

Meeting Minutes
Freedom Board of Selectmen
Date: 6-16-2025
Approved 7-7-2025

In attendance: Laura Greeley, Lissa Widoff, Rene Ouellet, Beth Owen-Mishou Jim Waterman, Cindy Abbott, Brian Murphy, Eliane Higgins, Richard Bickford, Steve Holmes, Nathan McCann, Trudy Price, Kyle Price, Dylan Turner (via zoom), Kim Holmes

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

1. Call Meeting to Order / Finalize Agenda: Laura Greeley called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm.
2. Announcements:
 - Laura Greeley welcomed Rene Oullet and Lissa Widoff.
 - Rene Ouellet mentioned that based on article 201.2 of town charter, 4 things should occur at this meeting:
 - **Rene Oullet nominated Laura Greeley to be the chairman of the Select Board, Lissa Widoff seconded and all approved.**
 - Select Meeting times:
 - First and Third Monday at 6pm Selectman meeting
 - Second and fourth will be Mondays at 7:30am for workshops.
 - **Lissa Widoff made a motion to keep the meetings as they are, Rene Oullet seconded and all approved.**
 - Appoint Board and Committee Members: Laura Greeley reported that she has had 3 letters of interest in the open board positions. Rene Oullet mentioned that he would like time to review the applications. They will vote at the next Select Board Meeting and vote.
 - Review the policy book: The Select Board must review and renew all policies yearly. They will review them and address this at the next Select Board Meeting.
3. Review and Approve Minutes: Secretary's Report:
 - **Rene Ouellet made a motion to approve the minutes from 4-22-2025 as written and place them on record, Lissa Widoff seconded the motion and Rene Ouellet abstained.**
4. Fire Chief & EMA Director Reports: Jim Waterman
 - Jim Waterman was concerned with the guard rails at Penney Stream Bridge and asked that they be evaluated.
 - Boat Ramp: The fire department was there today to fill the tanker. There was a request for a portable toilet and trash barrel at the landing.

- Laura Greeley asked if anyone is assigned to picking up trash at the landing. Should it be addressed under the maintenance budget line?
- There is a dam inspection July 9th. The spillway has a lot of branches in it. Laura Greeley mentioned that Mr. Bridges had looked into this with Heather Donahue and Ryan Willette. There are two dams but we are only responsible for Dam #29 on the pond. Jim will forward the message from the inspectors to all Selectmen.
- The new Select Board members will need to go through training on the NIMS and emergency operations. Jim Waterman will arrange for the emergency operations training to occur at the town office. Jim will send them information on NIMS.
- Reserve Account: at the end of the year, anything that is left in the Fire Departments account can be moved into the reserve account. They are waiting on Vernice to confirm that it occurred.
- The fire protection fee for Knox has been received and should be in the fire department reserve account.
- Before 7/26/2025 the fee needs to be paid for \$11654.54 for a Scott Airpack. This is being funded through a grant from the Steven and Tabitha King Foundation.
- Hardwood Lane call. It was difficult to get an emergency vehicle in there. It will need to be cut back or they will not be able to get an emergency vehicle down there.
 - Rene Ouellet asked how many lanes we have in town. Jim Waterman said 5-10. The residents need to be notified, via a letter from the fire department that the Lane needs to be cleared. Jim will draft a letter and share it with the Select Board.
- MMA safety grant. The fire department submitted a safety grant for non-structural turn out gear. The total cost is 7300 they will grant us 3000 and we pay the remained by May 1 2026
- Truck One, tanker is going to Reliant for a coolant leak and pump certification. \$1000-1200 for the pump test.
- Addressing Ordinance: He had been the addressing officer for the town of Freedom and there was no governing ordinance for addressing. Jim Waterman wrote an ordinance and it was tabled until the town could hold a public meeting to review the ordinance.
 - Laura Greeley and Jim Waterman will send a copy of the ordinance to Rene Ouellet and Lissa Widoff.
- Jim Waterman asked about overdue bills.
- The Lost Kitchen dug today to find the pipe for the water suppression system and the fire hydrant. The T joint is in a non-excavatable location. Jim provided a historical account of the hydrant and pipes. They will be capping the pipe to the hydrant so that their fire suppression system is working. Micheal Dutton suggested that there be a mutual agreement between the town and the Lost Kitchen regarding the hydrant.
- CPR training class tonight.

