



## TOWN OF FREETOWN BOARD OF SELECTMEN

### MINUTES

Monday, September 30, 2019, 5:00pm  
Council on Aging (Lower Level) – 227 Chace Road, East Freetown

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**5:00 P.M. Call to Order** Chairman Charles B. Sullivan calls the meeting to order at 5:00pm. Present: Selectman Lisa A. Pacheco and Selectman George L. Grunwald. Also present: Town Administrator David DeManche and Administrative Assistant Timm McIntosh. The meeting is being recorded by FREECAM and by Mark Rosofsky, 115 Chace Road.

Chairman Sullivan opens with some words on Karen Mello, Assistant Assessor of 28 years, who passed away last week after a battle with cancer.

He also announces that Jessica Thomas has passed her certification and is now a certified Treasurer/Collector.

**5:00 P.M. Public Hearing** - Petition submitted by NSTAR Electric Company, d/b/a Eversource Energy, to request permission to locate poles, wires, cables and fixtures for 2 proposed poles – Plan No. 6857 on Wamsutta Way, East of Bullock Road

Selectman Sullivan reads the notice aloud. Donna Haworth of Eversource Energy is present. This would service a new solar array that will be installed at the end of Wamsutta Way. The poles are needed to run a primary service cable to the new solar array. Ms. Haworth shows the map to present abutters. Selectman Sullivan asks where the poles are being located; the first pole is 130' from the pole on Bullock Road, then another 130' from that one, on the north side of Wamsutta Way. Selectman Pacheco asks if any properties are blocked; Ms. Haworth says no. Chairman Sullivan opens the floor to questions from the abutters; none heard.

VOTE: Motion (Grunwald/Pacheco) to close the public hearing, passed unanimously.

VOTE: Motion (Pacheco/Grunwald) to approve the request, passed unanimously.

**5:30 P.M. Joint Meeting with the Freetown Board of Assessors** - Pursuant to M.G.L. ch. 41, sec. 11, to consider and act upon a vacancy on the Board of Assessors

Discussion on this item begins at 5:35pm. Board of Assessors members Suzanne Parker and Mike Motta are present, as is Senior Clerk Mike McCue. Jeff Field has expressed an interest to the Board of Assessors on the vacancy, to replace Chairman Sheila Scaduto; they've spoken to him regarding the vacancy and have voted to recommend him. Mr. DeManche says there was a second candidate, but they have withdrawn from consideration.

VOTE: Motion (Pacheco/Grunwald) to approve the appointment of Jeffrey Field to the Board of Assessors. After a roll call vote of both votes, the motion carries unanimously.

### Board of Selectmen:

1. Additional articles for the Special Town Meeting warrant.

Selectman Sullivan reads the new article regarding a wage and classification study. Mr. DeManche says he's been involved in a couple of these. The aim is to evaluate job descriptions, talk to department head heads to define the scope of the positions, interview employees about their positions, quantify positions using a rating system with certain criteria and to develop a wage plan. A final report is filed to the Board of Selectmen in the end. This gives a way to classify future positions that may be added. Mr. DeManche has gotten an estimate with 3 consultants give a ballpark of \$12,000-15,000 for the study. Selectman Pacheco asks why we can't do this in-house, as we have all of this already done; the Board of Selectmen's office does this work every time we go through negotiations. Mr. DeManche says the office looks at comparables, this study would establish actual worth of positions, but also do comparables as well, taking into consideration regarding the differences in communities. Selectman Pacheco asks how many positions this covers; Mr. DeManche says all non-union positions for certain, but if we wanted to add union positions as well, between 25-30 positions. Mr. DeManche says this study will tell us where we are in relation to other positions, in terms of pay and actual positions; it gets down to the nuts and bolts of each individual position. Selectman Pacheco says this comes down to affordability; if the study comes back and says a certain position is worth \$200,000, the town isn't going to want to pay \$200,000 for that. She says we look at comparables because that tells us how much we should be paying. Selectman Sullivan says this isn't a blanket thing, it will show what we need to have and set up for new positions that come along. He says she's only thinking of a very small part of the study, but this is up the full Board. Selectman Grunwald says if this is mostly for payroll, he doesn't see the need for something so substantial. Selectman Sullivan says Mr. DeManche has explained it's far more than that. Selectman Grunwald says we've talked about this, but we should look at this as a Board before we hire a consultant; he's still not clear what this consultant can do that we can't do ourselves.

VOTE: Motion (Pacheco/Grunwald) to withdraw the article, passed unanimously.

Selectman Grunwald thinks we should take a good hard look at positions, to see if we are implementing our own procedures. Selectman Pacheco asks if the Executive Session can put together a packet of job descriptions with a list of what we do and don't have. Mr. DeManche says they all need to be in the same form, but he will have Mrs. Golz do that. Selectman Grunwald thinks many of our issues are policy related, which will be discussed later on.

