

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Freedom Board of Selectmen**  
**Date: 7-17-2023**  
*Approved 7/24/2023*

**In attendance:** Ron Price, Steve Bennett, Ryan Willette, Jim Waterman, Beth Owen-Mishou, Cindy Abbott, Elaine Higgins, Nathan McCann, Tyler Hadyniak, Trudy Price, Laura Greeley, Samantha, Turner, Meredith Coffin, Kirk Thomas, Jasmine Willette, Dillon Turner, Tim Turner, Pamela Herman (via zoom), Anne Marie Adamson (via zoom), Travis Price, John Shaw, Susan B (via zoom), Ron Littlefield, Barbara Littlefield, Clara Alvarez (via zoom), Billie (via zoom), Tim Biggs, Heather Donahue

**New Zoom Meeting: Meeting ID: 431 235 8395**  
**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 meeting minutes as amended, Ryan Willette seconded and all approved.
3. Fire Chief & EMA Director Reports: Jim Waterman
  - o Happy Birthday Jim.
  - o Mike Dutton has put out no parking signs and this past Tuesday it worked out well. Mr. Bryant on pleasant street put up signs and there was parking only on one side of the road.
4. Public Works Director Report
  - o Ryan Willette made a motion to hire Isaiah Humphrey as a public works employee and Steve Bennett seconded, all approved.
  - o
5. Treasurer's Report: Cindy Abbott
  - o Payroll warrant \$3104.10, A/P warrant \$16,380.87
  - o Rabies Clinic with Human Society on 9-30-2023
  - o Cindy will be out for a training
  - o Rec Dept would like approval to spend money using the credit card for supplies.
    - Steve Bennett made a motion to allow the rec department to make purchases for the Botanical Garden and supplies for the Field Day, Ryan Willette seconded and all approved.
  - o Ryan Willette made a motion to approve the payroll warrant \$3104.10, A/P warrant \$16,380.87, Steve Bennett seconded and all approved.
  - o Need to use CC for the Botanical Garden pass for the community.
6. Town Clerk & Tax Collector Report: Cindy Abbott
7. Citizen's Issues and Questions

- Travis Price: presented an IRS request from 2021 stating that 2 w-2's were posted. He is asking that the town deal with the 2, W-2's and they be responsible for any penalties and that they deal with the ramifications.
  - Ron Price has contacted Ron Smith regarding the corrected W-2's and he attempted to reach them today. Cindy will email the materials to Ron Smith.
  - Ryan Willette made a motion that the town be responsible for making sure that the accountant makes the corrections to the W-2 submissions and corrections, Steve Bennett seconded and all approved.
  - Laura Greeley stated that on one of the FOAA's, it stated that the town Atty. afforded Ron Price and Travis Price a meeting and she asked if the other select members were invited to attend before the meeting occurred. Steve stated that he was not aware and Ryan Willette was not aware. Laura then questioned the role of the town atty., and asked who is he representing?
    - Steve Bennett responded that he works for the entity that hires him.
    - Tim Turner: drug and alcohol policies are federal. The town does not legally have to have a policy. Every store/town has to have a DER (designated employee representative). Once a person has been determined to have drugs or alcohol in their system as the result of a drug test their name goes to a clearing house.
    - Samantha Turner asked if there is any way the atty can come to the meeting and answer questions about what do we do moving forward?
    - Elaine Higgins stated that it is expensive to have the attorney here.
    - Ron Price stated that he recused himself once he knew that the test was positive.
      - Kirk Thomas questioned Ron Price regarding when he recused himself. Ron Price stated that he was allowed to attend that meeting because he had already recused himself. He went there as a father and as a recused person who was not involved in that process.
      - Steve Bennett stated that the Atty. was trying to respect both the town and the employee.
      - Rene Oulett: stated that there are really 2 conversations. One about policy and the other is about the procedure and direct challenges to board members regarding a specific situation. He does not feel that this impeachment conversation belongs at the board meeting.

