

**Town of Freedom
Selectmen's Meeting
Monday, January 11, 2021**

Present were Selectmen Leslie Babb, Ernest Day, Jr. and Alan Fall, and Ellen White, Town Administrator, who recorded the minutes. Also present was Rob Cunio, Scott Brooks, Bill Elliott, Chuck Brooks, Don Johnson and Mark McConkey. This meeting was held at the Town Hall.

Chairman Babb called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

Review of Mail, Sign Manifests, Approval of Minutes

The accounts payable and payroll manifests were reviewed as well as the red folder containing correspondence.

Day made a motion to approve the minutes of the Selectmen's Meetings & Non-Public Sessions held on 12/21/2020, 12/29/2020, 1/4/2021, 1/6/2021, and 1/8/2021. Fall seconded. All in favor, the motion passed.

The Board reviewed a quote received for a new telephone system at the Town Office. The Board agreed to move forward.

Department Head Updates:

Fire Department – Chief Rob Cunio reported call volume including 1 medical aid, mutual aid to a fire in Kezar Falls, car accident on Route 25, and 6 active positive cases of Covid-19. Cunio also reported that 11 members of the department have received their first round of Covid-19 vaccinations. The ice fishing derby has been postponed to 2/6/2021 due to present ice conditions. An ice rescue certification is scheduled for the end of February. Cunio discussed his efforts to obtain quotes to dredge the fire pond on Jerry Brooks' property. He has reached out multiple times to several contractors and only one has presented a quote which he then presented it to the Board. Day recommends holding off on a decision until the budget review to be scheduled for next week. Babb requested Cunio provide a list of the contacts for review.

Transfer Station – Supervisor Justin Brooks reported all is going well; George and Raymond are holding things down while he is out of work. Ricker's is scheduled to pick up scrap metals this week.

Highway – Road Agent Scott Brooks reported it has been quiet but the crew has been taking care of winter maintenance as well as cleanup of downed trees from the last storm. A load of salt was received last week.

Police Department – Chief Josh Shackford reported an accident just before the meeting; car vs. deer on Rice Hill Road. Shackford and Bob King checked out the Ossipee Lake Road property as requested to secure any valuables. Discussion on the cleanup of the property requiring biohazard mediation efforts.

Old / New Business/Discussion:

Subcontracted Equipment Rates – Brooks questioned if the Board has reviewed the proposed updated subcontracted equipment rates. All had and there were no issues. Babb made a motion to approve the request for increases as proposed. Day seconded. All in favor, the motion passed.

Department Requested Warrant Articles -

Fire Department: Cunio stated he is only requesting one for dredging the fire pond.

Transfer Station: J. Brooks requested the Board stand by the proposed budget; no warrant articles are necessary for Transfer Station.

Highway: S. Brooks reviewed the proposal received for a new cab, chassis, dump body and controls. The cover missing from the proposal will be an additional \$3,500 for a total of just under \$200,000 for an AWD. This price is comparable to the 2WD trucks being acquired by the towns of Eaton and Ossipee. Babb questioned if there is any value in the old truck. Brooks estimates \$30-35,000 on the high end. Day questioned the warranty terms on the new truck. Brooks was unsure.

Hot top, sand seal and crack seal – Funds for all were encumbered from 2020 for projects that were held off due to the uncertainty of the pandemic. Proposal to raise \$99,000 for hot top and replaced the 1-ton in lieu of raising additional monies for sand seal and crack seal. Brooks stated that he will be reusing the stainless-steel body. The quote received is for \$53,000 for cab and chassis in AWD. He is still awaiting a quote from Diprizio GMC.

Police Department: Shackford has no requests for warrant articles this year.

Appointments:

