

**Town of Freedom
Selectmen's Meeting
Monday January 8, 2024**

Present: 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.

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

Also, present were Chief Mullen, Scott Brooks, 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.

Ernie made a motion to accept the December 11th, 13th and December 20th, 2023, meeting minutes and nonpublic minutes as written, Motion was seconded by Melissa; Motion passed unanimously.

Department Head Updates

Police- Jamie reported he is happy with the new IT people and said he will be looking at replacing the computers at the police station. They are overdue for replacement. Clayton finished interrogation school. Rich Laferriere is signed up for a course in the FBI municipal school. Rich and Chief Mullen have training tomorrow for cell phone in criminal investigations. Evaluations are done and goals have been set.

Highway- Scott heard back from two equipment companies regarding a quote for the loader. Today was the deadline and he has met with two out of three of the companies he submitted to. John Deere and CAT responded. John Deere came in at \$185,300 and CAT came in at \$153,900.00 both prices include trade-in value for the current loader. The board is in favor of moving forward to put the loader on the warrant for the voters to decide.

Fire Department- Chief Cunio was not present.

Public Comment-

None.

Appointments: Anne Cunningham Town Office Advisory Committee

Anne came before the board on behalf of the Town Office Advisory Committee to update them on the two alternatives for the town office. The costs are in, and the committee believes there are items not included in the prices that should be. Don and Anne have been emailing the Town Attorney to get directions on how to deal with the bond issue at the town meeting. It was suggested that they happen in the first part of the meeting and there should be two different ballot boxes and two different color ballots to distinguish between the two options. Anne explained that before the town meeting, the bond council should look at the bond structure for the two options to avoid any issues. Les said in the past, they have always gone to the NH Bond Bank before town meeting, so they have numbers from the bond bank, so the voters know the costs. Discussion ensued around who should be involved with discussions with the bond bank.

Anne asked about comments about adding more staff, such as a public works director, water precinct, and cemetery mowing therefore requiring more space in the office. Les responded that if we go with a public works department; therefore, requiring a public works director, there is an office at the town garage, and everything would be dispatched from there. There may be another office staff member in the future, but not now. Melissa was confused by the

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question because there would be growth in the future. Anne said the argument is that we need to be in an office that will provide more office space. It was also stated the supervisors of the checklist need an office. Anne does not know if the people putting these comments forward know something the advisory board should know. Les said that with the office staff we have now, there could be growth for one more. Stacy said that has not been discussed. The only thing that has been discussed is with Anne stepping down in another year as chair of the planning board, the roles of the current staff could change due to taking on more of the planning board's workload. Stacy expressed concerns about needing more storage. Anne said there is storage in both plans. Melissa commented on the cost comparisons that there was only \$5,000 for a foundation and that the building is sitting on a partial foundation. The septic for the current building, Bergeron, stated he could not evaluate the septic, and the third question is where the staff will go while the renovations take place and how much it will cost to relocate them. Anne responded that it was not part of the mandate that was given to the committee.

Anne questioned if expanding the Public Safety Building for additional space is possible. Jamie responded he's not sure where they would add off from, and his opinion is no., One reason is that the anonymity of using the police station is a plus. Some of the people they see have suffered trauma. Les added to be able to separate services is a plus.

Elections Budget- Don Johnson

Don Johnson gave an overview of past election budgets. He is suggesting a budget of \$15,000 for election workers due to more time-consuming responsibilities. Carol Stancil requested \$5,000 for supervisors of the checklist. Don suggested \$6,500.00 for printing and operating \$2,000.00 for total of \$28,500. Election procedures were briefly discussed. The primary is on January 23, 2024, at the town hall. The parking spaces out front will only be for the voting public. Election workers will park at the school ballfield and rides will be given from the ballfield to the town hall. Election workers will be asked to bring their own lunch, but dinner will be provided upstairs for the election workers.

Don Johnson left the meeting at 7:30 pm.

FEMA money was discussed next and Highway warrant articles.

Les commented that the FEMA money is supposed to be used for road repair and suggested using the estimated \$205,000 for crushing. Scott said that leaves \$50,000 that's not spent. Melissa supports using the FEMA money to offset the costs to repair Huckins Rd. Scott said the asphalt on Huckins has ruts that are deep. Ernie said if we use \$150,000 to do the gravel crushing and put the \$50,000 left over for repairing Huckins. Either way \$170,000 needs to be raised wither you do crushing or fix Huckins.

There will be warrant articles for the following:

Paving- \$116,400.00

Crushing -\$149,100

Huckins Rd.- \$232,544

Loader- \$153,900

Crack sealing-

Sand Sealing -

The FEMA will be split between crushing and Huckins Rd.

Scott will let CAT know to order the loader pending town meeting outcome. Scott asked how far his responsibilities go for the transfer station. This question opened the conversation regarding looking at creating a public works position and needing a department head at the transfer station. Scott asked what the responsibilities of the public works director would be. Points discussed:

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Scott pointed out that that the department head of each department answers to the public works director. There is not currently a manager at the transfer station and to add that position would be an additional cost of at least \$ 65,000. Les said or you have someone who oversees all of it. Scott responded you still need managers at each site (highway, and the transfer station) the foreman of each site answers to the public works director. You can't have the public works director driving around to each site overseeing the work that needs to be done for the day. The public works director position is designed to oversee the budget. Scott added that what the select board suggests is very convoluted and adds another level of administration for which the town is not big enough. Ernie said the easiest fix is to hire a transfer station manager. Scott responded that if the town takes on the water precinct in the future, that's a part-time job and hire FX Lyons on retainer. He does not see where a public works director fits into any of this.

Ernie explained the idea was to have one person in charge of the public works employees and move them around as needed to fill positions. Scott responded he doesn't see that working.

Ernie wants to know when the Vachon Clukay contract is up.
He also wants to know where the rest of the money for the fire escape is coming from.

Les made a motion to enter into a non-public session at 7:53 pm pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (a), employee. 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 7:58 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.

Les made a motion to enter into a non-public session at 8:00 pm pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (c), reputation 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 8:02 pm. Ernie seconded. All in favor, the motion passed.

The red folder was reviewed.
The Board will meet January 17th at 10:00 pm for a budget workshop.
There was a brief discussion around the furnace.

Consent Agenda:

Minutes – Selectmen’s Meeting – 12/20/2023	Approved
Minutes- there was no meeting on 12/25/2023 or 1/1/2024	N/A
Payroll Manifest – week ending – 1/3/2024	Approved
Accounts Payable Manifest – week ending 1/5/2024	Approved

Correspondence:

Homeowner Assistance Fund	Reviewed
Ned Kucera email reimbursement dated 1/8/24	Reviewed
Job application	Reviewed
Clean Harbors Quote	Reviewed
Stipends for Trustee of the Trust Funds memo For John Roman	Reviewed
Betsy Moody Letter	Reviewed
Zoning Board abutter notice	Reviewed
Lakes Region Planning 2024	
Household Hazardous Wastes Collection	Reviewed
Ossipee Lake Alliance	Reviewed
Carl Carder email regarding Planning and Land use Books	Reviewed
Jah Hunter email from Spectrum	Reviewed

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Don Johnson email regarding elections
Effingham Zoning Board Notice

Reviewed
Reviewed

Being no further input, Florio made a motion to adjourn. Day seconded. All in favor, the motion passed.
Adjourned at 8:50 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