

**Town of Freedom
Selectmen's Meeting
Monday, April 26, 2021**

Present were Selectmen Leslie Babb, Ernest Day, Jr. and Melissa Florio, and Ellen White, Town Administrator, who recorded the minutes. This meeting was held at the Town Hall.

Chairman Babb called the meeting to order at 6:43 PM.

Also present was Renee Wheaton, Linda Habif, Kate Chaput, Janice Zecher, Paul Elie, Bonnie Elie, Josh Shackford, Rob Cunio, Karrie Buttrick, Alan Fall, Bill Elliott, and Anne Cunningham.

Review of Mail, Sign Manifests, Approval of Minutes

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

Babb questioned the funding source for the engine repair of the 2013 International by Advanced Diesel. White responded that the emergency expenditure was authorized but not the funding source.

Day made a motion to approve the minutes of the Selectmen's Meeting and Non-Public Sessions held on 4/19/2021 as written. Babb seconded. All in favor, the motion carried.

Babb discussed the repair to the 2013 International in further detail resulting in a \$33,975.71 invoice from Advanced Diesel. The cost to replace the motor was \$24,000 with the balance of the invoice being for labor. The expense was further justified due to the delay in its replacement's arrival in the Spring of 2022. Babb made a motion to request the funds in the amount of \$33,975.71 to come from the Highway Department Equipment Capital Reserve account. Day seconded. All in favor, the motion carried.

Department Head Updates:

Fire Department – Chief Rob Cunio reported 5 active Covid-19 cases in town for a total of 60+ reported, 5 calls for medical aid, 1 fire alarm, an illegal burn, and service call. The AEDs have been ordered and Cunio is working on setting up a training/CPR certification through Action Ambulance as one person must be certified at each location. Cunio is unsure of the units estimated arrival as they were ordered through the State bid system. Cunio discussed smoke investigations and calls for illegal burns stating he will not disclose the complainant's information in an effort to not discourage or deter people from reporting suspicions that could lead up to forest fires. Today was a Category-4 fire danger.

Transfer Station – Supervisor Justin Brooks reported that Rickers picked up the steel last Friday/Saturday. George has been very busy at the Transfer Station; the recycling, demo and compactors have all been filled and are awaiting pickup.

Senior Resource Coordinator – Renee Wheaton announced assistance to be provided by visiting nurses to assist seniors with vitals checks and questions related to Covid-19 vaccinations. In-person activities are anticipated to commence in late May then throughout June-July.

Town Office – Town Administrator Ellen White discussed the Town Office reopening plan. The Board agreed to address this next week with a tentative reopening date following the state's plan for

reopening date of 5/7. White will work on signage for limiting the number of persons in the lobby and request for mask wearing.

Public Input:

None presented.

Old / New Business / Discussion:

Community Garden – Renee Wheaton presented the Board with a further information as requested along with a proposed layout for a community garden contained within 1-acre. Discussion on needs to proceed including establishing a committee to manage, finalize proposal/drawings, and utilize tools such as those provided by UNH Cooperative Extension to assist with setup. Other towns were noted as having been successful in implementing a community garden. Florio questioned the timeframe and needs assessment? Wheaton responded that it will be a multi-year phased project. A grant available through the AARP has an application deadline of June 15 and the funds would have to be expended by November 15. These funds would be used to purchase supplies for the raised beds and fencing. Discussion on soil preparation and volunteer assistance needed. Wheaton stated that the plan is to go with raised beds. Florio questioned the anticipated amount of interest. Wheaton responded that she already has 30-40 interested in garden rental space. Day spoke in support of the idea especially if the town's only responsibility is in providing the land. Brief discussion on insurance liability and water accessibility.

Danforth Bay Bridge Project – A change order was presented in the amount of \$2,300 to address drainage concerns. Additional expenditures incurred including paving costs, \$13,000 and additional concrete, \$15,000, due to a calculation error in the design as well as a 2” shortage created in the manufacturing of the precast footing. Alan Fall questioned why construction commenced in winter weather conditions? Further stating that the change orders submitted in February were supposed to be the last. And then there was the GZA invoice oversight, an error at the fault of CMA. White responded that Northeast Earth proceeded with the project using their heating blankets and temperature probes at no charge to the town. Change orders and contract amendments are currently under review by NH DOT. The Board is in favor of approving the change orders presented. If NH DOT approves all three, that will be a bonus since the drainage and paving are requirements of the town. White requested a representative be appointed to act on items that could potentially delay project progression if they have to wait until the next Selectmen's meeting. Day offered. Florio made a motion to nominate Ernie Day as representative. Babb seconded. Day abstained. Majority vote carried.

Masonic Lodge Acquisition – Day reported that Building Inspector Dave Senecal looked at the building along with a contractor who reviewed the roof. Day reviewed notes on the building including dimension of 56x41 on 5/8 acre of land and assessed value of \$373,300. The septic is unknown and the roof has been noted as needing replacement or could be re-screwed and painted as an option.

Day is in support of the acquisition in an effort to: save a historic building, keep the Mason's charter in town, have additional space to utilize for office and meeting space, and because it is a gift.

Florio stated that the Board is in a position where it has been asked to acquire this building with no prior intention to obtain it; it is a historic building with parking lot being the main attribute but there are other ways to obtain parking. She does not feel the Town should be put in a position to acquire it to save it being a historic building with unknown costs to keep. Question of setting a precedent for other potential locations.

