

**Town of Freedom
Selectmen's Meeting
Monday January 29, 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 6:30 PM

Also, presents were Daymond Stere from the Conway Daily Sun, Anne Cunningham, Kerri Buttrick and Don Johnson, Sue Hoople, Susan Marks, Roberta MacCarthy, and Allen Fall.

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 January 22, meeting minutes and nonpublic minutes as written, Motion was seconded by Melissa; Motion passed unanimously.

Department Head Updates

Fire Department- Chief Cunio reported the department responded to eight medical aids, one motor vehicle accident, one mutual aid, and two fire alarms. They are already 17 calls ahead of last year. One of the fire department members completed their EMT and obtained their NH license. Chief Cunio updated the board that he is doing physical therapy three days a week and he is on light duty.

Police- Rich reported that the department received positive feedback about signs that were put up during voting. Clayton got someone for DUI, and the ford is going in for maintenance tomorrow. Like the fire department, they have also been busy. He also cautioned about the deer in the road and thin ice.

Town Office-

Transfer station-

Highway- Scott was not present.

Appointment-

Anne Cunningham, on behalf of the Town Office Advisory Committee, updated the board that she has the numbers for both the renovation of the town office and the option to rebuild out on 50 Eaton Rd. round to the nearest 100 it is \$1,490,000 and for the existing \$1,455,000. The town office advisory is comfortable with these numbers. Anne has tested them with the people who have put the proposals together, and they added things to them that should have been included in the architectural fees. The committee has discussed what it will cost to relocate employees while the renovation takes place, and her understanding is the Selectmen discussed anywhere from 75,000 to 100,000 dollars. The committee requests the selectmen put the dollar amount to move employees as a separate warrant article since the Advisory Committee was not tasked with getting that number. With that said the Advisory discussed some relocation options for the employees. Ernie explained that they talked about three options. Option one is the Town Hall, Option two would be to get portable trailers to put out on Eaton Rd., and the third is an option that he did not disclose because he has yet to hear back from the individual he inquired to. This location has access to electricity, septic and water. Denny and Anne discussed the portable and Denny has offered to get specific quotes. One of the benefits of these trailers is that there are outside boxes for the electric to plug into.

Anne also commented she has concerns about having the meeting at Town Hall with the capacity only being one hundred and ten. Ernie asked what Don Johnson's thoughts were on the matter. Don responded that he anticipates a lot of debate regarding the bond. He suggested voting at the Town Hall and doing the deliberative portion at the

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school on Saturday at 9:00 AM. If the deliberative were held during the week at the school, they would have to cancel school for the day.

Chief Cunio questioned whether anyone had considered whether the renovation option required sprinklers. Anne said she will ask the question to the consultants she has been working with.

The sound system for town meetings was also discussed and Chief Cunio will work with Stacy to reach out to Joe Deagan to reserve the system the town has used in the past.

Les stated in the past, the Selectmen have been authorized to obtain a bond up to a certain dollar amount, and he thinks the bond will be the same amount for either option because the project must go out to bid, and a buffer will be built in based on fluctuating material costs. There was a brief discussion about the rules have relaxed around rehabbing historical buildings. The bond articles will go right after the planning and zoning articles and there will be two different ballots to distinguish between the two options handed to the voter and there will be two different ballot boxes.

Don and Anne left the meeting.

Allan said the commission is working on a flyer to inform the public that the commission is in support of the renovation.

Old Business/ New Business

Licensed STR on the website

Les explained that he is concerned about the safety of people who choose not to fulfill the life safety portion of the STR rental process. He has proposed adding a page to the town website listing all licensed short-term rentals within the Town of Freedom and adding their life safety page. Both Melissa and Ernie support this proposal. After the Town report is done the office will work on creating the short-term rental page on the website.

Ernie mentioned the quote for the village fire station is worded *if needed*. He proposed adding an additional \$3,000 in case additional work is needed. Sheathing and plywood were discussed.

Ernie made a motion to authorize Stacy to sign the maintenance agreement with Porter Office machine, Melissa seconded the motion; Motion passed unanimously.

Eaton Fire Contract

Ernie proposed the fire contract increase due to employee raises and new equipment purchases. Chief Cunio stated they were called thirty times last year at approximately \$800.00 a call. Les said the last time there was an increase was when they bought the tanker. And there have been two new trucks since. Stacy will let Leanne know the contract will increase to \$24,000. The reasons stated for the increase include fire truck costs \$425,000 with \$150,000- \$200,000 worth of equipment, a new 2023 International Rescue \$425,000 with 150,000 worth of equipment. Other equipment includes:

- Two Engines
- One Tank Truck
- One-Rescue Truck
- One- UTV & Rescue Sled
- One- ATV
- Three Forestry Trucks

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Four EMTS.

Deed to the 50 Eaton Rd property. Sue Hoople expressed concern that the 50 Eaton Rd property title is a tax collectors deed. Les explained every time the town has taken property, the town attorney has ensured the paperwork is in order. By the town's paperwork alone the town should be fine. He went on to further explain there was a piece of property the town was trying to sell on Pequawket Trail, and because the town did not own the property for ten years, the buyers could not get title insurance. Once the town owns the property for ten years it's a clear title. Sue asked if the town had a quitclaim deed from the previous owner. The town does not. Sue also referenced the NHMA article regarding the new ruling regarding the taking of property RSA 80:89, VII that allowed a municipality to keep excess proceeds resulting from the sale of tax deeded properties. Les said the property was taken prior to the ruling so, it does not apply. Stacy will reach out to Jill at the bond bank to inquire about the collector's deed.

The 2024 budget was next.

Les opened the budget review by stating he would like to cut \$200,000 off the budget.

Key points discussed:

- Maintain fund balance at 17%
- The town only capturing 38% of the waterfront value. The growth is not being realized.
- Change the wording on article 9 to *continue to improve site access and traffic flow*.
- The transfer station revenue went from \$12,000 to \$40,000.
- Article 10 is for crushing very important saves the town money.
- Article 11 Huckins road needs to be repaired can't be delayed any longer.
- The paving line will go to Huckins reconstruction.
- Putting the tires on the loader helped with the value on the trade in.
- The scales will not be on the warrant this year. The cameras still need to be done. Les suggest decreasing article 9 to \$49,532 (monies that were not expended last year) to continue to improve access and traffic flow and see where the scales would best fit.
- The box culvert must be done due to permits that will expire if we don't.
- Ernie questioned if money should be added to the transfer station line to hire a manager.
- Eliminate transfer station CRF.
- Bond articles will come after the Zoning Board amendments.

Stacy will post a notice for a workshop for Wednesday January 31st.

Les made a motion to enter into a non-public session at 8:50 pm pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (1), legal Ernie seconded. Roll call vote was taken: Ernie-yes, Melissa-yes, Les-yes. All in favor, the motion passed. Les made a motion to resume public session at 8:55 pm. Ernie seconded. All in favor, the motion passed. Ernie made a motion to seal the minutes due to employee Melissa seconded the motion; Motion passed.

Meeting reconvened at 8:55 PM

Melissa questioned if the Heritage Commission should be using Town Funds to send out flyers.

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

Adjourned at 8:30 pm.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM

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Consent Agenda:

Minutes – Selectmen’s Meeting – 1/22/2024
Payroll Manifest – week ending – 1/24/2024
Accounts Payable Manifest – week ending 1/26/2024

Approved
Approved
Approved

Correspondence:

Department of Revenue

Reviewed

Respectfully submitted,
Stacy Bolduc, Town Administrator

Approved by the Board of Selectmen on _____:

Leslie R. Babb

Ernest F. Day, Jr.

Melissa M. Florio