5. Public Works:

- Laura Greeley thanked Lauren for all the work he has been doing. He kept the Public Works department running.
 - The trash truck has needed a lot of work.
- Met with Jim Foster about the Mitchel Road Bridge. They have 5 years to work on the bridge but the rails need to be addressed now. Next year we should apply for the Stream Smart Grant.
- Loren is updating policies regarding the Department of Labor.
 - He identified that MMA has an incentive program with regard to Workers Compensation.
 - He is also looking into the Hepatitis Vaccine.
- The decision was made not to grade Unity's roads
- Penney Road: Laura Greeley received emails from Montville's select board. She attended the Montville Select Board meeting and had done some research. On Thursday Laura Greeley will go up to look at the surveyors' markers on Penney Road.
 - Elaine Higgins mentioned that in 2020 they had set up a written agreement with Montville. Yes, Laura had seen that but it did not reference the surfacing of the road or ditching.
- Thursday June 19th businesses are closed and there will be no trash pick-up. The pick up will be on June 20th.

6. Treasurer's Report:

- **Rene Oullet made a motion to pay the payroll warrant for the week of 6/16/2025 in the amount of \$7225.95, Lissa Widoff seconded and Rene Ouellet abstained.**
- **Rene Oullet made a motion to pay the A/P warrant for the week of 6/16/2025 in the amount of \$185,243.20, Lissa Widoff seconded and Rene Oullet abstained.**
- **Rene Oullet made a motion to approve a check for Travis Price for the confiscated tax return dated 6/16/2025 in the amount of \$2612, Lissa Widoff seconded and all approved.**
- **Lissa Widoff made a motion to pay Jeff Holmes for mileage reimbursement 6/16/2025 in the amount of \$32.75, Rene Oullet seconded and all approved.**
- Camden National: \$386,889.44
- Received Checks from:
 - Back Hills: \$73.01
 - Daddy and Daughter Recycling: \$107.20/ \$58.40
 - Town of Knox: \$12,360
 - USPS: \$884.17

7. Town Clerk & Tax Collector Report: Cindy Abbott

- Revenue reports for April and May were presented.
- Excise tax reports January to May, 2025/2024
- Real Estate Taxes: 48 accounts 69286.55 outstanding balance. 30-day notices will go out Wednesday or Monday.
- 2023; 24 outstanding bills

- 2022; 2 outstanding due to address issues. These certified letters were returned. Cindy sent one notice to the post office.
- Pre payments for 2025
- Abatement:
 - Account 472, homestead was omitted.
 - **Rene Ouellet made a motion to approve the abatement in the amount of \$372.50 dated 5/20/2025 concerning Map 11 Lot 21 account #472, Lissa Widoff seconded and all agreed, due to the homestead exemption being left off.**
 - Peace Ridge: The Atty stated that they had paid the taxes. Cindy Abbott stated that the taxes were reversed and they have not been charged. Laura Greeley will reach out to the Atty. Laura will contact Jackie regarding how to show the property value on the bill with \$0 due.
 - **Rene Oulette moved to approve the abatement in the amount of \$5272.28 for Map 7 Lot 0102, account #254, dated 6/16/2025. Lissa Widoff seconded and all approved.** Discussion: Laura Greeley will reach out to their attorney tomorrow regarding the charges being reversed.
- June 10th elections. 2 workers had donated their time. Rene Ouellet asked if a thank you note could be sent for them donating their time.
- Notice from the post office that the mail box is too high. Lauren will fix it.
- Heat Pumps may need to be assessed. The filters were cleaned and it is still making noise.
 - **Rene Oullet moved that they authorize Cindy Abbot to call the individuals in to fix the heat pump, Lissa Widoff seconded and all approved.**
 - John Willette fixed the toilet and Cindy recommended sending him a thank you letter.
 - Cindy mentioned the trash can and port-o-potty at the Landing. Rene Oullet suggested making sure the signs are visible. Laura Greeley suggested that they check with Public Works regarding the trash can and trash pickup. Lissa Widoff will ask Lauren to check into the cleaning up weekly at the landing.
 - **Rene Ouellet made a motion that they review the job description for maintenance, Lissa Widoff seconded and all approved.**
 - Thursday June 19th there is an event with the Little League at the town baseball field.
 - June 24th needs to change the hours in the office from noon-6pm.
 - Laura Greeley will get the event policy that was being developed to share with the new select board members
 - 2025 Tax Commitment, Laura Greeley will reach out to Jackie for some dates on when this needs to occur.

