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Freetown Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes

Ja Brown

Tuesday, September 8, 2020 – 4:30pm

Meeting Will Be Held Virtually

4:30 P.M. Call to Order

Chairman Lisa A. Pacheco calls the meeting to order at 4:32pm. Present: Selectman George L. Grunwald and Selectman Trevor R. Matthews. Town Administrator David DeManche and Administrative Assistant Timm McIntosh are also present. All participants of this evening's meeting are participating remotely. The meeting will be livestreamed at the conclusion of the posted Executive Session.

Executive Session

At 4:32pm, motion (Matthews/Grunwald) to enter into executive session under the exemption noted in agenda item #2 only, and to return to open session following; motion carries unanimously after a roll call vote.

1. M.G.L. c. 30A, sec. 21(a)(1) – to discuss the reputation, character, physical condition, or mental health, rather than professional competence, of an individual
2. M.G.L. c. 30A, sec. 21(a)(3) – to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Public Employees Union, Local 1144 (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

The Board will discuss agenda item #1 at a later meeting.

At 4:43pm, motion (Matthews/Grunwald) to return to open session; motion carries unanimously after a roll call vote.

From this point onward, the meeting is being livestreamed at youtube.com/FreetownMA.

Board of Selectmen

3. Weekly Warrants for month of September 2020, numbered 011-014

VOTE: Motion (Matthews/Grunwald) to sign; motion carries unanimously after a roll call vote.

4. Set time, location and procedure for October 3, 2020 Special Town Meeting

The Board initially skips this and returns to it after reviewing the warrant with the Finance Committee. This is presented here in posted agenda order.

VOTE: Motion (Matthews/Pacheco) to have Town Meeting at 1pm on October 3rd at Apponequet High School; motion carries two votes to none, with Selectman Grunwald no longer present.

5. Early Voting for 2020 Presidential Election

Mr. McIntosh says Mrs. Brown was unable to attend tonight's meeting but told him earlier today that she is proceeding with Early Voting for the Presidential Election to take place at the Council on Aging, not the Town Hall.

6. Septic Betterment: 145 South Main Street

Mr. DeManche explains that the Town has a loan program to help residents with septic upgrades, with the loan repaid as a tax lien. Before he departed, Mr. Macedo confirms there was money in the account, and is seeking approval to start this process with the resident.

VOTE: Motion (Matthews/Grunwald) to approve; motion carries unanimously after a roll call vote.

7. Town of Freetown Recreational Facilities Rules & Regulations

In a previous discussion, the Board mentioned that the Parks & Recreation Committee should update these regulations; Mr. McIntosh suggests that the Board formally vote to charge the Committee to do just that.

VOTE: Motion (Matthews/Grunwald) to have the Parks & Recreation Committee update this and bring it back to the Board of Selectmen; motion carries unanimously.

8. Snow Plowing for the 2020-2021 snow season

Mr. McIntosh says that the Highway Surveyor has requested that snowplow rates be left level this year, not raised like the Board had previously expressed an interest in. Selectman Pacheco has no issue with that but would want to set a hard deadline and stick with it, suggesting November 2nd as a deadline.

VOTE: Motion (Matthews/Grunwald) to have the Highway Department snowplow contracts available as soon as possible, with a deadline of November 2nd; motion carries unanimously after a roll call vote.

Mr. McIntosh says the contracts are currently processed by the Selectmen's office, even though the office has no answers for any specific questions asked by the subcontractors. He requests the contracts be handled by the Highway Department, and then submitted to the Board of Selectmen for approval, as any other contracts. Selectman Pacheco denies this request, noting that the contracts need to be complete and ready for the Board ahead of meetings. Selectman Matthews agrees. Mr. McIntosh expresses concern that this will result in him being the Highway Department clerk. Selectman Grunwald suggests listing the Highway Surveyor as the point of contact, not the Selectmen's office.

