

**Town of Freedom
Selectmen's Meeting
Monday, December 11, 2023**

Present were Selectmen Chairman Les Babb, Ernest Day, Jr. and Melissa Florio, and Stacy Bolduc, Admin. Assistant, who recorded the minutes. This meeting was held at the Town Office.

The Selectmen attended the School Board meeting at 6:30 PM. The following items were discussed:

- Kennett tuition is up 8.5%. This increase does not include health care or contract negotiations.
- The kitchen project numbers are too high to bring food service to the school. Jim Stone was consulted to see what would need to be considered if the addition was to be used in emergency shelter situations. Sara asked if there was anything the board would like them to keep in mind. Les said the last time there was an emergency was the storm of 1998. The town hall was opened, people used it to charge their devices and use the bathroom. The town hall has a generator and is currently where people would go to seek shelter. The numbers to add the kitchen came in at 1 million and as high as two million.
- Presidential elections to be held at the
- The future use of the ice-skating rink. Sara asked how the town views that space. Les said he wouldn't be surprised if they were approached to use it for pickle ball. The school board has been discussing if they could utilize the space for extra curricular activities.
- Malissa said she heard a rumor that there will be a vote in Conway to close some of the elementary schools and have the students attend middle school. Sara said they are meeting tonight to bring the recommendation. Jake said the concern will be if they want to take a bond out to do any additions or alterations to the middle school, Freedom would be on the hook for it.

The selectboard left the meeting at 6:50 pm to hold their weekly meeting at the Town Hall.

Public Meeting

Chairman Babb called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Also, present was Chief Cunio, Chief Mullen, Scott Brooks.

Public: Robin Waters, Chris Libby, Luanne & Steven Genest.

Review of Mail, Sign Manifests, Approval of Minutes

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

Ernie made a motion to accept the December 4, 2023, meeting minutes and nonpublic minutes as with the correction of adding Paul Elie to the Public present; Motion was seconded by Melissa; Motion passed unanimously.

**7:15 Public Hearing for Unanticipated Revenue
Block Aid Grant Money**

Les made a motion to accept the one-time block aid grant money in the amount of \$24,989.46, motion seconded by Ernie; Motion passed 3-0-0.

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Public Hearing closed at 7:16 PM
There was no public comment.

Department Head Updates

Police- Jamie reported that the department is finishing up with training. New this year is prioritizing office mental health. The training is available online or by mobile phone. Clayton attended training this past week for active shooters. The department investigated suspicious activities that included someone walking around barefoot in a sweater and one individual who saw someone riding a bike with multiple tattoos and stopped to tell the rider what he thought of them.

Fire Department/Forest Fire- Rob reported it was a slow week with one medical aid, one lift assist, one tree on a wire. The state is offering more PPE. Rob said he accepted the offer, and it will be picked up on Wednesday. Rob has also renewed his EMS license. Action Ambulance has an ACLS instructor that did the testing at their Tamworth facility.

Highway- Scott reported they are moving along with winter. They removed the beaver dam out by the Ossipee Lake Rd., and it's already built back up. The guard rails for Watson Hill will be here Thur or Friday of this week.

Scott reported no roads were lost to washouts. The recall work has been done on the 5500 chevy, he is still waiting to hear back from Mac on their recall. The tires have been ordered for the loader.

Malissa- Malissa reported she heard back from Dave George regarding gates for the beaches. He suggested using farm gates like what is being used in the Forrest because they are cheaper to replace. For two gates and all the supplies it will be under \$600.00.

Public Input: None

Appointments: 2024 Budget Review

Library- Robin Waters the treasurer handed out the budget. The budget total increase is just over \$1,000.00.

Cemeteries- level funding no increase requested.

General Assistance-

Food Pantry- level funded.

Meals on Wheels went from 3,500.00-7,500.00

Budge Hearing will be the first week of February.

Les wants to review the general assistance in January.

Health Agencies- Starting point, VNA and life flight has not requested their money yet. Stacy will follow-up with them.

Highway-

Summer Budget line items that are changing-

Summer Parttime- will go from \$19,500 to \$24,000.

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Contract Services from 34,881 to 36,974

Les asked if contact services should be a warrant article. Scott said no.

This line is up due to washouts.

Ten-wheeler rental increase to \$19,800 to \$29,750

Tri Axel from 12,000 to 16,200

Gravel line is up due to anticipating reclaiming Huckins Rd. then it would need to be graveled. The gravel line has been increased to \$32,185.00. If the gravel line is reduced, then the numbers for the ten-wheeler and the tri-axel can be reduced to the original numbers.

