

**Town of Freedom
Selectmen's Meeting
Monday, January 22, 2024**

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

Chairman Babb called the meeting to order at 6:15 PM

Also present were JoJo Howlett and Daymond Steer from the Conway Daily Sun

Review of Mail, Sign Manifests, Approval of Minutes

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

NonPublic

6:15 pm Les made a motion to enter non-public under RSA 91A:3II(I), Ernie seconded the motion.;

Roll Call Vote: Les-yes, Ernie-yes, and Melissa-yes.

The meeting was reconvened at 6:45 pm.

Ernie made a motion to accept the January 8, meeting minutes and nonpublic minutes as written; Motion was seconded by Melissa, Motion passed unanimously.

Department Head Updates

Police- Rich gave a brief update saying that the police department was prepared to do its part for tomorrow's primary election. The parking signs are done and will be put out tomorrow. Rich also cautioned that the deer are out and may be on the road.

Town Office- Stacy reported that it has been very busy getting the Town Report done and the Warrant Articles in.

Transfer station- Melissa reported that Charlene had an incident with the backhoe. When she entered the garage, the door came down on the loader, and two panels on the bottom of the door were damaged. Stacy will call White Mountain Overhead Door tomorrow and schedule them to come and access the door.

Highway- Scott was not present.

Fire Department- Chief Mullen was not present.

Public Comment-

Daymond Steer was present tonight to question the Selectboard about the path forward now that the verdict favors Short-Term renters who have been renting.

Les asked him to clarify if he was asking about pre-existing non-conforming or all STR's.

Daymond responded, existing.

Les explained the Housing Authority's decision that the Town could not require pre-existing non-conforming use of STRS to meet life safety standards. The life safety standard was the only thing the town required of the pre-existing non-conforming STR renters. They could rent outside the 90 days if they could show a renting history. Les does not understand the Housing Board's decision because you must meet life safety standards if you have a foster child or

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long-term renter. Les stated the Housing Authority has life safety standards in place for rentals, if they want blood on their hands, and assume the liability along with the people who do the rentals, then that's on them. He hopes no one gets hurt, and he gave the example of the Red Jacket fire which shows that catastrophic things happen. The whole thought process when discussing STR Rentals was around protecting the renter. Ernie agreed with the Chair, and Melissa added that we have many people do the life safety requirements by going through the checklist.

Daymond asked if a potential renter could verify if an STR has undergone the life safety process. The answer is yes.

JoJo Howlett commented that clarifying what the Housing Authority's decision really means is important. She stated that it doesn't say, mean, or decide that short term rentals are not bound by life safety requirements. The decision states you cannot gut the right to prior non-conforming use which is in the Zoning Ordinance and the Constitution. You must honor grandfathering rights you can't just gut them because the ordinance concludes life safety standards and feel she said the town expected more than just life safety, it was also expected the homeowner to apply and pay and meet the current life safety standards as opposed the existing standard. She went on to state that the decision does not mean life safety standards do not apply to short-term rentals. They apply to short-term rentals just as they apply to any other residential use of property. We are all subject to life safety measures, there are also measures that already exist that would allow the Town to intervene if there were indications of unsafe circumstances. JoJo referenced RSA 50A, where the Town could intervene if they thought there was an unsafe circumstance. What this decision says is the Town can't use the fact that life safety standards were in the ordinance to disregard the right to grandfather status.

Daymond asked what about new STR's. Les responded you must follow the ordinance. He also asked if the fee has to be returned. Melissa said the people involved in the lawsuit never paid a fee and stated they would not comply. Les said the fee that is charged is to cover the expense of the permit which includes the admin assistant making copies for the Planning Board, Zoning Officer, and Fire Chief (the fee is \$50.00). The fee does not cover all the costs. It was reiterated that many have gone through the process. JoJo said that those people may not have wanted to fight and just did the process. They may not know about the decision, and they would not be subject to the ninety-day limitation, and this is a right that runs with the land. JoJo asked if the Board would file an appeal. Les responded he agreed with some of JoJo 's points but believes the Housing Authority should have pulled out the life safety separately and is very concerned about that. Other than that, there is nothing to appeal.

Old Business/ New Business

Jane came before the board to discuss her job responsibilities and accurate time reporting.

The 2024 budget was next.

The warrant articles were reviewed next.

Key points:

The scales for the transfer station. The quote for the site work is \$71,851.

Need to know the costs of one compactor.

Add the total costs to all warrants with funds to be raised by taxation.

Article 10 add \$53,695 to be added by taxation.

Article 11 add \$125,000, with \$28,695 to be added by taxation. Put a period after fund balance. Replace the word received with allocated.

Article 12 round to 120,000

Article 13 is good.

Article 14 change to \$29,200

Article 15 \$155,000 with \$40,000 from Hwy 40,000 CRF and 115,000 to be raised by taxation.

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Article 16 change 103,900 to 216,400, with \$50,000 to come Hwy equip fund and 62,500 for a trade-in value \$103,900 to come from taxation.
 Article 17 add \$18,000 from taxation.
 Article 18 add 18,000 to come from taxation.
 Article 19 change to \$3,500.00

Trust Funds

PD CRF- \$20,000
 Highway Equip- 20,000
 Highway Drainage-\$20,000
 Fire- 0
 It was discussed to increase Eaton’s yearly fee to \$17,000.
 Transfer Station-\$10,000
 ROW-0.00
 Town Hall/Office- \$20,000
 Infrastructure-\$ 20,000
 Public Safety- \$10,000

**For a total of 120,000.00
 \$130,000 with the Library ETF.**

Stacy will get a draft of the MS-636 for the Selectmen.

Town office advisory will be on the agenda next week. It was also discussed if there was enough room to hold town meeting at the Town Hall.

Chief Cunio’s numbers:

- 11 medical aids
- 1 mutual aid
- 3 alarms fire
- 1 Smoke investigation

Consent Agenda:

Minutes – Selectmen’s Meeting – 1/8/2024	Approved
Payroll Manifest – week ending – 1/14/2024	Approved
Accounts Payable Manifest – week ending 1/16/2024	Approved

Correspondence:

Paid Family Leave	Reviewed
Marks letter to consider exception from the purchasing policy	Reviewed
Susan Hoople letter regarding tax deeded properties	Reviewed
Milton Cat Lease Purchase Info	Reviewed
NH Housing Appeals Decision	Reviewed
Vachon Clukay Audit	Reviewed
Cease and Desist order	Reviewed
Ossipee Lake Alliance	Reviewed
NH Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management	Reviewed

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Being no further input, Florio made a motion to adjourn. Day seconded. All in favor, the motion passed.
Adjourned at 8:45 pm.

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