 - Reports for cash received were presented to the Select Board.
 - An Excise Tax report was presented.
 - Nomination papers are available and are due on January 20th, 2026.
 - Laura Greeley asked about the 2 seats that are expiring on the Planning Board and would like them posted.
 - Dog licenses are due by the end of January.
 - Dog licenses can be done online.
 - Upcoming Rabies clinic on 1-10-2026.

7. Correspondence:

- Multiple requests for donation have been received; Laura Greeley will be copying them and will share them with the budget committee.

8. Citizens Issues:

- Marianne Bennett expressed concerns about motorized vehicles on certain roads, particularly noting issues with water runoff and safety.
- Meredith Coffin emphasized the importance of cooperation and compromise in town matters, particularly regarding the ongoing negotiations about the Beaver Ridge Road.
- Lincoln Frasier asked about the light on the Smithton Road and feels that it is dangerous.

- Cindy Abbott reported that Bill Thompson was plowing on that road and it nearly blinded him. She reported that moving forward in the application process it will be stated that the light is not allowed.
- Erin French asked about the concerns with the road and parking right before Christmas and she clarified that they were not having an event, the shop was open and it was just busier than expected. Laura Greeley clarified that it was Loren Fitch who had raised the concern because a customer had been rude to him regarding parking on both sides of the road. Michael Dutton said it would help if Loren posted no parking signs on one side of the road. Additionally, he asked if there is any plan for repaving lower Pleasant Street. Laura Greeley reported that it probably would not be paved this coming summer. Due to the scheduled bridge repair they are going to wait until after the bridge repair before repaving the road. The Select Board will discuss the possibility of patch work repair.
 - Jim Waterman cautioned those at the meeting to be careful going home tonight.
 - Someone asked if trucks could be prevented from using lower Pleasant Street because it is in such bad shape.
- Brian Murphy asked if Lissa Widoff had looked at the hazard plan. She will get it done in January.
- Kirk Thomas wanted to know more about what had been done near his house. There has been a stop work order placed on the property. The town received a letter from the Thomas' requesting that the Code Enforcement officer look into the situation.
 - Cindy Abbott stated that a stop work order was placed on the property. It was emailed originally. Laura Greeley went to the property and reinforced this and then the work started again. Despite being told to stop work the, work has continued. Cindy inspected the site and placed a stop work order, but the contractor continued working despite this. The town is considering imposing fines for disregarding the order and may require the contractor to move machinery off the property. There are concerns about damage to the wetlands and potential impact on Freedom Pond. The town is also considering taking action regarding a fence that was installed too close to Town's property line. Cindy has reached out to the DEP about the wetland violations, and they are investigating.
 - Cindy Abbott will be calling the Forester to come look at the damage that has been done.

- Kirk Thomas asked how the town is going to ensure that no further damage is done.
- The stop work order was issued on 12/28/2026 and was placed on the resident's home. Laura Greeley spoke with the contractor this past Friday and the contractor was apologetic and assured her that he was going to pack up. She received a call shortly after that he had continued to work. The contractor nephew said that he had all of the correct permits.
 - Lissa Widoff asked how things stand with DEP. Cindy Abbott reported that she has sent DEP information clarifying where the wetland is and where the properties are located. Cindy Abbott is also working with DEP to determine if the permits were taken out with regard to the pond added to the property.
 - Cindy Abbott is gathering information from DEP and will continue to update the Selectboard. Rene Ouellet reviewed the rules regarding fines for what has been done without the required permits. Cindy Abbott had asked for the machinery to be removed from the property on that day. The owner stated that the machinery will not be removed. Lissa Widoff asked that Cindy Abbott call DEP and make sure they are on the path to enforcement.
 - Laura Greeley suggested that Cindy Abbott call David and let him know that DEP has been contacted.
 - Violations: Stop Work Order (12/28/25)
 - Follow-up 3 additional times and the individual continued to do the work.
 - Cindy Abbott then clarified that the official date for the stop order would be 1-2-2026. It was requested that the equipment be removed on 1-2-2026.
 - Lissa Widoff asked that a paragraph be written by Cindy Abbott with the sequence of events

and the penalties for what was done. Rene Ouellet asked that the CEO write out what the permitting process is with both the town and the state. Lissa Widoff preferred that it be concise and clear.

