

Meeting Minutes
Freedom Board of Selectmen
Date: 2/2/2026

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

Approved 2-9-2026

Select Board Meeting

In attendance: Rene Ouellet, Lissa Widoff, Rene Ouellet, Beth Owen-Mishou, Jim Waterman, Brian Murphy, Heather Donahue, Elaine Higgins, Richard Bickford, Joe Freeman, Stan and Kerri Taylor, Meredith Coffin (via Zoom), Matt Grotton (via zoom),

1. Call Meeting to Order / Finalize Agenda: Laura Greeley called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.
2. Announcements:
 - **Rene Ouellet made a motion to go into executive session for 1 MRSA 405 (6) E, legal consultation at 6:01pm, Lissa Widoff seconded and all approved.**
 - They came out of executive session at 6:35pm, with no decision to be made. Within a couple days the Beaver Ridge agreement will be ready and can be shared with residents.
 - **Rene Ouellet moved to approve the minutes as amended and place them on record, Lissa Widoff seconded and all approved.**
3. Fire Chief & EMA Director Reports: Jim Waterman
 - There will be a budget meeting this Wednesday with the Fire Department
 - Laura Greeley clarified that she spoke with Vernice, at the end of the year the auditors will move funds into the capital reserve accounts as applicable. It is important that the auditor know what was supposed to be moved there. Jim Waterman wanted clarification of what account the check was deposited in.
4. Treasurer's Report: Contesa Mancini (not present)
 - Cemetery Fund: had not received their funds. Laura Greeley requested that this be paid.
 - Lease Payment for Public Works: this was mailed today and added to the calendar. There is only one remaining payment due next year.
 - Laura Greeley worked with Contessa to clarify accounts.

- **Rene Ouellet made a motion to approve the A/P warrant for the week of 2-2-2026 in the amount of \$70,019.48, *motion withdrawn*.**
 - **Rene Ouellet made a motion to approve the A/P warrant for the week of 2-2-2026 in the amount of \$69,931.03, Lissa Widoff seconded and all approved.**
 - Camden National Municipal: \$729,595.68
 - Checks received:
 - Maine Municipal Association: \$3000
 - State of Maine Revenue Sharing: \$17,755.44
 - **Rene Ouellet made a motion to approve the 2-2-2026 A/P warrant in the amount of \$26707.15 for the budget line lease payment contracted services from Public Works, Lissa Widoff seconded and all approved.**
 - **Rene Ouellet made a motion to approve the 2-2-2026 A/P warrant in the amount of \$1200 for expenses related to the Pleasant Hill Cemetery.**
5. Public Works: Loren Fitch (not present)
6. Town Clerk & Tax Collector Report: Cindy Abbott
- The Town Calendar for February was updated.
 - Casella cost \$195/month for each of the 2 handicapped port-o-potties
 - Lissa Widoff reviewed the Casella contract.
 - **Lissa Widoff made a motion to go with the contract for Casella for one port-o-potty at the ball field and one at the boat landing for 6 months only, *motion withdrawn*.**
 - Rene Ouellet will research this more by Wednesday of this week.
 - Mobile Park Ballot: Cindy Abbott asked for clarification on the wording for the mobile home park ballot. This would be on the ballot for Friday night.
 - Lissa Widoff suggested that the citizens be asked if they favored having the town meeting at the grange, providing the Select Board with the time to explore ADA accessibility and occupancy numbers. Lissa Widoff will help with the wording of the question.
 - Appointed versus Elected position for the Town Clerk:
 - Debate ensued regarding the benefits or deficits of this.
 - Currently there is:
 - No job description
 - Anyone can run for the Clerk position regardless of their having the qualifications to do the job.

- MMA has advised that we need to provide the salary amount and that anyone who takes the position as an elected position would have to be paid the same amount.
- Currently as an elected position the Select Board cannot directly hire an assistant
- There are limited checks and balances because the Clerk is not responsible to the Select Board.
- Lissa Widoff stated in summary that:
 - Need a job description
 - Anyone can run for the position and that it is a high salary position which, in an elected position we have no control over.
 - With an elected position there is no performance review process, with an appointed position there can be a process.
- Lissa Widoff spoke about having a job description for the clerk to be completed very soon.
- If a group of residents wants this on the Friday vote they would need to submit the petition by this Wednesday. Rene Ouellet asked what the state guidelines are regarding when the information needs to be submitted in order to go on the ballot.
- The Select Board will consult with MMA regarding the Clerk Position and what are the parameters for putting this on the ballot.
- How many towns have elected vs appointed positions for the town clerk?

