

Meeting Minutes
Freedom Board of Selectmen
Date: 7-24-2023
Approved 7-31-2023

In attendance: Steve Bennett, Ryan Willette, Jim Waterman, Beth Owen-Mishou, Cindy Abbott, Elaine Higgins, Tyler Hadyniak, Laura Greeley, Samantha Turner, Meredith Coffin, Kirk Thomas, Jasmine Willette, Tim Turner, Billie (via zoom), Kyle (via zoom), Heather Donahue, Jason Moody (via zoom), Rene Oulet, Nancy Farrar, Joe Freeman, Bob Kanzler

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

1. Call Meeting to Order / Finalize Agenda: Steve Bennett called the meeting to order at 6pm.
 - Steve Bennett made a motion to accept Ron Price's resignation, Ryan Willette seconded and all approved.
 - Ryan Willette made a motion to make Steve Bennett the chairperson of the Selectboard, Steve Bennett seconded and all approved.
 - Special Election: described by Steve Bennett. At least 25 years ago a process was put in place of selecting selectmen by ballot and special election. One month's time has to occur to prepare the ballot. It would take 100 days. It can be shortened by a specific process.
 - Nomination papers can be obtained tomorrow thru August 3rd.
 - The person would have from August 3rd to 23rd. There has to be a minimum of 25 registered voter signatures
 - Absentee ballots as of August 21st.
 - 30 days equals the Sept. 19, 2023
 - The election will be Sept 19, 2023 from 8 am to 8 pm.
 - Shortening the Election Procedure per 30-A MRS: 2602
 - Steve Bennett made a motion that they adopt the Shortening the Election Procedure 30-A MRS:2602, Ryan Willette seconded and all approved.
 - Steve Bennett made a motion that Ryan Willette be authorized to be the contact person with the Sheriff's Department and State police in regards to weather emergencies and things of that nature, Ryan Willette seconded and all approved.
 - Steve Bennett made a motion that Ryan Willette be the contact person for the Sandy Pond Dam Emergency action plan, Ryan Willette seconded and all approved.
2. Review and Approve Minutes: Secretary's Report: Steve Bennett made a motion to accept the meeting minutes as amended, Ryan Willette seconded and all approved.
3. Fire Chief & EMA Director Reports: Jim Waterman

- The Farmer's Market last Tuesday went well. The no parking signs appear to be working. There was no problem at the town office.
 - Tara Ayott is the individual in charge of the Dam inspections through the state.
 - There has been some concern between 6 and 8 am getting a driver for Unity Ambulance
4. Public Works Director Report
- Isaiah started today and Ryan Willette provided orientation.
 - Cold Patching will start soon.
 - The grader is being fixed
 - Picking up all of the old picnic tables
 - Putting up dead end signs
 - Inventory of shop tools and equipment
 - Will be making a list of tools that will be needed
 - Steve Bennett is happy that Ryan Willette is acting as the liaison with public works and with his knowledge of what is needed.
 - He feels public works is the biggest concern, culverts, ditching, grading roads. Climate events are impacting many communities. Our roads need to be in good condition. 20 years ago people wanted to get rid of the public works department. He hopes that people in town will support our public works department. The individuals who were there did a good job, we need to move forward now. He has spoken with other towns and they are having difficulty finding contractors to do the jobs.
 - Meredith Coffin: asked if we had a second employee named Ryan. Ryan Willette stated that the other Ryan is out with a back injury and will be out for an extended period of time.
 - Elaine Higgins asked if the new employees are bringing their own tools. Ryan Willette said no and that it would only be town owned tools. Additionally, she asked if the money was allocated for Pleasant Street if it could be used for the Raven Road. Steve Bennett explained that it is cost prohibitive.
 - Ryan Willette stated that he will check the cost of paving Pleasant Street and what it would cost to pave Raven Road.
 - Steve Bennett stated the Hustus Brook Bridge on the Mitchell Road needs to be fixed. He suggested to research grant money for repairing/replacing the bridge, if anyone has grant writing experience.
 - Ryan Willette said he spoke with someone from DOT who will come and check the bridge and make some recommendations regarding options.
 - Nancy Farrar asked if we are now hiring 3 people for the public works department. Steve stated that Ryan will not be back for a while and they are not sure when he will be back.

- Bob Kanzler asked if the state was paving would they be willing to help us since they are rerouting traffic down Pleasant Street. Ryan Willette stated that it would be a good idea to ask.
- Samantha Turner asked if the bridge was a liability for the town. Ryan Willette said not at this time.
- Joe Freeman asked when the town was going to pave Raven Road. Steve Bennett said it depends on the budget committee. Joe said that the people voted on it and it has not occurred. Steve said that the town votes on a line not the specific job.
- Nancy Farrar asked about the bridge on 137 and how extensive the repairs would be. Ryan Willette stated that they are just changing the bridge out.