Selectman Sullivan reads the article presently labeled Article 11, which is regarding leasing space on a telecommunications tower at the site of the new Police Station. He explains that the Town has had an individual contact the Town about building the Tower, which would be owned by the Town, but the company would lease it to place their own equipment on there. This article would allow the Selectmen to enter into a lease longer than 3 years, which needs Town Meeting approval. Selectman Pacheco says this was included in the project, but the lease came along after the fact. Selectman Pacheco says the term of the lease would be 5 years, so Counsel would need to make those changes. She says this is more money coming into the Town; she isn't sure of the exact amount, but \$250,00-275,00 rings a bell. Selectman Grunwald confirms the tower would belong to the Town; that is correct. Selectman Pacheco says a request for proposals will be going out later to see if we can get an even better deal.

VOTE: Motion (Pacheco/Grunwald) to approve Article 11, passed unanimously.

2. Finalization of warrant for Special Town Meeting

VOTE: Motion (Pacheco/Grunwald) to approve the warrant with all the changes from Town Counsel accepted, passed unanimously.

VOTE: Motion (Pacheco/Grunwald) to close and finalize the warrant, passed unanimously.

3. Right of First Refusal for Portion of Chapter 61B land at 19 Flagg Swamp Road.

Selectman Sullivan goes over the findings from last time. Chapter 61B land is for recreational uses, and this action has been taken by the Board in the past. He says the question here is if we want to buy this .25 acre? Selectman Pacheco asks where exactly this is; Mr. McCue, who works in the Assessor's office, says it is by the street, between the house and garage. Mr. Rosofsky, 115 Chace Road, asks if there is a precedent for taking this small of a portion out, as this would be setting a percent; Selectman Sullivan reminds everyone that this is just a question on whether we want to buy this or not, not the use of the land. Selectman Pacheco says she thinks that she confused this project with another and apologizes to the Board.

VOTE: Motion (Pacheco/Grunwald) to approve, passed unanimously.

4. Ambulance Billing Rates.

Chief Silvia is present. Selectman Sullivan says he and Selectman Grunwald met separately with a representative from Comstar, our ambulance billing company, getting insight into how this process goes. Bristol County organizations rates are before the Board, as with the Comstar Top 50 rates. Selectman Pacheco asks what was learned at the meeting. Selectman Grunwald says not much, as these rates don't amount to much, as long as the rates are higher than the reimbursement rate. Insurance companies will only pay what they are contracted to pay; if you are lower, you'll get paid less. Selectman Pacheco asks if our current rates are higher or lower; Chief Silvia says we are higher. He says we have no contracts now, but we are lower than most of our neighbors. Selectman Sullivan says the bottom line is that we have a concern for people who can't pay. Medicare pays 80% of what their rate is, secondary insurance pays the rest. Selectman Sullivan refers to the chart, noting that we are significantly below some of the rates, and private insurance pays at a much higher rate. Selectman Sullivan thinks we could get more money if we raise the rates. Selectman Sullivan would like to tie the rates to the average going forward; Selectman Grunwald thinks that makes sense. Chief Silvia believes the Board would still have to vote them every year, but he will check. Changes will go into effect October 1 if possible, but November 1 if not.

VOTE: Motion (Grunwald/Pacheco) to increase all the rates to the Comstar Top 50 average rate and tie our rates to that for the future, passed unanimously.

5. Transfer request from Freetown Highway Department.

There is \$176 in the overtime account presently. Selectman Grunwald asks why we've depleted this already; Selectman Sullivan says in the past this has been extremely low, but there has been more OT this year. Selectman Grunwald thinks the Board should review the OT process. The Board says ok.

VOTE: Motion (Pacheco/Grunwald) to forward to the Finance Committee, passed unanimously.

6. Policy for Community Room at New Police Station.

Selectman Sullivan says he and the Chiefs have worked on this. Selectman Pacheco says she's in favor of everything she sees. The Board will review and come back with comments.

VOTE: Motion (Pacheco/Grunwald) to approve the first reading, passed unanimously.

7. Consultants for Health Insurance (National Financial Partners) and Property & Liability Insurance (Atlantic Insurance Consultants).

Mr. DeManche says this has been before the Finance Team, and significant savings are possible for both the Town and the employee. It was too late in renewal process before, but the time is now. Discussions with the consultant were held at the last Financial Team meeting and the general feeling was to move forward with this. The consultant will work with the town to look for options for savings, including bidding out health insurance. There is a meeting on October 7 of HIAC to lay out the same options. This will get us to the level to allow for bidding or to get the current provider to give us savings and will be followed by impact bargaining. We are also looking at adding a lower cost option. Mr. DeManche says that the consultant, Kevin Paicos, can only do so much until we pay him, which is why he is before the Board tonight. The cost is \$9,500 for this fiscal year. We have a scope for the contract, it just needs Counsel approval.