9. Chapter 90 Project Request for paving of Chace Road

Mr. DeManche says members of the Police Station Team met on site to address concerns that the culvert in the area is completed before this paving process starts. They have gotten assurance that the work will be done in time.

VOTE: Motion (Matthews/Grunwald) to approve the work only after the culvert work is completed, in the amount of \$372,433.62; motion carries unanimously after a roll call vote.

10. Ambulance Abatements/Write-Offs for month of July 2020

VOTE: Motion (Matthews/Grunwald) to approve the contractual allowances in the amount of \$55,262.27 and write-offs in the amount of \$(2,460.41) for a total of \$52,801.86 for the month of July 2020; motion carries unanimously after a roll call vote.

11. Minutes: August 17th and August 26th, 2020

VOTE: Motion (Matthews/Grunwald) to approve the August 17th minutes; motion carries unanimously after a roll call vote.

VOTE: Motion (Matthews/Grunwald) to approve the August 26th minutes; motion carries unanimously after a roll call vote.

12. Town Administrator's Report

- a. Mr. DeManche recognizes the Police Team (which consists of, amongst others, representatives from the architects' firm and general contractor, the owners project manager, Selectman Pacheco, Chief Abbott) for all the work they've done to ensure that the building remained insured as the builders' risk insurance period came to a close. He says they were able to switch the insurance over on time, though it was close in the end.
- b. The Town has received a \$6,438.75 check from Eversource, which is reimbursement for the streetlights. This was part of the MAPC contract, and another grant check coming from MAPC. After all the grants, the total cost for the project will be under \$10,000.
- c. Mr. DeManche has had conversations with Maureen Candito of Lakeville about the IT/scanner grant. As the Board is aware, we have received a grant for \$160,000 for IT purposes, to allow us to scan in historical documents and create a searchable database. Lakeville is moving ahead, and we are working in tandem. Lakeville is contracting with King Systems, who did our last project similar to this; the feeling is that we will use them as well. Mr. DeManche says the main focus will be on the Building Department and Police Department. He wants to make sure this is started before he leaves.

13. Police Station Update

Selectman Pacheco says anyone can drive by the station and see that we are at the end. The Police Sub-Committee has a walk through on Thursday night, and they will have more to report later on. She says the community has a building we can all really be proud of, and an opening ceremony is still to come.

Board of Health

14. Trash & Recycling Pick-Up Survey

Selectman Grunwald says we wanted more data on the trash & recycling, so we agreed to to the survey, and the Board wanted a look at it before it went live. Selectman Pacheco says the trash pickup is a mess, that she regularly gets complaints, and we still have ongoing issues, so she thinks this survey will help us. She would like to add a question asking if the resident gets trash pickup, recycling pickup, or both, saying that some people do not get both; this could be just another data point to go on in the next step. Selectman Grunwald does not have an objection to adding that. Selectman Matthews has no input.

VOTE: Motion (Matthews/Pacheco) to send out the questionnaire; motion carries unanimously after a roll call vote.

15. Security Cameras at the Transfer Station

Selectman Grunwald has not picked out a system yet; he was unaware the Board needed his recommendation, but he will work on this. He asks if the Board has a budget for this; Mr. DeManche says there is no appropriation, a reserve fund transfer would be needed. Selectman Grunwald thinks \$1,000 would be more than enough, with installation on top of that figure; the Board agrees. Selectman Grunwald asks if this will be a cloud-based system or an on-site recording, noting that on-site recordings could disappear. Selectman Matthews thinks that something along the lines of a Nest camera would be what we are looking for; Mr. DeManche notes that comes with a monthly subscription charge, which would be something to keep in mind.

