

Town of Freedom Select Board Minutes  
November 16, 2020

Present: Cindy Abbott, Steve Bennett, Travis Price, Jim Waterman, Dylan Turner, Tammy MacTaggart, Joe Freeman, Ron Price, Nathan McCann, Alyssa Brugger, Elaine Higgins and Amanda Jamison

Ron called meeting to order at 6:10pm

Citizen's Concern: Tammy MacTaggart expressed concern that after visiting two Freedom businesses, she saw that employees and many customers did not wear masks to protect themselves and others from the Coronavirus. She had gone inside the Freedom Post Office and reported that the staff is not wearing masks, nor are some of the customers. She also had gone inside Freedom General and found the staff and some customers are not wearing masks. Tammy expressed concern that Freedom is a pass through town for many people from other counties. She is concerned with the lack of compliance with the Governor's mandates from local businesses. She felt that at the very least the employees should be wearing masks. She expressed that this is a public safety issue and wondered if anything could be done. Ron stated that a formal complaint could be filed with the USPS. Steve said he would call John Chapin the next day to talk about this. Ron stated there is no way on a local level to enforce the mask mandate, but the Town could put on their facebook page something about encouraging mask wearing and social distancing. Steve thanked Tammy for bringing this up and taking time to speak to the Select Board.

FVFD: Jim reported that 440, N95 masks would be delivered to the fire department sometime this week. Truck #2 is back. It cost \$11,232.98 to fix it, and Alyssa has the bill. Jim reported there will be another distribution of food on Friday, November 20<sup>th</sup> at Mt. View. Jim will be picking up a few boxes of food from this distribution for Freedom residents. Jim has been in touch with WCAP about the Thanksgiving boxes. Jim will deliver four of those boxes to Freedom residents.

Public Works: Travis reported that Truck #6 has been serviced. He is starting bed chain exchange on Truck #8. Travis is ditching between public work and Gerry Spaulding. He suggested to take this expense out of winter roads line, not the summer roads. Alyssa spoke about the bill from Eagle Rental for the excavator/grinder and that that would be taken out of winter roads line not the summer roads line.

Ron reported that the mirror by the Post Office is not lined up correctly. Travis will look at the mirror the next morning.

Travis reported that he did find a leak around chimney on Post Office building. He did fix it with tar and cleaned out the gutters and down pipes on the building. Travis reported that the chimney does need to be fixed correctly by building a cricket behind chimney to shed water off to the sides. Travis recommended that Mitchells could make something and install it. Steve said that Travis should inquire about that job at Mitchells and get a price for it. Elaine wondered if it is worth painting the ceiling of the P.O.? Ron suggested waiting to do this until the roof is fixed

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and then make sure there are no more leaks before painting the ceiling. Cindy mentioned that under the light it is very dirty. Ron said that area needs to be power washed. Travis said he will get the light looking better, and if there is a warm spell he can take the power washer to the P.O. building.

Select Board Minutes: A few changes were made to the November 9<sup>th</sup> minutes. Ron made a motion to accept amended minutes. Steve 2<sup>nd</sup>. Unanimous.

Correspondence: Steve brought up Bill Kelly's email that he received in regards to Town foreclosed properties. Steve said he needed clarification on the email. In regards to the potential of foreclosed properties in Town, Steve asked about the property on Stevens Rd. Cindy said they usually pay the back taxes at the last minute. Steve wondered about the Bangs and Knight property. Cindy said they still have one more year of back taxes not paid before it would be foreclosed. Steve mentioned that property has two buildings on it. He is concerned about the foundation on one of the buildings, the one on the left, that has a problem with supports and potentially creates the potential for it to fall into the stream. Ron stated that after his meeting with the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, it will be very costly to get rid of abandoned or derelict buildings. It will be next to impossible to be able to burn them down and extremely costly to haul the debris off site. Ron sent the owners of the Anderson property a list of contractors that might tear it down. Ron has not heard back from them. Ron needs to let them know that the DEP regulations have changed.

Community Solar Farm: Steve stated he learned from Tom Carter, who works at Revision Energy, that the solar farm going in in Knox will use all the capacity at CMP substation in Thorndike. That means that the potential of putting a solar farm on the Skidgell lot has greatly diminished. There is the possibility of putting Freedom on a list as a site for a future solar farm, but that would take years. If the Town wanted to build a solar farm for itself to offset Town costs, that is possible. Elaine asked what else could that land be used for? There are about 4-5 acres of land that are deemed to have a 95% solar rating, from the Revision Energy report. And the land is next to a town highway with 3-phase power. Steve said the next step would be convincing CMP to increase capacity of the substation. Steve is just not sure how to go about that.