Similarly, Mr. DeManche has been in touch with Atlantic Insurance Advisors for something very similar with property & casualty insurance. This was also done by Acushnet. This work covers many sorts of insurance. This consultant would look at all existing coverages to highlight gaps and have him check limits on them; if we have a loss, we should be able to rebuild and move forward. This would also be put out to bid; there is no requirement to go out for bid, but since the market is so small, it would effectively threaten MIIA, our current provider, to give us a better price. The cost would be \$7,500 maximum.

Selectman Grunwald asks what insurance is costing this year; Mr. DeManche isn't sure. Selectman Pacheco gets where Mr. DeManche is going, but we need to be careful with people's health insurance, that that communication needs to be out there. Selectman Pacheco wants to make sure the HIAC is on board and not just the chairman. She also wants to make sure nothing changes for retirees; Mr. DeManche says that isn't even being contemplated, this is for current employees.

VOTE: Motion (Pacheco/Grunwald) to approve the Kevin Paicos thing as long as the Health Insurance Advisory Committee approves this, passed unanimously.

On property and casualty, Selectman Pacheco likes saving money if we are getting the same coverages. She notes, however, that we have a lot going on with MIIA that we can't infringe on. She wants a cost analysis on the last five years and what sort of money MIIA has given back to us for being good customers. Mr. DeManche says he can do that. He thinks this is mostly to get MIIA to give us better rates, as they don't want competition. He is concerned about replacement cost and thinks

the consultant will be able to find places where we are overpaying. She would like to see this on the next agenda and vote at that time. T

8. Minutes: September 16<sup>th</sup>

VOTE: Motion (Pacheco/Grunwald) to approve the September 16<sup>th</sup> minutes, passed unanimously.

9. Town Administrator's Report

- Mr. DeManche has a meeting with Lakeville Town Administrator Maureen Candido on Wednesday about community compact grant for Inspectional services software, would be a joint grant. This would move the inspector's reports to a modern, cloud-based system.
- Work is continuing on the LED project, which is looking like October/November. The consultant recommends going to other communities to look at the light options, as installing just a few is expensive.
- Bids for the generator project are in and are being reviewed by the building and wiring inspectors. This will hopefully be up for awarding at the next meeting.
- Finally, the Housing Authority has been reactivated, in relation to the Freetown Screw project. They need a wetlands delineation on the Acushnet side of the property before we can do much else, before we can take that land. Mr. DeManche says the interesting thing we've found is the large portion of land is in Acushnet, and the housing would be there, potentially making them Acushnet residents. There is a lot to consider here.

10. Police Station Update.

Selectman Pacheco says all is going according to plan. The cell tower is concentration right now, as we've heard. The project is on schedule and on budget. Selectman Sullivan says it looks like the head walls for the driveway have been delivered; is that going forward expeditiously? Selectman Pacheco says it should be. Further, she says that DEP is on the same page now, so we are all good.

**Personnel Board:**

11. Employee Handbook

- PowerDMS, currently in use by other town departments

Selectman Pacheco says the employee handbook before the Board tonight is very, very old. It's a welcome packet for new hires basically. She says we can review and add to it as necessary. Selectman Grunwald asks how old; Selectman Pacheco doesn't recall but notes that it has Richard Brown on it.

Chief of Police Carlton Abbott joins the Board to discuss PowerDMS is a document management program used by the Police Department. Chief Abbott says the Police Department exploits it for a variety of purposes, including job descriptions and assignment descriptions, compensation and benefits, and policies and procedures, all on the cloud. Employees are given a list of what's outstanding and what they need to do. They are able to embed videos, and external trainings are included. Chief says it is an incredible system. You can also develop lesson plans with test questions. We capture all this information, so we can track who has signed a policy or whatever you need at a

glance. Chief Abbott says the downside is that you need a person or persons to manage the system, you have to put all this into the system; it's not self-sufficient. You'd need computers for the workers. Chief Abbott says he finds it very beneficial. They were first introduced to the company for accreditation purposes. There are other systems that may work too, they could be worth exploring. Chief Abbott cautions that it does take work to get set up, however. Selectman Grunwald asks if the system is adaptable to different types of businesses; Chief Abbott believes that it is. You can calendar trainings, so the system makes employees stay up to date. Selectman Grunwald asks if we can add to the PD system; Chief Abbott isn't sure, but he can research that. He believes it costs them around \$3,500. Selectman Grunwald asks if this would be a burden on the office; Mr. McIntosh doesn't think so, noting that this is Mrs. Golz's area, but it really depends on the system and the amount of work. Chief Abbott will get the information on whether we can use their system or not. Selectman Grunwald asks him to contact a representative from the company to come speak to the Board at some point.