16. Handling of Cash at the Transfer Station

Treasurer Jessica Thomas is present. This item taken at the beginning of open session to not take too much of Ms. Thomas's time. Selectman Grunwald reiterates his believe that the Transfer Station should not be taking cash. He allows that credit cards have a fee attached which could be a bit of an issue, but checks would also be taken. He says there is very loose accountability for cash, which is why most Towns have gotten away from it. Ms. Thomas says confirms there would be additional fees with cards, but checks have no fees. She says most of the charges would be \$100, so the fee would be \$2.50 or \$3.95, depending on the card. She notes that the town could absorb that fee if the Board so chooses, she will set it up however the Board wants to proceed. Selectman Pacheco asks how much the Town

has taken in in each form of payment; Ms. Thomas says she does not have the numbers in front of her, but there have been less than 5 credit card charges in the entire time they have been accepted at the Transfer Station. Selectman Pacheco asks if the Transfer Station is losing cash: Ms. Thomas says they are not; Selectman Grunwald says we cannot know that. Mr. DeManche has asked Town Counsel if we can stop accepting cash payments, but the response was not clear. He knows there are communities that are currently only cards or checks but says this is a Board decision. Selectman Pacheco says if the Board absorbs the fee, we are setting ourselves up to possibly lose money; Selectman Grunwald would like to see more data on that before deciding. Mr. DeManche says the cash register will give us a little more information on where the money is coming from in time. Selectman Matthews says we currently pass the fees on to the customers, which is why there are so few card charges. Selectman Pacheco says we have a transfer station, so residents do not dump their stuff on the side of the road. Selectman Matthews thinks we should be absorbing the fees; Selectman Pacheco says we cannot lose money. Selectman Grunwald agrees with Selectman Matthews, saying every business absorbs the fee. Selectman Pacheco thinks if that is the case, we should look into raising fees; Selectman Grunwald agrees. He notes that the Board previously raised the fees, but revenues remained flat; Selectman Pacheco says the fees were raised due to increased disposal costs. Selectman Grunwald believes this is a question on accountability, not a question of whether the Transfer Station is profitable or not, suggesting the Board speak to the Town Accountant to figure out where we are. Selectman Pacheco says she trusts the employees we have working for us, and notes that the Transfer Station is a service, not a business. Selectman Grunwald says this is all completely uncontrolled.

VOTE: Motion (Matthews/Grunwald) to review cash payments once more in 60 days, once the cash register has had time; motion carries unanimously after a roll call vote.

Personnel Board

Discussion/possible action on the following topics:

17. Appoint Preliminary Screening Committee for Town Administrator

VOTE: Motion (Pacheco/Grunwald) to appoint the following people to a Preliminary Screening Committee for Town Administrator: Timm McIntosh, Ali Golz, Kimberley Fales, Gary Martin and Robert Jose; motion carries unanimously after a roll call vote.

18. Appointments:

- a. Paula Charette, Amanda Murphy and Coral Costello as Election Workers, effective September 8, 2020, as recommended by the Town Clerk

VOTE: Motion (Pacheco/Grunwald) to approve; motion carries unanimously after a roll call vote.

- b. Amanda Barlow (Precinct III) & Ellen Lima (Precinct I) to Parks & Recreation Committee, effective September 8, 2020 (no other applicants at this time)

VOTE: Motion (Pacheco/Grunwald) to approve; motion carries unanimously after a roll call vote.

- c. Town Hall Custodial/Maintenance Worker, effective September 8, 2020

○ Recommendation of Town Administrator: Tim Devine

Mr. DeManche says the interviews of the two applicants were conducted by himself, Selectman Matthews and the Building Commissioner, and the recommendation is Mr. Tim Devine.

VOTE: Motion (Pacheco/Grunwald) to approve; motion carries unanimously after a roll call vote.

Old Business:

- Town Hall Phone System – Dates still pending
- Vocational Education – No new updates
- Council on Aging Building Addition – No new updates
- Board of Assessors Staffing – No new updates
- Town Clerk Position – No new updates

Neither Mr. McIntosh nor Mr. DeManche have any new updates on these topics.

At 5:41pm, motion (Matthews/Grunwald) to enter into recess until 6pm; motion carries unanimously after a roll call vote.