Don Johnson – 2021 Town Meeting Planning –

Johnson stated the School District Annual Meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 8 at 7:00 PM and traditionally is adjourned by 7:40 PM. His recommendation is to hold the town and school elections in the elementary school gym using the same setup as the primary and general elections. Question of whether there can be a bifurcated meeting without approval at Town Meeting the prior year. The school gymnasium has been calculated to allow seating of 122 chairs with 6' of distancing. Johnson presented an idea proposed by Supervisor of the Checklist Bud Brooks to begin the meeting at 9:00 AM on Tuesday, March 9th and immediately adjourn until Saturday, March 13 at 9:00 AM with appropriate noticing of intentions. Babb responded that he does not like the idea of holding a meeting and moving it. Discussion on the number of voters at the Town Election. Day stated that there were 250 in 2020. Babb stated he would like to see voting to be held at the Town Hall and Town Meeting at the school. White suggested voting upstairs to allow additional space and separates point of entry and exit. Johnson stated the Board has the authority to set the time and place of Town Meeting but the election must be held on Tuesday, March 9. Another suggestion was to have the polls open from say 9 AM – 5 PM, immediately seal the ballot box and proceed to Town Meeting at 6 PM, both taking place at the School. Cunio stated that if there are capacity concerns during elections, they could restrict the number of voters entering to the number of available voting booths. State Representative Mark McConkey was presented and provided an update on the house bill to postpone elections until later in the spring. The bill has been turned over to election law for review and Secretary of State Bill Gardner is prioritizing the review once the bill is complete and includes all proposed amendments. The Board discussed Town Meeting approval received a few years ago authorizing two sessions. White will review this with legal counsel. Day questioned if there is issue with simultaneous voting and deliberative session. Johnson stated that it will be a healthier voting space at the school. The Board recommends designating the Town Hall as the voting location. Discussion to continue.

Public Comment:

Mark McConkey stated the challenges he and others are facing obtaining pre-approval of septic plans

stating the Zoning Officer only works one day per week and depending on timing of receipt and holidays, the pre-approval turnaround can take up to several weeks.

McConkey specifically reviewed the Nowak case and provided the Board with copies of his application to the ZBA and plans. McConkey states he turned his application in for review 10-days prior to the ZBA deadline and received a letter of denial. Upon application to the ZBA he was informed that the application was incomplete and a driveway permit application is required. McConkey stated that there is a driveway that has been present for at least 10-years but is unsure of appropriate permitting, and added that he is only seeking setback relief for the septic tank and field and tree removal as a prerequisite to whether the site can be improved. Fall responded that there appears to be confusion between the septic approval process and the building permit process. There should be no building permit approved absent a state approved septic design. He then stated there is a letter of approval/denial to accompany septic submittals opposed to requiring the plan be stamped in an effort to speed up the approval process. McConkey stated he had a similar issue with delays impacting the Bolduc case. Babb responded that they are in the process of outlining a process for the Zoning Officer to follow. Fall questioned if the zoning application needs to be amended to include a checkbox for setback relief for septic location which would eliminate the requirement for certain information contained on the application. It was agreed that a driveway permit is not required as part of this specific application for septic setback relief. Fall made a motion to recommend the acceptance of the Nowak application as submitted. Babb seconded. All in favor, the motion passed. Babb requested an email be sent to ZBA Chair Scott Lees acknowledging the Boards' recommendation to allow the application for Nowak for the January meeting.

Babb requested a budget review be scheduled for next week with no public comment to be received. Discussion on use of fund balance last year; \$60,000 was used to reduce the tax rate. Babb reviewed preliminary budget figures and suggested reductions on page 5 totaling \$50,000. Babb stated that the town-wide assessment increased by \$1.3 million. Babb requested a meeting be scheduled for next Tuesday, 1/19 (due to the Monday holiday) at 7:30 AM to take place at the Town Office.

Fall reported the Danforth Bay Bridge has reopened officially as of Friday night.

Non-Public Sessions:

Not applicable.

Consent Agenda:

Minutes – Non-Public Sessions – 12/21/2020	Approved
Minutes – Selectmen’s Meeting & Non-Public Sessions – 12/29/2020	Approved
Minutes – Selectmen’s Meeting & Non-Public Sessions – 1/4/2021	Approved
Minutes – Selectmen’s Meeting & Non-Public Sessions – 1/6/2021	Approved
Minutes – Selectmen’s Meeting & Non-Public Sessions – 1/8/2021	Approved
Payroll Manifest – week ending 1/6/2021	Approved
Accounts Payable Manifest – week ending 1/6/2021	Approved
Birthday Proclamation – Carolyn Clancy	Approved
Letter – Bill Howlett, thanks for donation	Approved

Correspondence:

2021 Proposed Operating Budget as of 1/7/2021	Reviewed
Minutes – JLMSC Quarterly Meeting – 12/8/2020	Reviewed
Report – Building Permits Issued 1/1/2020-12/31/2020	Reviewed

Proposal – Verizon OneTalk Telephone System Quotation Reviewed
Letter – Personnel, Termination Letter Reviewed
Letter – Personnel, Worker’s Compensation Status Reviewed

Being no further input, Day made a motion to adjourn. Babb seconded. All in favor, the motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Ellen White, Town Administrator

Approved by the Board of Selectmen on _____:

Leslie R. Babb Ernest F. Day, Jr. Alan G. Fall