



Quarterly Newsletter

8-12-2024

Committee Updates:

- Planning Board:

The Planning Board is hard at work on refining our draft solar energy system ordinance following the results of the town-wide survey in March. We also are incorporating into our agenda other matters as they come along, like a proposed construction and deconstruction project for a residence in the Shoreland Protection Zone on Pleasant St; and the anticipated need to address in the coming months an ordinance focused on mobile home parks.

The Planning Board meets every second and fourth Tuesday of the month, from 6 pm to 8 pm, at the town office. These meetings are open to the public and there is a dedicated "citizen concern" section of the agenda at the beginning of each meeting. The chairman can be contacted at planningboard@freedomme.org or 207-323-3462

- Recreation: Alyssa Brugger, Chairperson

- Field Day/ Pond Day August 17, 2024 (see flier)
- This month parks and rec has been preparing for their annual Field Day!

We have been creating the flier, reaching out to numerous people for the parade and for vendors, gathering volunteers, we cleaned up the snack shack and park (the weather interfered with more external clean up). We are putting together orders for food, prizes, and decorations.

- Appeals Board: Mike Smith, Chairperson
 - appealsboard@freedomme.org
- Cemetery: Steve Holmes, Chairperson
- Budget: Laura Greeley, Chairperson
- Community Advisory Development Committee (CDAC):
BroadBand: Phil Bloomstein, Chairperson
- Ad Hoc Policy: Rene Oullet, Chairperson

Town Officials:

- Code Enforcement: Cindy Abbott
- Assessors Agent: Jackie Robbins
- Health Official: Patricia Ashland
- School Board Director: Eleanor Hess
- General Assistance Officer: Ryan Willette
- Plumbing Inspector: Cindy Abbott
- Solid Waste Director: Phil Bloomstein
- Animal Control Officer: Peter Nerber

Community Groups:

- Freedom Community Historical Society:
Upcoming Book Reading August 17, 2024 (see flier)

Community News:

- You can now subscribe to the Town Calendar on Google Calendar. It is also available on the town website: (freedomme.org) on the Bulletin Board Page . If you would like to subscribe please reach out to Cindy Abott with your email address.
- Beaver Ridge Use Survey due by Friday August 16: you can access the link from the town website or you can get a paper copy at the town office.

Select Board Updates:

2024 has thus far been a busy but productive year for the Select Board. The drive of this board is transparency, fairness, and communication. This is the first of a quarterly newsletter that will be sent out to all residents, giving an update from each board or committee on their respective activity and progress from the previous month. Since this is the first newsletter, covering the last six months, we will provide some of the most important bullet points.

- Tax bills were sent out with an approximate 5.5% decrease. Freedom budget committee worked hard to initially produce a budget that represented an 18% decrease from last year's overall budget. That 18% included an estimated normal increase from the county and the school district. However, a motion was made at Town meeting for an increase on the Town government line, there was an unprecedented increase in our county tax, and an approximate 5% increase in the district school budget. These items lowered our initial 18% tax cut to a 5 1/2% tax cut. We commit to a continued effort in lowering taxes.

- Assessments increased across-the-board this year. This is a forced increase by the state in order to keep our homestead exemption status. This increase in assessment did not increase your taxes. As a board, we have many questions concerning our assessments, it is a challenging process and this fall we will be attending trainings on the assessing process.

- Rapid Renewal will soon be available for online registration renewals.

- If you are on Facebook, follow Freedom Live. We go live with all of our Select Board, Budget Committee, and Planning Board meetings.

- A lawsuit has been filed against the Town, claiming a disputed portion of Beaver Hill/Ridge Road to be a legally abandoned and now private road. As requested by the Town attorney, all residents have been sent a survey, asking for testimony to any and all use of the road.

- The Public Works department is in the middle of our summer road projects. They are currently working on the Raven Road where they are digging out 1000 feet of unstable surface to a depth of 12 inches and replacing that with 6 inches of crushed stone base, CSB surfacing of an additional 2000 feet, and removing two rotten culverts and replacing them with a 48 inch culvert to aid water flow. They will then move onto Townhouse and Rollins Roads, where they will also be CSB surfacing needed areas. The paving money the voters approved last year to pave Pleasant and Main streets has been placed in a paving account, awaiting the DOT to complete their scheduled bridge work.

- Unfortunately, we are still dealing with issues from past bookkeeping errors . After this year's Town report was printed and after we held our Town meeting, we discovered a \$100,000 missing or misplaced within the Town report. For example, we believed there to be a Solid Waste capital reserve account of approximately \$62,000. Within our audit, we discovered that

there was actually no capital reserve account. We discovered that we only have half of the amount in our public works reserve account that was reported in the Town report. We have approximately \$30,000 less in Covid funds account compared to what was reported in the Town Report. We continue to diligently work hard to find answers to questions concerning our past bookkeeping, correct errors, and move forward as effective and responsible stewards of taxpayers' money.

Town Clerk Updates: Cindy Abbott clerk@freedomme.org



Town of Freedom
71 Pleasant Street
Freedom, ME 04941

Phone: (207) 382-6177
Fax: (207) 382-3040

Hours:
Monday: 9am - 6pm
Tues./Weds./Thurs.: 9am - 3pm
First Saturday of the month: 9am - noon