6:00 P.M. Joint Meeting with the Freetown Finance Committee

Review of Submitted Warrant Articles & Supplemental Budget Requests for Fall 2020 Special Town Meeting and possible vote on recommendations

Chairman Lisa A. Pacheco calls the meeting back into order just after 6:00pm. Selectman Trevor R. Matthews remains present; Selectman George L. Grunwald has departed from the meeting, and does not return from recess. Also present: Town Administrator David DeManche, Administrative Assistant Timm McIntosh, Fire Chief Gary Silvia, Chief of Police Carlton E. Abbott, Jr., Esq., Town Accountant Kimberley Fales, Building Commissioner Jeffrey Chandler and members of the Freetown Finance Committee: Craig Rosen, Katie Calheta, Christine Dupras and Chairman Gary Martin.

Selectman Pacheco goes through the draft warrant, pausing when an article is held or needs further discussion, or if anyone has any questions:

- Proposed Article 6, regarding road layouts – Mr. McIntosh says he's received correspondence from the Highway Surveyor requesting the article be removed.
- Proposed Article 9, regarding prior year water bills – Ms. Fales says the correct dollar amount is actually \$256,199.27 and the bills are only from Fiscal Year 2020, so that language can be updated.
- Proposed Article 11, regarding a transfer from reserved receipts to the Town's PEG account – Mr. DeManche says he's explored the project a bit further and believes he will require \$50,000, not the \$25,000 as originally quoted. Selectman Pacheco says as long as the funding is not coming from the general fund, she is fine with this.
- Proposed Article 12, regarding the rescission of a 2000 vote regarding the appointment of a Part-Time Conservation Agent – Mr. McIntosh informs everyone of correspondence from the Conservation Commission saying the article can stay or go, but the Conservation Commission can make the appointment either way. Selectman Pacheco says it can stay for now.
- Proposed Articles 16 & 17, regarding making the Town Clerk & Highway Surveyor appointed positions respectively – Selectman Pacheco brings the Finance Committee up to speed on the need and process for this article, noting that if it passes at Town Meeting, it must still go to a ballot.

VOTE: Motion (Matthews/Pacheco) to accept the articles as noted; motion carries unanimously after a roll call vote.

Ms. Fales asks if the Board is going to add dollar amounts to the warrant where "a sum of money" is listed, saying she has suggestions; Selectman Pacheco says those can be voted on at a later date.

VOTE: Motion (Matthews/Pacheco) to recommend all articles as approved; motion carries unanimously after a roll call vote.

Similarly, the Finance Committee votes to recommend all articles as approved.

Selectman Pacheco goes through the proposed supplemental omnibus in the same fashion, pausing when an item is held or needs further discussion, or if anyone has any questions:

- Police Station Utilities – Chief Abbott says the increased facilities cost for the new police station is due to Comcast going up a couple hundred dollars a month, as they are not able to get certain services for free any longer. He says he's surveyed area stations for their costs and the costs from the architect were different, so the dollar figures were estimated. Ms. Fales says there is an inflation fact that was not figured in initially, which is in play now. She says with the electric rate has been corrected and Comcast is

actually double, even prorated, coming to around a \$25,000 increase. Selectman Pacheco wants to make sure we aren't reverting backwards, that these costs aren't for major fixes, and are just maintenance. Mr. DeManche says the station will need to be open for a full year to really get a feel for how much utilities will actually cost; Selectman Pacheco says she is uneasy at how fast these costs are going up.