7. Correspondence:

- Key Bank: Smithton Cemetery Account: Laura Greeley will reach out to Mrs. Overlock regarding the account and Laura Greeley will reach out to Key Bank.
- Audit Preparation: end of February. Laura Greeley will try to make herself available that day. She will write and scan the payment/contract.
- ARPA funds: the funds were last used in 2023 and a report needed to be filed in 2024. Laura Greeley will reach out to the appropriate person to clarify what needs to be done.
- Laura Greeley asked where Elaine Higgins got the information that the survey would cost \$60,000. Elaine Higgins said that it was conjecture and not based on specific data related to Freedom. Laura Greeley stated that it would cost the town \$8000 for the initial scope of the work and if the surveyor needed to continue past the scope, he provided an hourly fee would apply. The Select Board has asked to meet with the surveyor to clarify the costs.

8. Citizens Issues:

- Bob Kenzler: Has been in contact with Larry Holcomb. He will come and show where there are 2 cemeteries on Beaver Ridge.
- Heather Donahue asked if Elaine Higgins will be making a correction to her article regarding the cost of a survey. Elaine responded yes.
- Stan Terry asked if there was any progress on a trash truck.

9. Town Officials Reports

- Code Enforcement: Cindy Abbott
 - Cannabis, property in town. The state sends a list of medically approved properties to the CEO and Cindy asked the state who monitors what is happening. Cindy Abbott sent the state an email and someone from the state will be reaching out to her.
 - Atty Kelly asked to meet with her today and she was not able to meet with him regarding the Rt 137 wetland issue.
 - Cindy Abbott reported that DEP has not yet responded to her emails. Lissa Widoff provided guidance on how to get a timelier response.
- Assessors Agent: Jackie Robbins (not present)
- Health Official: Patricia Ashland (not present)
 - Patti Ashland will be out of town and Rene Ouellet asked if there was someone who could cover for her when she is out of town. Cindy Abbott said she could do this.
- 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)
- Town Boards & Committee Reports:
 - Planning Board: Tyler Hadyniak
 - Feb 10
 - Recreational Committee: Chair yet to be determined
 - Winterfest: 10 am - 3 pm/ Freedom Follies doors open at 6pm
 - Donations of hot meals and soups would be appreciated.
 - **Rene Ouellet made a motion to approve Cindy Abbott spending up to \$500 for supplies for the Winterfest using the town credit card, Lissa Widoff seconded and all approved.**

- Appeals Board: pending new appointment
- Cemetery Committee: Steve Holmes
- Budget Committee: Laura Greeley
- CDAC Committee: Lex Bennett (not present)
- Broadband Committee: Phil Bloomstein (not present)
- Ad Hoc Policy Committee: Elaine Higgins
- Comp Plan Committee: 2-21-26 meeting to gather public input at the grange

11. Old Business:

- Town Employee Wage Schedule: Rene Ouellet sent it in google docs (shared) The documents are in the shared drive under job descriptions. Rene Ouellet suggested a wage range. Lissa Widoff asked for clarification about when they would talk about this. A workshop was suggested as a means of working on this document.
- Town Report:
 - not all reports have been received
 - Spirit of America
 - Town report cover
 - It all needs to be submitted by the 9th of February

12. New Business:

- Loren Fitch had hired Gooseridge Electric to complete the work at the Post Office but Laura is requesting the Lissa and Rene review and perhaps elicit bids for the work that needs to be done at the post office. She disclosed that the proprietor is her son-in-law.
 - Rene Ouellet will speak with Loren about this.
- Snow plowing: Rene Ouellet will speak with Loren regarding plowing
- Select Board to meet with Loren Fitch in executive session next Monday at 5pm prior to the select board meeting. Cindy Abbot was asked to post this.
- Freedom Heating Assistance Fund Policy: Rene Ouellet proposed this policy to address the use of the money from the Beaver Ridge Wind Farm specifically slated for Heating assistance.
- **Lissa Widoff made a motion to approve the Freedom Heating Assistance Fund Policy, Laura Greeley seconded and Rene Ouellet abstained due to his developing the policy.**
- Abatements: Laura Greeley made a call to Jackie regarding the amount of taxes. If Jackie agrees to what is stated he could pay that amount and they will clarify the abatement next week.
- **Lissa Widoff made a motion to approve an abatement Map 8, Lot 14 in the amount of \$835.19, Rene Ouellet seconded and all approved.**

13. Date of Next Meeting: Monday February 9, 2026 at 6:00 pm.
15. Adjourn: **Rene Ouellet made a motion to adjourn at 9:05 pm., Lissa Widoff seconded, and all approved.**

Recording Information:

https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/XE8HVuNKdCKWRo3UO_SV2fggJud3CLGrGFYwceipeuMZ4yZLXK6Tj-z0I4ZrQd5m.WDVdp7ictBf8tne0

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