8. Citizens Issues:

- Freedom Field Day? Will we have one? Elaine Higgins will write something for the paper regarding volunteers.
- Tanker trucks removing water from the pond. Lissa Widoff will look into this.

9. Review Correspondence:

10. Town Officials Reports

- Code Enforcement: Cindy Abbott
 - Cindy scheduled a phone call with Bill on the Bangs and Knights building. This will occur at 10am on Thursday.
 - Patty Ashland and Cindy Abbott have scheduled site visits for 2 other properties on Thursday, June 26th. These will occur on the Bryant Road and the Greeley Road.
 - Ryan Willette is cleaning up a water situation that Patty and Cindy are working on.
- Assessors Agent: Jackie Robbins
- Health Official: Patricia Ashland
- School Board Director: Eleanor Hess
 - School Budget passed by one vote in Freedom
- General Assistance Officer: Cindy Abbot is acting office at this time.
 - Rene Ouellet is willing to do this but he will need training.
 - Lissa Widoff moved that Rene Oullet serve as the GA officer, Laura Greeley seconded and all approved.
- Plumbing Inspector: Cindy Abbott
- Solid Waste Director: Phil Bloomstein
- Animal Control Officer: pending
 - There are several applications and they will set up interviews for Monday during the workshop.
- Town Boards & Committee Reports:
 - Planning Board: Tyler Hadyniak
 - Laura Greeley asked if there was any citizen input.
 - Recreational Committee: Chair yet to be determined.
 - Appeals Board: Michael Smith
 - They are working on an appeal. They were reaching out to Bill. Laura Greeley told the appeals board to send an email to Bill.
 - **Rene Oullet made a motion to approve the board of appeals to use Atty Bill Kelly's time up to 10 hours to discuss a current appeal that they are working on, Lissa Widoff seconded and all approved.**
 - Historical Society: Wilson Hess
 - Cemetery Committee: Steve Holmes
 - Steve Holmes would like approval to purchase a cleaner for cleaning cemetery stones. He would like to purchase "Wet It". It would come out to the supplies account for cemeteries. It can be purchased from Home Depot and we

have an account. It was suggested that he bring in the information about the product and the town will order it.

- Levi Temple stone: it is in the cemetery committee budget. Then perhaps the individuals who have said they will donate could be contacted then those donations could be put back into the cemetery budget. Laura Greeley asked if she and Steve Holmes could meet at 2pm on Friday to order the stone.
- Steve Holmes asked about getting metal flag holders as opposed to plastic.
- Roadside flags: We need to find someone to hang the roadside flags. Steve Holmes suggested contacting Alex Green and or Gold
 - Budget Committee: Laura Greeley
 - CDAC Committee: Lissa Widoff
 - Broadband Committee: Phil Bloomstein
 - Ad Hoc Policy Committee: Rene Ouellet
 - Budget Committee:

11. Old Business:

- PAWS Contract: Our yearly contract needs to be reviewed.
 - **Lissa Widoff made a motion to approve the contract with PAWS as our animal care facility in the amount of \$1450 for a period of one year, seconded by Rene Oullet and all approved.**
- Unity Ambulance Meeting for other towns

12. New Business:

- Laura Greeley will contact Jackie to commit taxes and a call to RH Smith because we received another notice regarding social security re 2023, and Maine Revenue regarding a lien notification.
- **Rene Oullet made a motion to go into executive session to discuss 1 MRSA 405 (6) A for Personnel Matters and MRSA 1 MRSA 405 (6) H Pending Court Case.**
- **Rene Ouellet moved that they come out of executive session at 8:55.**
- **Rene Ouellet moved that they appoint Lauren Fitch as director of the Public Works Department and increase his salary to \$30/hour, Lissa Widoff seconded and all approved.**
- No decisions were made regarding the pending court case.

13. Date of Next Meeting: Monday June, 2025 at 6:00 pm.

14. Next Select Board Workshop, June 23, 2025

15. Adjourn: **Lissa Widoff made a motion to adjourn at 9pm.**

Recording Information:

https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/WCZ1jQeSgWe9Mck5A-DVp8pxvkZgPJ29hObEXhSgVTqxvrG7vYOU_nQmqTfG5JsP.uts7uq5gi-MArr37

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