- Police – Selectman Pacheco says Fourth of July overtime was still included in the police budget, so she believes that should offset the union retirement incentives. Chief Abbott explains how they have had to tap into that overtime account already due to a number of staffing issues. Selectman Pacheco thinks most of those are COVID-related costs, so they should be coming from elsewhere; Chief Abbott says not all the issues were COVID-related. Selectman Pacheco continues on to the request for a new confidential secretary, asking if this is a new position or a change in title. Chief Abbott says it is a new position. Selectman Pacheco notes that Chief Abbott says he is down an officer and needs money for that, but is still adding a secretary. Chief Abbott explains the need for the secretary, noting that he is administratively far behind. Selectman Pacheco understands this, though she is taken aback by how far Chief Abbott says he is behind, as this is the first she is hearing of that. She suggests a half-time secretary and then evaluating whether or not it needs to be expanded; Chief Abbott says that is a good suggestion, suggesting 20-25 hours. Ms. Fales says if the goal is to save money, the hours should be capped at 19 hours, as benefits are extended to employees starting at 20 hours. Selectman Pacheco says she will speak to Chief Abbott about a 25-hour position separately.
- Police/Communications Capital – Chief Abbott explains that the new Police tablets are fully integrated with everything, with the new Fire tablets connecting to our database.
- Fire – Chief Silvia says OSHA is requiring additional testing on equipment, which requires additional funding. He is also adding another jetpack, and new equipment for new recruits. He says we currently have 29 paid on-call firefighters, and 11 full-time firefighters.
- Fire Capital – Chief Silvia echoes Chief Abbott, noting that we are finally connecting Fire systems with the new police station. He's also requested funding for the installation of a required source capture exhaust system; a grant has been applied for to pay for this, but if we don't get the grant, we have to pay for it. Chief Silvia is not hopeful on receiving the grant, as we've already gotten two of them for the other stations.
- Library – Mr. McIntosh spoke to Library Trustees Chairman Paul Sadeck, who said the overtime funding is not likely necessary, so it can be removed.
- Unemployment – Selectman Pacheco asks if everyone is comfortable with Ms. Fales recommendation to remove \$100,000 from that budget; nobody has any objections.

- Assessors – Mr. McIntosh says the Board of Assessors are meeting tomorrow. Ms. Fales believes they are still looking at adding an employee, but she personally believes hiring a consultant is the better cost saving measure. Mr. DeManche agrees, saying his main concern is that if we hire an employee, it would be a major challenge to get that person in and up to speed in time for the recap to be completed. Ms. Fales says that between \$10,000 and \$15,000 was used last year for this, so that would be her recommendation; Selectman Pacheco was thinking \$12,000, so is fine with \$15,000.
- Conservation Commission – Selectman Pacheco thinks the two part-time workers requested should be taken over by Parks & Recreation.

VOTE: Motion (Matthews/Pacheco) to accept and recommend the budget with the recommended changes; motion carries unanimously after a roll call vote.

Similarly, the Finance Committee votes to recommend the budget with the recommended changes. The Board returns to agenda item #4 (see above).

At 7:11pm, motion (Matthews/Pacheco) to adjourn; motion carries unanimously after a roll call vote.

Respectfully submitted,



Timm McIntosh
Administrative Assistant

List of Documents/Exhibits Used by the Board of Selectmen

- Excerpt of Acts of 2020 Chapter 115 of Massachusetts General Law
- Letter from Board of Health Agent D. Macedo re: 145 S. Main Street Septic Betterment
- Draft Town of Freetown Recreational Facilities Rules & Regulations
- Letter from Highway Surveyor re: snowplow rates for 2020/2021
- E-Mail from Administrative Assistant re: snowplow contracts
- Letter from Highway Surveyor re: Chapter 90 project for Chace Road
- Chapter 90 Paperwork for Paving of Chace Road project
- Draft memo from Board of Selectmen and Fire Chief to Town Accountant re: Ambulance Abatements – Write-Offs for July 2020
- Draft minutes of meeting of the Board of Selectmen on August 17th and August 26th
- 2020 Curbside Trash & Recycling Survey
- List of security camera options, prepared by Board of Health Agent

- Note from Executive Assistant re: recommendation of composition of Preliminary Screening Committee for Town Administrator
- Letter of interest from A. Barlow re: Parks & Recreation Committee
- Draft Certificate of Appointment for P. Charette, A. Murphy, C. Costello, A. Barlow, E. Lima, T. Devine