- **Lissa Widoff made a motion that the Selectboard levy a fine of \$2500 on the land owner for the stop work order violation provided to them by Cindy Abbot on January 2 ,2026, in addition a fine of \$1000 per day since the excavator was not removed as requested on 1-2-2026, Rene Ouellet seconded and all approved**
- Bob Kanzler reviewed state law regarding water run-off.
- **Lissa Widoff made a motion to levy a fine of \$2500 per violation to the contractor in addition to a fine of \$1000 per day from 1/2/2026 for not removing the excavator that was ordered to be removed, Rene Ouellet seconded and all approved.**
- Lissa Widoff asked that Cindy speak with Colin at DEP and make sure he can see what Cindy is referring to and what they would recommend regarding the enforcement and the property damage. Rene Ouellet asked that Colin be asked about state law and how it applies to this situation.
- Cindy Abbott stated that the letter will be sent via certified mail and general mail.
- Cindy Abbott will look into the building on the property and whether it was permitted. She will send out a violation notice regarding the building and an application for a permit. Cindy also noted that there is a culvert violation as well.
- Cindy Abbott stated that the applications and fines should be updated.

9. Town Officials Reports

- Code Enforcement: Cindy Abbott

- Assessors Agent: Jackie Robbins (not present)
- Health Official: Patricia Ashland (not present)
- School Board Director: Eleanor Hess (not present)
- General Assistance Officer: Rene Ouellet
 - No applications in the last week.
- Plumbing Inspector: Cindy Abbott
- Solid Waste Director: Phil Bloomstein (not present)
- Animal Control Officer: Johnna Hatt (not present)
 - Rene Ouellet asked if the ACO provides a quarterly report? Cindy Abbott reviewed past procedures. Cindy will reach out to Johnna regarding providing a quarterly report.
- Town Boards & Committee Reports:
 - Planning Board: Tyler Hadyniak
 - January 13th is the next Planning Board meeting with the meeting on the used car lot. On January 12 there will be a hearing on the mobile home park ordinance. Laura Greeley clarified her understanding of the process on how the ordinance should be presented and the hearing.
 - Recreational Committee: Chair yet to be determined
 - Appeals Board: pending new appointment
 - Cemetery Committee: Steve Holmes
 - Budget Committee: Laura Greeley
 - January 14th at 6pm
 - CDAC Committee: Lex Bennett (not present)
 - Broadband Committee: Phil Bloomstein (not present)
 - Ad Hoc Policy Committee: Elaine Higgins
 - Comp Plan Committee:
 - meeting Thursday

11. Old Business:

- Direct Communications contract. Lissa Widoff recommends that we sign on based on the estimate that we have.
 - The select board will review the final contract next week.

12. New Business:

- Health Officer: current policy says that it is a one-year contract, it also states that we advertise for a week, when that contract expires. Cindy Abbott was asked that we post that we are looking for a health officer. The contract has expired. It was suggested that the position be posted as a year position.
- Comp Plan budget request: They would like to rent the grange once a month for meetings and community involvement. Lissa Widoff asked if it

could be assumed that they have \$250 to work with. The committee will be developing a budget.

- Town Phone Lines: There are 3 phone lines in the town office. Incoming/ fax/ treasurer. Lissa asked if we need all three of these lines? Lissa Widoff will continue to speak with the provider to assess if we need the lines we have.
 - Workshop on Tree Growth/ Farmland Usage: this workshop would be to draft a letter and decide the process the town will take and what the landowners would need to do. January 15, 2026 at 8 am- 11 am.
 - Executive Session on January 14th at 4pm.
 - Small Community Grant: Cindy Abbott will look at the grant and the needs of the town.
 - County Budget: meeting coming up.
13. Date of Next Meeting: Monday January 12, 2026 at 6:00 pm.
15. Adjourn: **Rene Ouellet made a motion to adjourn at 9:40 pm., Lissa Widoff seconded, and all approved.**

Recording Information:

https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/qi_1OinGDuQ-18UcrBITsOig4f6ZJhaaS2n_VRXj6kwilhMlvs_0Bnm5p46a60zy.1xYV3uuCScqVwn7b

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