There were no changes to the winter budget.

Line # 210 - from \$2,400. To \$2,544.00

Line # fuel heating oil from \$9,100.00 to \$9,750.00 based on 3000 gal at \$3.35 and diesel at \$3.24.

Diesel line went from \$52,620. to \$58,200.

Line 701 For the old police cruiser maintenance increase \$2,000.

Line 707, the deck on the old tanker needs some work that line will go from \$1000.00 to \$2,000.

Line 708 420 backhoe- 2,500.00 to 3,600.00

Line 719 will go down \$1,000.00.

Line 721- 2018 550 4500 increase to 6,000 (this vehicle line is overdrawn due to computer issues and def issues) still needs brakes.

Line 724 grader maintenance increase to 10,000

Warrant articles

gravel crushing.

Crack sealing.

Still trying to get prices for the loader.

Scott said they are falling behind on preventive road maintenance (sand sealing) due to prices increases. After Huckins is done he will look at doing more footage of road a year for rebuilding. All Huckins, Pequawket, Stoddard and East Danforth need to be reclaimed and repaved.

It was discussed pulling the 32,185.00 for gravel for Huckins out of the budget and make it a warrant article and leave the gravel line at \$16,185.00.

Old / New Business, / Discussion:

Katherine Watts- Katherine Watts petitioned the town to plow her section of road on Freedom Shores Rd. to the turn around at the end of the road. Les questioned Scott, wouldn't it be easier to turn the trucks around at the end of the road rather than where they turn around now. Scott said it doesn't make any difference. Les said where it is not a burden to the road agent and could improve public safety, they are good to lay it out as a Winter Rd.

Stacy will post the hearing and request from Katie her official petition. Ned Kucera will also be noticed. The public hearing will be 12/20 at 10:00 am at the Town Office.

Transfer Station Layout- Malissa reported that when the grant people did the reassessment of income median because that is what the grant is based on. The match went from 50% to 15%. Jim is pursuing other grants and will reach out to Tamworth who just received grants for their improvements.

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Other points discussed:

- Position of the scale- Does everyone need to go over the scale (including MSW) Les wants everyone to go over the scale.
- Moving the C & D down with the metal.
- Scott said the tough part is going to be positing the scale so that when they come off the scale, they can make the swing. Improving traffic control was discussed at length.
- Les suggested putting the scale where the pine needles are now. How to minimize crossing lanes is the challenge.

Stacy has not heard back from Tamworth yet on their proposal regarding their recycling proposal.

Town officials reports need to be turned in on January 11, 2024.

Last week the highway crew replaced the door on the backhoe. The lower glass will be replaced tomorrow.

The plowing situation at the transfer station was discussed. Malissa talk to Charlene and Brian. Brian needs more training on the loader and Charlene expressed her concern if she was working her second job on the days, she does not work the transfer station or on vacation who would plow it. Scott made it very clear the highway crew does not have the time to plow it. Their priority is the roads, and they are stretched thin now. Not to mention if they have a breakdown and lose a truck. Scott stated that the attendants have always plowed the transfer station and the highway sands it. Ernie does not agree with what was decided last week on paying someone \$150.00 for an event. The job description covers the attendants having to plow the transfer station under being able to run a plow truck and other essential duties.

Non-Public Session(s):

Ernie made a motion to enter a non-public session at 8:55 PM pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (a), Employee. Melissa seconded. Roll call vote was taken Ernie-yes, Melissa-yes, All in favor, the motion passed. Ernie made a motion to resume public session at 9:15 PM. Melissa seconded. All in favor, the motion passed.

Public Meeting

Ernie made a motion to seal the non- public meeting under RSA 91-A:3, II (a), Melissa seconded the motion; Motion passed unanimously.

Public Meeting reconvened at 9:15 PM

Les made a motion to authorize Stacy to sign up with Pay Chex, motion seconded by Malissa; motion passed unanimously.

Consent Agenda:

Minutes – Selectmen’s Meeting – 12/4/2023	Approved
Payroll Manifest – week ending – 12/6/2023	Approved
Accounts Payable Manifest – week ending 12/08/2023	Approved

Correspondence:

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Reviewed
Abatements

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

The meeting adjourned at

Respectfully submitted,
Stacy Bolduc, Town Administrator

Approved by the Board of Selectmen on _____:

Leslie R. Babb

Ernest F. Day, Jr.

Melissa M. Florio