

Town of Freedom Select Board Minutes
November 2, 2020

Present: Elaine Higgins, Ron Price, Steve Bennett, Cindy Abbot, Travis Price, Alyssa Brugger, Jim Waterman and Amanda Jamison

Ron called the meeting to order at 6:04pm

FVFD – Jim delivered boxes of food to some town's people from the Oct. 30th Farmers to Family food distribution event. Jim knows there will be another large food distribution. He is finding out the date.

DEP – Guidelines in regards to burning buildings. Jim needs to research about the specific building in town that is being talked about to burn to make sure it falls within the guidelines. Ron sent the homeowner a list of contractors that may burn it and relayed the message that Jim prefers that there be snow on the ground when and if it gets burned down. Jim recommends filling in the basement for safety reasons. Ron suggests that Jim call DEP to find out specifically what can be done with the building.

Truck #2 – Jim knows that the truck is half reassembled, hopefully truck will be back by the end of the week.

Property on N. Palermo Road – Jim reported seeing structures for the first time on that property. Ron will have Jackie go check on the land again.

Public Works – Travis said there is nothing new to report. Steve asked if he got to use the grinder. Travis said no that he had to work on getting the trucks ready for snow.

Treasurer's Report – Alyssa reported that Payroll this week was \$7,063.27. This is the beginning of the month, so everyone gets paid. She said the town is still waiting on Cross Payment to come through. She has not finished balancing the October checkbook, so the ending checkbook balance may change a little.

Ron made a motion to pay \$100,000 on the Tan next week. Elaine 2nd the motion. Steve asked if the town should pay it off? Ron said not now with the current balance in the checking. Alyssa said the town owes the October school payment as well. Steve said the town needs to pay both bills. Ron made a motion to amend the original motion to pay \$100,000 on the Tan and the School Payment. Elaine 2nd the amendment. Unanimous. Ron called for a vote on the amendment – Unanimous.

A/P Warrant discussion of \$460 expenditure regarding a property boundary issue on the Skidgell Property. Steve is not sure where the line is behind Freedom General. Travis reported that Mr. Bagley had his line surveyed. Steve asked Travis to ask Mr. Bagley if we could make a copy of his survey. Travis said yes, he'd talk with Mr. Bagley.

Elaine made a motion to pay Payroll Warrant in the amount of \$7,063.27 and the AP Warrant in the amount of \$4,824.52. Steve 2nd the motion. Unanimous.

Citizen's Issues – none reported

Donations – Elaine is keeping track of donations. It was mentioned that Doug Van Horn has done it in the past, so it would be good for Elaine to connect with Doug. The town received a request from Maine Public Broadcasting for a \$200 donation.

Covid-19 and meeting in person discussion – Ron suggested moving into the other building to meet, it is a larger meeting space to spread out more. The downsides are though that the building would need to be heated more. Travis suggested that there could be airflow in the building while people are meeting by cracking a back window and put double fan in another window. Steve suggested that instead of meeting in person, the meetings could go back to Zoom for the time being. Ron said that the number of people meeting for a Select Board meeting is not too bad, but during a Budget Committee meeting there are more people. If meetings were moved to the other building, there would need to be a better wifi connection in order for the meetings to use Zoom, so town's people can connect via Zoom.

Steve made a motion to go to Executive Session, Personnel Matters 1 M RSA 405(6)A

Elaine 2nd motion.

6:50pm resumed meeting

Steve made a motion to go to full Zoom meetings next Monday. Elaine 2nd motion. Unanimous.

Town Clerk – Cindy asked to have Ron on standby to set up the generator in case the buildings lost power the next morning during the election. Travis said he is available at 6:30am as long as he is not out plowing the roads. Cindy also asked to get a hold of Jim in case power goes out, because the town would not have running water and the facilities. The generator would need to be set up at the fire department so the Town Office can have running water.

