

Town Charter Commission Meeting Freedom, Maine
Minutes of June 7, 2022

Present: Tyler Hadyniak, Mary Ann Bennett, Rene Ouellet, Eleanor MacMakin, Meredith Coffin, Phil Bloomstein, Joseph Freeman, Tim Biggs

Absent: William Pickford

Agenda 1. Meeting called to order at 6:04 pm. Quorum achieved.

Agenda 2. Review of last meeting's minutes of May 17, 2022. Three edits suggested. Mary Ann moved to accept the minutes with the edits. ***Motion carried.***

Agenda 3. Carry-over Discussions from last meeting. Individual reports on homework assignments using St. George table of contents.

1. Article 201, Select Board. Tyler and Mary Ann reported.
 - Tyler noted that he could not find any requirements for Select Board. Phil noted that anyone elected need not be a citizen of Freedom. The appointed Boards and Committees need to be residents.
 - No documents regarding terms or how elected found. Phil offered that the Australian, secret ballot, was adopted a while back. It resulted in more folks voting but reduced attendance at the town meeting.
 - Discussion ensued: our job is to capture the tradition. It could also be to change tradition.
 - Mary Ann noted that St. George and Freedom have some similar ordinances.
 - Noted also: St. George has a 1 year residency requirement. Proof of residency discussed.
 - Verbiage discussed. Select Board acts as the licensing authority. What would be clearer is: Select Board, when hiring, would ensure proper licensing.
 - Overall Mary Ann states that the article is pretty good and could work for Freedom. What is needed is to put our traditions into written word. For example the Select Board is the Board of Assessors but they hire Jacki to do all the leg work.
 - Rene related that in N. H. a ProTem is appointed as an assistant. When we have a vacancy in the clerk or treasurer position, the Select Board could appoint a ProTem.
 - Noted that Freedom has chosen to use and pay the Me. Municipal Association. It is a private advocacy organization.
 - Discussed briefly how a town manager vs administrative assistant could be used.
 - In summary, for now, we need to look up state law...do our traditions agree with the state? Can the MMA help to know if we are following state law?
2. Article 202 Town Boards and Committees not done yet
3. Article 203 Town Manager not relevant
4. Article 204. Administrative Organization
 - Meredith reviewed what positions were elected and which ones appointed.
 - Noted some committees are standing others are at the will of the Select Board
 - Noted that we do not have a Municipal Employees Handbook but we do use extensive MMA handbooks for clerk, tax collector and treasurer.
 - There is a binder with some job descriptions.
 - We do have a policy regarding merit principles.

- Fire Department. Discussed that this position is somewhat separate from the town. The volunteer fire department staff hires the fire chief. It has its own budget. The town votes as to what the pay will be.
- School Board Director. State of Maine Constitution can be cited.
- 4. Article 205. General Provisions
 - Eli noted we do have a non- discrimination policy.
 - Municipality of Danforth has a conflict of interest spelled out, what we have is tradition and Cindy just knows it.
 - Elly found Danforth more helpful regarding bribery, fraud, political neutrality.
 - Elly reports that what is needed is housekeeping, making the issues clear.
- 5. Article 301 Town Meetings
 - Rene noted that State Law was referred to a lot. St. George frequently refers back to the State.
 - So again, we need to look at our tradition and know where to find the State Law.
 - Rene will upload the law to our google docs.
- 6. Article 302 Nominations and Elections
 - Phil talked with Cindy
 - Could not locate the authority
 - St. George looks OK, all sections appear relevant to Freedom
 - Noted again that we use the Australian ballot
- 7. Article 303 Ordinances
 - clearly covered by State Statutes
- 8. Article 304 Financial Procedures
 - Tim noted our fiscal year is different, and likely it won't change as it would have to go through a year of citizens being taxed twice in order to get on track.
 - Our Budget Committee meets starting in October and is done January 1.
 - Budget Committee votes on all fiscal choices coming before the town at town meeting in March.
 - Budget Committee is guided by the State.
 - Any unspent money can be carried forward by the Select Board with Town approval.
 - Select Board is able to take out bonds and short term loans to cover costs.
- 9. Article 305 Planning
 - Bill noted this is for long range planning
 - committee develops a comprehensive plan
 - need for 5 year revisions
 - noted that St. George took this article out in their last charter amendment.

Agenda 4. Suggested homework for 6/21/22 meeting

1. Tyler will coordinate with our Select Board regarding reaching out to the MMA as they could be a good resource for us.
2. Tyler will reach out to St. George. Why did they remove the Panning article?
3. Our committee members to begin with identifying “what is” first. Adding on or expanding to come later.
4. Agreed that our outline needs to be clean and organized. Elly will write up a sample table of contents.

5. Each committee member to begin to substantially edit and re-write their article on a draft google document.
6. Phil will set up a “working charter” in each of our names. This is our draft google document.

Plan:

1. Phil will be able to see what editing we did and ultimately he will be the one to do the final edit, with the committee's approval, and produce the document.
2. As a group we will do a reading of the edited article, one section at a time. There may be second and third readings.
3. We will begin with a reading of the first section.

2.

Meeting adjourned at 7:56 PM

Respectfully submitted, Meredith Coffin

*Next meetings : Tuesday June 21, 2022
Tuesday July 5, 2022
Tuesday July 19, 2022*