Steve reported he checked on the property on Timberwood Lane. He checked on it because Cindy received a call from someone that said there is a gate. Steve did not see a gate. Ron said that there is a gate way down there, out by the gravel pits. Steve realized he did not go far enough.

Tax Collector/Town Clerk: Cindy asked what the Select Board would like to do with the awning outside the Town Office. She reported from last night's wind, the frame broke, but the awning did not rip. Steve added that soon snow will bring that awning down. Cindy asked if they planned to keep the awning up through the winter. Steve said that he imagined business would

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still be conducted from outside, so that people do not have to enter the Town Office. Ron said that the awning should be kept up for as long as possible, but once it comes down, that will be it for the awning. Cindy said people can call her from their car, so they don't have to stand outside in the cold. Ron wondered if it could be worked out to have just one person in the town office at a time and install plexiglass. Steve suggested that people could make appointments with Cindy and Steve felt fine with Cindy telling people that they need to come into the Town Office wearing a mask. Ron was concerned at the pressure that would put on Cindy to enforce that. It was stated that for now, leave the awning up and continue with people coming to the window to do business from outside the Town Office. Steve suggested that Cindy could make a recommendation to the Select Board on how best to proceed through the winter months.

Code Enforcement Officer: Jacki Robbins checked on A-frame on N. Palermo Rd. There is an outhouse and a bus type camper on the property. Jacki let the property owners know they need a permit for the outhouse.

Planning Board: They canceled their meeting this month. Ron said he would get in touch with Prentice about the properties that might come into foreclosure.

Recreation Committee: Cindy reported that someone had contacted her about creating a Holiday decorating event that townspeople could vote on for the best lights. This would be a no contact event. Cindy reported that the Veteran's Day event went well. Cindy also mentioned a Stocking event that would be promoted on facebook. She said there would not be a lot of contact with people for this event either. People can pick up the stockings through the window.

Cemetery Committee: Steve Holmes emailed pictures of stones that need to be fixed with prices on each photo. It was reported that there is \$2,000 in the budget to fix the stones. Ron said he would contact Steve Holmes to let him know there is money in the budget.

Old Business:

November 17<sup>th</sup> at 6pm, Internet Meeting

Elaine will send letter to Ron and Steve to get their signatures to show they are in support of the Internet Meetings.

November 18<sup>th</sup> at 1pm, Select Board will meet in Executive Session, MRSA 405(6)A to review Personnel Policies

November 18<sup>th</sup> at 6pm, Budget Committee Meeting

November 19<sup>th</sup> at 3:30pm, Conference Call with Terri Ann Holden to review and close out Skidgell Property grant

New Business: Joe Freeman reported that he is picking up a number of 55 gallon trash bags with the \$1.50 sticker on them. Joe recommended that to dispose of a 55 gallon trash bag, there

should be a \$2.50 sticker. Cindy felt having two different stickers might be confusing. She suggested that a 55 gallon trash bag might need two \$1.50 stickers on them. Joe said the Town is losing money the way it is currently set up. Elaine needs to check if this change needs to be decided at the Town Meeting. Elaine suggested that instead of having two stickers, it might be time to raise the price of a garbage sticker. The price has not been raised since 2012, when it went from \$1.00 to \$1.50 per sticker. Ron said the Board needs to think about this. Ron asked Joe to get a count of how many 55 gallon trash bags are getting thrown out a week using the \$1.50 sticker. Joe said he would do that and report back.

Treasurer's Report: Payroll Warrant in the amount of \$3,148.25. There are three AP Warrants this week: \$12,106.23, \$14,100.00 for Mitchell Roofing – this check was written and spent some time ago, but needs to be recorded in Trio, \$16,993.00 for Cross Excavation. The ending checkbook balance is \$494,395.92.

Ron made a motion to accept Payroll Warrant, Elaine 2<sup>nd</sup>. Unanimous.

Ron made a motion to accept AP Warrant in the amount of \$12,106.23, Elaine 2<sup>nd</sup>, Unanimous.

Ron made a motion to accept AP Warrant in the amount of \$14,100.00 for Mitchell Roofing Correction, Elaine 2<sup>nd</sup>, Unanimous.

Ron made a motion to accept AP Warrant in the amount of \$16,993.00 for Cross excavation/Skidgell Property, Elaine 2<sup>nd</sup>, Unanimous.

Steve will call Brian tomorrow and let him know the check is on the way.

Ron made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Steve 2<sup>nd</sup>. Unanimous.

Meeting adjourned at 7:57pm.