Cindy reported that 235 Absentee Ballots had been requested and 227 had been returned to date. Steve asked if any poll watchers had signed up. Cindy reported no, not at this time. Cindy said she will be the Warden tomorrow. The town has 5 voting booths. Precautions for sanitation include handing sanitized pen to voter and cleaning booth after each voter uses a booth. Ron noted that Christy has put in a lot of time and wanted to make sure there is still money in the budget to pay that position. Cindy said yes, that she had not been needed earlier in the year, so she did not work. Cindy reported there are 571 registered voters as of three weeks ago in Freedom.

Town Officials – Ron reported that Montville took Freedom's recycling trailer. Travis reported that there is a lot of cardboard in Montville's recycling. There is a lot of recycling from Montville at this time, since their truck has been broken down for a few weeks. Replacement fenders were installed by Travis on the recycling trailer.

Planning Board – Prentice will send minutes to the Select Board.

Budget Committee – Will meet via Zoom on Thursday, Nov. 5th at 6pm.

General Assistance – Ron reported that the Select Board needs to vote on the General Assistance Ordinance. This is the guideline that the town follows when someone comes to the town and applies for General Assistance. Ron made a motion to accept the General Assistance Ordinance, Appendices A-H, October 1, 2020 – Sept. 30, 2021. Steve accepted the motion. Elaine 2nd. Unanimous. The Select Board signed the ordinance on November 2, 2020.

Travis reported that he received a thank you from Dale Hoskins.

Steve spoke with Vicki Kupferman at Mt. View and filled out the form for each child that volunteered cleaning up the Skidgell Property.

Steve reported that the town did not get another deposit today to finish that project. Terri Ann told Steve that the money should be in account by today. Steve will call Brian tomorrow to follow up. The town has been waiting for this money for two months.

Ron looked at the ceiling in the Post Office. Travis is going to look at it. Steve reported that John Chapin said USPS would also look at the ceiling.

Travis recommended there be a written policy for the Secretary to the Board position.

Mailboxes in Freedom – Steve reported that Joe said the Post office is responsible for mailbox posts. Joe has forms to put in the mailboxes to let people know. Travis recommends that Freedom's mailbox policy should be amended to include that mailbox posts should be plum and vertical and any further problems with the post and mailbox is the responsibility of the Post Office.

Steve made a motion to accept the amended minutes of the October 26, 2020 Select Board meeting. Ron 2nd. Unanimous.

Budget and Trio – Steve would like the Chart of Accounts to line up with Trio more than they have in the past. He noted looking at the Chart of Accounts and the Trio report that they don't line up, so it makes it hard to keep track of the details. Steve is moving the Worker's Compensation line under Employee Costs. Steve wondered if the line, Supplies and General Expenses needs to be broken out more? Ron said no. Steve suggested adding Tax Maps under Contracted Services. Ron noted that there was nothing budgeted for the postage meter, but it cost \$800 this year. He suggested budgeting \$900 for it next year. Steve changed name from MMA to Property and Casualty Insurance so people know what it means. There are no suggested changes in the Public Safety Lines.

Public Works – Question whether the Contracted Services amount cover all those costs? Payments include the truck body and excavator payments of \$17,730/year, which is a 5 year lease. Steve is grouping truck expenses under one line for each truck. The town also has an equipment trailer, that hauls the excavator and a utility trailer.

Summer Roads – Steve wondered about breaking out more detail under Contracted Services to include grating/mowing. Road Work is \$25,000, this includes everything but paving.

Steve noted that historically the budget has tried to reflect expenses and revenue generated so the town's people could see what money was also being brought in. It was suggested that instead the town should take out the revenue lines and just have a tax budget. What ends up at end of budget sheet is just total town budget from taxes. And then explain about where revenue excess goes. Steve's goal is to simplify budget. Ron thought that it is confusing to mix up revenue and expenses. He added that just the tax budget should be presented to show what needs to be raised from taxes. Elaine thought that including the revenue will be too much information to give to people and people will interpret it differently. Ron likes the way Steve did the budget in past Town Reports. Elaine agreed to keep format from last year's town report. But that the order of the Chart of Accounts could be changed to have the School bill and the County bill come at the end.

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:11pm
Ron 1st, Elaine 2nd.