

Town of Freedom Select Board Minutes
August 22, 2022

Present: Elaine Higgings, Ron Price, Steve Bennett, Travis Price, Jim Waterman, Cindy Abbot and Eleanor MacMakin, Kim & Steve Holmes & Troy Lebovitz

Ron Price called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm.

Motion by Elaine, 2nd Ron, unanimous: To accept August 15, 2022 minutes as presented and placed on file. One minor punctuation change.

FVFD: Jim Waterman reported on the success of the Parade, BBQ and sale August 20 put on by the Freedom recreation committee.

Initiated discussion on a development issue on 1057 N Palermo Rd regarding drilling a well. The code inspector put a note on the property but this was ignored. The board wants to look into how notice is given for red tagging a property, and how can the Town enforce it.

Public Works: Travis Price reported tree work on the Clark Rd, the road near the McDonald farm. Reported issues with his and another's emails not being received. Issue was noted for followup. Requested status of the Labor law Poster, Ron will get it this week.

Citizen Issue: Troy Lebowitz addressed the board and Travis about this tree work and made a case for his property boundary being eroded by road traffic. He explained he lost the house in 2011 and the property is not occupied. Travis said he doesn't service that road, Unity does. Lengthy discussion with the conclusion Travis would fill pits left by tree roots with rubble to restore land grade.

Public Works continuation: Reported issues with his and another's emails not being received. Issue was noted for followup. Requested status of the Labor law Poster and Ron said he will check on it.

Steve initiated discussion about power washing of the Post Office. Ron will contact Jeff to schedule the job. The repairs needed on the back of the building should not hold up this annual maintenance, all agreed.

Public Works continuation: Travis hauled 1,405 yards of sand + 70 yards more to do. He reported about an opportunity to purchase a used champion grader. It needs some engine work and the tires alone cover the cost of \$4,500. The contractor who is hired to grade charges \$4,700 a time.

Motion by Elaine, 2nd Ron, unanimous: Approve purchase for the used champion grader with the funds to come from the Public Works Capital Reserve.

Treasurer's Report: Elaine reported this week the payroll warrant in the amount of \$4,589.17 and the A/P warrant in the amount of \$4,495.16. The ending checkbook balance is \$238,978.28. Discussion on payments for charitable organizations concluding is the decision to pay first 10 on the list in the town report next week, then the next 10 the week after and 11 the following week to complete the charitable donations for 2022.

Motion by Steve, 2nd Elaine, unanimous: To accept the treasurer's report and pay the Payroll warrant in the amount of \$4,589.17 and the A/P warrant in the amount of \$4,495.16.

RSU3 School District report: Ellie Hess recently assumed the position of Chairperson with Myrick Cross retiring from the position.

She has led 2 workshops/training for new board members.

There is a new principal for Mt View High School, Thomas Gray. He is looking to attract international students and host more public forums.

There is a new strategic plan to coalesce initiatives for the Superintendent to respond too. Ellie noted that covid has prompted the need for mental health support.

There is a district meeting Wednesday night at Mt View High School at 5:30

Informative discussion about an initiative by a Selectperson from Liberty, Andre Blancher to change the cost sharing for towns to RSU3. Freedom Selectboard did not see changing from the current system of town valuation to a percent of students viable as it mostly benefits Unity and places undue burden on the small towns.

Freedom Select Board congratulated Ellie on her work for RSU3.

Steve recommended that RSU3 find means to provide an impetus to get the non-profit FutureRSU3 moving again. There is a budget amount of \$60,000 remaining on the record.

Cemetery Committee report: Steve and Kim Holmes requested funding to fix a marble headstone at the Gould Cemetery and assistance to excavate the original steps of Freedom Academy.

Motion by Ron, Steve 2nd, unanimous: Approve purchase of stone costing \$225 for repairing the headstone at Gould Cemetery.

The Freedom Academy stone entrance buried under turf presents a few challenges to solve that Kim will consider, and bring solutions back to the Board.

Town Clerk/Tax Collector: Cindy Abbott showed Select Board abatements:

Motion by Ron, Steve 2nd, unanimous: To approve 1 abatement for Ron Porter.

Correspondence:

Letter from Colleen Hendricks, a hydrologist with Ag & Forestry dated August 19 regarding PFAS remedial action. Steve reported the plan to address the problem in 4 tiers the first 2 are volume and proximity.

Two letters were sent from Jackie Robbins to Dalton Heppeard and Brandon Suitor for code violations.

Old Business: Review of Animal Control report by Peter Nerber who kept a stray dog at his home because the Waterville rescue was closed. Cindy reported the dog was released to the owner.

A property tax matter was discussed regarding Peace Ridge sanctuary, a new barn in Freedom for rescuing horses.

Noted as Steve reported that Coleen Smith did not receive the grant she had applied for and explained that she is working with the Town on the old Skidgel site.

Steve shared the history of canning in Maine and how the interstate freeway was the end of Maine's canning industry. He noted the drought in the West shutting down farmers from water sources could revive Maines food production.

RHR Smith and Karen Bolk need power of attorney to enter dialogue with the IRS on behalf of the Town of Freedom to remedy an \$8,000 penalty.

Motion by Steve, Elaine 2nd, unanimous: Sign the requested form to render power of attorney to RHR Smith to resolve a payroll imbalance.

New Business:

Elaine reported that Kyle Hydiniak offered to create a link for zoom to store meeting videos which is the way the Broadband committee records minutes. Steve asked what the cost for storage would be. He stated that the Towns current system has been working for a long time and it's easier to go back to a written report than listen to hours of video. Ron stated that the paper system puts him at ease and that digital information comes with more risks.

Motion by Elaine, Steve 2nd, unanimous. Employ Eleanor at \$15 an hour to assume the duties of secretary, starting immediately.

Meeting adjourned by Ron at 8:15 pm

Respectfully submitted by Eleanor McacMakin