12. Resignation from Brandon Viveiros as Assistant Transfer Station Attendant, effective September 20, 2019

VOTE: Motion (Sullivan/Grunwald) to accept, passed unanimously.

Selectman Pacheco asks if we are posting this position. Selectman Grunwald suggests posting for 2 per diem workers. Selectman Sullivan asks if he means an assistant and a backup per diem; Selectman Grunwald says that sounds logical. Selectman Pacheco suggests posting for two part-timers and see where that leads us. Mr. DeManche asks if we'd be splitting the hours. Selectman Pacheco says for this fiscal year and see what the needs are when it comes to budget time. Selectman Sullivan says we should want to have the regular assistant the per diem workers below them on the organization chart. Selectman Pacheco agrees, saying Selectman Grunwald should be discussing that with the Health Agent and both of them coming back to the Board. The Board is in agreement on the permanent full-time worker, a permanent half-time worker and a per diem worker. Selectman Grunwald says this body count is fine, but he has a problem with the organization and wants to discuss it in the future.

VOTE: Motion (Sullivan/Pacheco) to post the opening for the assistant and also that we post for a per diem assistant transfer station attendant, same rate and then a day rate, passed unanimously.

13. Appointment of a second Fence Viewer

Selectman Sullivan says that by statute, we need a second fence viewer. The Building Commissioner is the main Fence Viewer.

VOTE: Motion (Sullivan/Grunwald) to open and advertise for a fence viewer until hired, passed unanimously.

14. Appointments:

- o Catrina Goncalves as Finance Committee Clerk and Economic Development Committee Clerk, effective October 1, 2019

VOTE: Motion (Sullivan/Grunwald) to approve, passed unanimously.

- o Suzanne Parker as member of the Freetown Housing Authority, effective October 1, 2019

VOTE: Motion (Sullivan/Grunwald) to approve, passed unanimously.

#### **Public Comment**

Residents from Algonquin Way are present to speak to the Selectmen about the construction of a solar field in their area, asking what the Board can do about this, calling it a disaster. Selectman Pacheco says that goes to the Planning Board, projects like that never come to the Board of Selectmen. They meet on the first and third Tuesdays of each month. Lisa Lundrigan, 16 Algonquin Way, says she's attended 2.5 years' worth of meetings, concerns were voiced, but the project proceeded in different ways and the concerns have not been heeded. She understands the Board doesn't have jurisdiction, but she wants the Board to take a look anyway. The residents want to know who runs the Town, who the Planning Board accountable to. Selectman Sullivan says they are an elected board, so they are accountable to the voters.

#### **Executive Session**

At 6:34pm, motion (Pacheco/Grunwald) to enter into executive session under the following exemption, and not to return to open session following. Roll call Chairman Charles B. Sullivan, Selectman Lisa A. Pacheco, Selectman George L. Grunwald; all voted in the affirmative when polled.

15. M.G.L. c.30A, Sec. 21(a)(3) – to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Public Employees Union, Local 1144 LIUNA (Highway Bargaining Unit) because an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body and the chair so declares.

At 7:05pm, motion (Pacheco/Grunwald) to adjourn. Roll call Chairman Charles B. Sullivan, Selectman Lisa A. Pacheco, Selectman George L. Grunwald; all voted in the affirmative when polled.

Respectfully submitted,



Timm McIntosh  
Administrative Assistant

#### **List of documents/exhibits used in this meeting, pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, § 22(a)**

- Public Hearing notice for Eversource pole location request
- Pole location petition, order for pole location and map of proposed pole locations, prepared by Eversource Energy
- Letter from P. Sadeck re: vacancy on the Board of Assessors (withdrawn prior to meeting)
- Proposed article for Special Town Meeting warrant re: wage & classification study
- Proposed article for Special Town Meeting warrant re: lease of a communications tower
- Draft of Special Town Meeting Warrant, redlined with changes suggested by Town Counsel
- Draft of Special Town Meeting Warrant, with redlined changes suggested by Town Counsel accepted

- Letter from J Moniz re: Right of First refusal on Chapter 61B land for 19 Flagg Swamp Road
- Copies of letters dated April 13, 2019 and June 20, 2019 re: right of first refusal
- Letter from Fire Chief G. Silvia re: comparison of ambulance rates
- Request for Transfer from the Reserve Fund, submitted by Highway Surveyor Charles Macomber
- Draft Meeting Room Policy
- Draft Employee Handbook for the Town of Freetown, prepared by Town Administrator Richard Brown
- Letter of resignation from B. Viveiros
- Draft Certificate of Appointment for C. Goncalves & S. Parker