Babb stated that more information is needed and recommends the acquisition be forwarded onto the Planning Board and Conservation Commission for comment as required in RSA 41:14-a, prior to scheduling public hearings. Figures are need for cost analysis.

Day reiterated that the building is being offered as a gift.

Florio stated that it is not needed but they are faced with trying to find a need.

Babb opened the discussion for public comment. Alan Fall questioned what is the public hearing schedule? Babb responded that they have to receive feedback from the Planning Board and Conservation Commission first.

Anne Cunningham confirmed the Planning Board agenda deadline as May 6.

Paul Elie requested clarification on the overview and process, who has the authority to say yay or no? Babb responded that the Selectmen have the decision authority as was granted to them at Town Meeting several years ago.

Fall reported that a contractor looked at the roof several weeks ago and is disappointed that a cost for repair has not been received yet. Fall then stated that he will be assembling a meeting and the property will be offered for sale by May 28 as they cannot miss an opportunity to sell in this unique market. The Lodge will pay rent to Ossipee Valley Lodge for a meeting venue; it cannot afford to keep the building and will not be granting easements, etc. if it is offered for sale.

Cunningham questioned the RSA referenced? RSA 41-14-a. She also asked if an official assessment has been completed by a professional to assess the needs of the building? Babb responded that Senecal has been asked to report actual needs then estimates would be obtained based on that report. This information will be gathered prior to holding the public hearings.

Rob Cunio questioned which property the Roller Shed is located on? Fall responded that it is on its own property, possibly through adverse possession in a conveyance from 1906.

Linda Habif commented that she understands the building contains a nice meeting room that could be used a space for community needs.

Day stated that he will coordinate with Fall for access to the building for contractors to provide necessary figures for review.

Short-Term Rentals – Babb commented that this topic has been tabled until next week until he is able to make contact with Attorney John Ratigan.

Non-Public Session(s):

Babb made a motion to enter into a non-public session at 7:41 PM pursuant to RSA 91-a:3, II (a) for personnel. Florio seconded. Roll call vote was taken: Day-yes, Babb-yes, Florio-yes. All in favor, the motion passed. Babb made a motion to reconvene public session at 8:20 PM. Day seconded. All in favor, the motion passed.

Discussion continued:

Day questioned what is being sought in terms of the Masonic Lodge if everything is functioning. The

Charter is in jeopardy. Florio has concerns with entering into an agreement to fulfill the needs of a separate non-profit after discussion with Effingham. There are also unknowns on the operating costs such as heat and again setting precedents. The roof, electrical and heating system will be focal points for inspection/quotes. Various contractors will be contacted.

Discussion on the Town Office rehabilitation at its present location in comparison to constructing a new building.

White requested remaining appointments be made. Day made a motion to appoint Joyce Watson as a Cemetery Trustee. Babb seconded. All in favor, the motion passed.

Day made a motion to appoint Karrie Buttrick, Sue Hoople and Scott Cunningham to the Heritage Commission. Florio seconded. All in favor, the motion passed.

Day stated that the steel was removed at the Transfer Station after he placed a call to Rickers requesting pickup. Johnny Edwards removed some of the brush but has to return to pull from the center of the pile.

Brief review and feedback were discussed on the Regional Ambulance Meeting held.

Consent Agenda:

Minutes – Selectmen’s Meeting & Non-Public Sessions – 4/19/2021	Approved
Payroll Manifest – week ending 4/21/2021	Approved
Accounts Payable Manifest – week ending 4/21/2021	Approved
Intent to Cut Wood or Timber – Paul Wynn (Milford Ave., Map 7, Lot 3)	Approved
Vachon & Clukay, Audit Questionnaire	Approved
Employment Agreement	Approved
Requests for appointment: K. Buttrick, S. Hoople, S. Cunningham, J. Watson	Approved
Request for Abatement – Lien Penalty Assessment – Multiple	Approved
Map 1B, Lot 56 William A. McCarthy \$20.99	
Map 20, Lot 5 Mark McConkey \$18.59	
Map 3, Lot 20-33 Albana Jubani \$19.43	
Map 60, Lot 1-P09 Michael Comora \$18.52	
Map 60, Lot 1-E21 Aaron Bailey \$18.77	
Map 23, Lot 55 Albert Dizoglio \$20.85	
Map 60, Lot 1-N32 Chris Van Hirtum \$18.50	

Correspondence:

Letter – NH Dept. of Revenue Admin. – 2020 Total Equalized Valuations	Reviewed
Letter – Appointment acknowledgement - Jeff Fongemie, ZBA Member	Reviewed
Letter – Lakes Region Community Developers – Partnership presentation request	Reviewed
Letter – American Red Cross – Appreciation for funded appropriation	Reviewed
Letter – CASA – Appreciation for funded appropriation	Reviewed
Letter – Land Tech re: Bella 13, LLC, Wetlands Permit Application	Reviewed
Letter – NH Dept. of Agriculture re: response to pesticide treatment in Danforth Pond	Reviewed
Claim – Property Liability Incident Submission	Reviewed
Minutes – Town Office Advisory Committee Meeting 4/20/2021	Reviewed
Minutes – Heritage Commission Meeting 4/15/2021	Reviewed
Minutes – Planning Board Meeting 4/15/2021	Reviewed