5. Treasurer's Report: Cindy Abbott

- Payroll warrant: 2,684.52 A/P warrant \$61,939.86/\$3000=\$64,939.86
- Rabies Clinic with Human Society on 9-30-2023
- Camden National Balance=\$170,518.10
- Checkbook Balance (from March) is: \$208,995.80
- Need to use the credit card to pay for town mailings
 - Steve Bennett made a motion to allow Cindy to use the credit card for the mailing, Ryan Willette seconded and all approved.
 - Steve Bennette made a motion to allow Cindy Abbott to pay for the 2-year plan with Wix to renew the website, Ryan Willette seconded and all approved.
 - Ryan Willette made a motion that we pay the payroll warrant in the amount of: Payroll warrant: 2,684.52 A/P warrant \$61,939.86 / \$3000=\$64,939.86, Steve Bennett seconded and all approved.
- Wix renewal, renewing for 2 years saves the town \$120.
- Calendar for the library pass is available in the town office for the Botanical Gardens.
- Laura Greeley mentioned that since there is money in the budget are we going to be using the money to work on the roads? Steve and Ryan both stated that we will be working on the roads once we have filled the job vacancies in the public works department.
- Elaine Higgins asked if we were going to do any paving. Ryan Willette said no, due to the bridge replacement.

6. Town Clerk & Tax Collector Report: Cindy Abbott

7. Citizen's Issues and Questions

- Bob Kanzler asked about the mail boxes and how the hot top is being moved away. Steve said he has seen similar happenings. He asked if there was crushed stone available to fill in those areas. Ryan Willette explained why this happens. Steve Bennett suggested that people use the same crushed stone that the town uses around their mail boxes.
- Meredith Coffin: said that there should be an amendment to the town charter. She provided the select board with information on how to make

the amendment and the new wording, so that it could potentially be placed on the November ballot. There is a contradiction in the conflict-of-interest section. Tyler Hadyniak clarified what needs to be changed. There was a discussion about the rule of necessity.

8. Review Correspondence

- o none

9. Town Officials Reports

- o Code Enforcement Officer: Jackie Robbins
 - Ryan Willette spoke with her and she has explained that they need permits and they have not responded.
- o Health Official:
- o School Board Director: Elenore Hess
- o General Assistance Officer: Ryan Willette
- o Plumbing Inspector
- o Solid Waste Director:
- o Animal Control Officer: Peter Nerber

10. Town Boards & Committee Reports:

- o Planning Board:
 - Tyler Hadyniak, reported that he has been learning about the LS Power Line. Scott Cyrway and Chip Curry are planning to attend the planning board meeting. The meeting will be a fact-finding public meeting, not a debate. Tyler was asked to change the location of the meeting due to the potential number of people. They will have the meeting in the basement of the church which will begin at 6pm.
 - Samantha Turner asked if Abion acquires a moratorium, does it put Freedom at higher risk for having more of our land annexed?
 - Tyler Hadyniak stated that it is interesting that this part of the state where the approved alternative routes are the closest.
 - Nancy Farrar asked how far away they will stay from people's homes. 300 feet was the response. Heather Donohue stated that the power will go to the New England ISO, even though the state said they purchased 60% of the power that will be coming through.
 - Steve Bennett discussed the ramifications of the power lines.
 - Tyler Hadyniak spoke about the moratorium and if it was all approved by the DEP. An ordinance/moratorium would be attended to by the DEP when it comes up for review. Tyler has requested to see the study that reportedly stated that using the existing power pathways and why it would not be feasible to use them.
 - Elaine Higgins discussed the cost of electricity and our need for power. Who will it be coming from?
 - Samantha Turner mentioned that it is not the source of the power but that with 300 feet from your home there is going to

be an invasive thing happening. The power company is taking advantage of people in a low socioeconomic area.

- Bob Kanzler discussed power lines through fields and how the lines humm and affect animals.
- Tyler Hadyniak further mentioned that when speaking with LS Power that when they obtain permission from the towns that the power goes through. We have a commercial development review ordinance.
- Ryan Willette said that many people are concerned about defoliant and the pesticides that would be used.
- Heather Donahue asked if the question could go on the upcoming ballot.
- Recreational Committee:
 - Pretty good turnout at this weekend's market
 - Rec meeting on Sunday at the field.
 - Freedom Field Day August 19th
- Appeals Board
- Charter Committee
- Historical Society:
- Cemetery Committee
- Budget Committee: we do not have the final audit.
 - Ryan Willette made a motion to allow Steve Bennett to make contact with Ron Smith, the auditor to determine when the final audit will be completed and reviewed, Steve Bennett seconded and all approved.
 - Ryan Willette made a motion that we hire a locksmith and that they have keys made, Steve Bennett seconded and all approved.
- CDAC Committee:

11. Old Business

- Samantha Turner asked about the missing money that Ron Price mentioned in his resignation. Steve Bennett responded that we had lots of errors.
 - Beth Owen-Mishou asked if the town had ever considered using a forensic accountant to determine what was occurring with the missing money? Additionally, she asked if other towns were having issues with Trio. Steve and Ryan stated that they know of 2 other towns that are having difficulty.

12. New Business

- Ryan Willette made a motion to allow Steve Bennett to sign checks in lieu of Cindy Abbot and to make contact with Bangor Savings and Camden National Banks as necessary, Steve Bennett seconded and all approved.
- Taxes will come out late August while they are waiting for information about the value of the wind turbines.
- Grants: Steve Bennett asked if anyone was willing to look for grants. He feels that the person could be reimbursed for it if the town approves.

- Elaine Higgins said she has a family member who writes grants. She was willing to provide the contact information. She will email Steve Bennett the information.
 - Meredith Coffin asked if there was a list of available grants.

13. Date of Next Meeting: Monday July 31, 2023. 6pm

14. Adjourn: Ryan Willette made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:44pm, Steve Bennett seconded and all approved.