- Samantha Turner felt that these meetings are for having a conversation about how things are run. It allows for a conversation about the process.
  - Laura Greeley stated that it is about protecting the taxpayers because there was not a policy in place and because of this there was a significant cost to the town in her opinion.
  - Steve Bennett stated that it was a process and some things would have to have been done regardless.
  - Tim Turner: asked how this is going to be fixed moving forward. Ryan Willette stated that Cindy Abbott stated that she has been trained to be the DER. Elaine Higgins asked if she has shown anyone the certificate? Tim Turner asked if Cindy has had any follow-up since this event from the company or further training to rectify the mistakes that were made?
  - Ryan Willette stated that at this time Cindy is the DER.
  - Rene stated that the companies do not have the same procedures. Tim Turner stated that it is a federal procedure and is consistent across agencies.
  - Tim Biggs asked if there was a schedule for any road work being completed. Ryan Willette said that they are working on it.
- 8. Review Correspondence
  - There was a letter for voting on membership for the MMA.
  - There was a small increase in their property and casualty coverage. This was due to the salt and sand building being reappraised by the insurance company.
- 9. Town Officials Reports
  - Code Enforcement Officer: Jackie Robbins
  - Health Official
  - School Board Director: Elenore Hess
  - General Assistance Officer: Ryan Willette
  - Plumbing Inspector
  - Solid Waste Director:
  - Animal Control Officer: Peter Nerber
- 10. Town Boards & Committee Reports:
  - Planning Board
  - Recreational Committee:
    - Freedom Field Day August 19th
  - Appeals Board
  - Charter Committee
  - Historical Society:

- Jenny Neves came for a book signing and there were about 12 people there.
    - Eliane Higgins, Wants to involve people in some more events at the Meeting House. Any ideas for the use of the building please let Elaine know.
  - Cemetery Committee
  - Budget Committee: waiting for the audit
  - CDAC Committee:
- 11. Old Business
  - Steve Bennett stated that the individual from Direct Communications will not be able to present due to family illness.
    - Phil Bloomstien stated that they are working with new vendors now. It now appears that it will be a public/private venture.
    - Elaine Higgins asked if there was going to be vendor options once the wires were run. There is no answer at this time.
  - Steve Bennett stated that the Select Board needs to settle on a bid to take down the Fisher Building. There are currently 3 submissions. They are waiting for a 4th bid.
- 12. New Business
  - Rene Oulett: Ad Hoc on Policy development meeting occurred and they have reviewed current policies and policies from other towns. They plan to meet again a week from Thursday. The committee has begun to create a task list.
    - Ryan Willette made a motion that the policy committee create a comprehensive drug policy to present to the board, Ron Price seconded, all approved.
    - They are currently reviewing the existing policies.
    - Laura Greely asked questions about the process with the Ad Hoc committee. These were responded to by the Select Board. She asked if the town's attorney has been consulted regarding the most important policies to protect the town from liability.
    - Steve Bennett stated that they spent lots of time in the last 8 years writing policies but that they need to be reviewed. He has spoken with the town attorney. Rene Oulett stated that there are currently 36 policies.
    - Rene Oulett mentioned that there are 2 different types of guiding policies. Select Board policies and town ordinances.
  - John Shaw: They have started a committee in Albion to get a moratorium in place regarding the power lines, so that the town of Albion can work to block the power lines. It is not an Albion town committee but a group of concerned citizens. (207-313-6442) John Shaw, anyone interested in joining him is welcome to contact him, as this could potentially affect Freedom as well.
    - Steve Bennett stated that he has the maps as well. One of the potential routes would impact Freedom.

- Meredith Coffin asked if sending all those who provided emails this information in the event that they might be interested in this issue.
  - Tyler Hadyniak, monthly meeting on August 8th at 7pm and a representative from LS power will be attending via zoom. LS Power had sent the Planning Board a letter similar to what was sent to the citizens. The purpose of the meeting would be fact finding. It is not a meeting for proponents to the power lines but is for fact finding. Facebook group “Mainers for Landowners’ rights / LS Power Aroostook Gateway Info”.
  - Steve Bennett discussed the legalities of home rule and the constitution. Asked what home rule is. Tyler Hadyniak stated that home rule is the power of municipalities to make rules when they don’t exist. When that authority does not conflict with state or federal law.
  - Elaine Higgins: asked if it was town rule, state rule, federal rule. Can the emails be used to send out a statement to the citizens regarding the upcoming meetings.
    - Ron Price read a letter to the Select Board and the Town of Freedom. He stated that it is time for him as a Select person to leave the position. He has been a member since 2007. He is proud of what has been accomplished. Ron Price read his letter. (attached)
    - Ryan Willette thanked Ron for his service to the town.
13. Date of Next Meeting: Monday July 24, 2023. 6pm
14. Adjourn: Ryan Willette made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:47pm, Steve Bennett seconded and all approved.