



Freetown Board of Selectmen

Meeting Minutes

Monday, October 19, 2020 – 4:30pm

Meeting Will Be Held Virtually

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4:30pm Call to Order

Acting Chairman George L. Grunwald calls the meeting to order at 4:30pm. Selectman Trevor R. Matthews is present; Selectman Lisa A. Pacheco is absent from the meeting. Also present: Town Administrator David DeManche and Executive Assistant Timm McIntosh. All participants are participating remotely. Once in open session, the meeting will be livestreamed on the Town's YouTube Channel, accessible by visiting freetownma.gov/FREECAM.

Executive Session

At 4:32pm, motion (Grunwald/Matthews) to enter into executive session under the following exemptions, and return to open session following; motion carries unanimously after a roll call vote.

1. M.G.L. c.30A, sec. 21(a)(3) – to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Freetown Fulltime Fire Fighters Association because an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body and the chair so declares.
2. M.G.L. c.30A, sec. 21(a)(3) – to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Freetown Police Association because an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body and the chair so declares.

At 5:05pm, motion (Grunwald/Matthews) to return to open session; motion carries unanimously after a roll call vote.

Board of Selectmen

Mr. McIntosh to read the following statement: "Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12th, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions on the Open Meeting Law, G.L. chapter 30A, section 19, and the Governor's March 15th, 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Freetown Board of Selectmen is being conducted via remote participation. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort is being made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings as provided for in the Order. A reminder that persons who would like to view this meeting while in progress may do so by accessing the live stream of this meeting on the Town's YouTube channel, youtube.com/FreetownMA, or accessible by visiting freetownma.gov/FREECAM. In the event the

live stream is unsuccessful, I am recording this meeting, and the recording will be posted to the Town's YouTube channel as soon as I am able to following the conclusion of this meeting."

3. Grant for Phase 2 of the Freetown Portion of the Project Cost for Chromebooks for Regional School District students & staff, to be used for remote learning
Superintendent of Schools Richard Medeiros and Regional School District Finance Director Kara Lees join the meeting, along with Town Accountant Kimberley Fales. They are present to discuss the 1:1 Chromebooks project the school district is undertaking to deal with remote learning. Ms. Lees says she has learned that the Board voted in late spring to cover the initial costs for the project, and this is the next step. The School District is requesting \$124,318.24 from the Town's CARES Act, which will give over 1,000 students their own device; prior to this project, the district only had enough devices to allow 1 in 3 students their own device. This dollar figure is a pro-rated share. Mr. DeManche asks if Ms. Fales has any insight. Ms. Fales says the Town received \$828,000 through the CARES act, and we have spent \$160,000 thus far; this does not include a partial commitment made to the schools, which is another \$30,000. Ms. Fales says we received a significant amount of money, and she has been working with Chief Silvia to determine what we will need to remain prepared for future surges. She believes there is adequate funding in place to cover this request. Mr. DeManche agrees and recommends the Board approve this request.

VOTE: Motion (Matthews/Grunwald) to allocate \$124,218.24 from the CARES Act to the regional schools' 1:1 initiative for the Chromebooks; motion carries unanimously after a roll call vote.

Mr. Medeiros appreciates the Town's continued support. He notes that they do have a future request on the project but will make the request at a later date.

4. Improvements to the Assonet Bandstand and Further Improvements to Fire Station No. 1
Mary Rezendes Brown, Chairman of the Historical Commission, is present. She was very pleased with the work to the arches of the Fire Station but wishes there were windows on the doors. She says next for the Fire Station, work must be done to the rear & side windows and doors, as they are all in rough shape. Mr. DeManche referred her to the Board of Selectmen. Mrs. Brown would like the Board to consider upgrades. Mr. DeManche says there should be funding available due to savings in the roll-up door project, and would recommend this work, starting with the doors. Ms. Fales confirms there is significant money, around \$40,000, remaining that could be repurposed. The Board has no objections, Mr. DeManche will work on gathering the information necessary.

Next, Mrs. Brown wishes to discuss the bandstand. Mr. DeManche says this is a longtime project; we previously explored resurfacing it, but it would probably be best to do the whole project at this point. This was in the capital improvement budget last year, but it was held

when COVID hit; now that we have a better handle on revenues, it can once more move forward. A new quote on resurfacing will be needed. Mr. DeManche is seeking the Board's support in re-starting this project. Selectman Matthews believes this is an important project to bring the charm back to Assonet.

VOTE: Motion (Matthews/Grunwald) to continue the process of fixing the Assonet Bandstand as well as the doors and windows of Fire Station No. 1; motion carries unanimously after a roll call vote.

5. Utility License with Verizon New England, Inc. regarding Pole 70/9PB at the New Police Station

Mr. McIntosh explains that there is a pole in the middle of the driveway at the new police station, and this license will give Verizon the approval to move the pole to where it needs to be.

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

6. Change Order No. 3 for Pomroy Associates, LLC, for Continued Owners Project Management Services for new Police Station Project

Mr. McIntosh explains that as COVID has added time to the project, further services were necessary.

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

7. Spending Plan for Elections Grant Received from the Center for Tech & Civic Life
The Town Clerk's office received a grant for \$5,000 to help with elections, and Mrs. Brown has put together a memo outlining how she intends to spend the funds.

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

8. Awarding of the Bid & Contract Approval for Cleaning Services for the New Police Station (Recommendation to come from the Town Administrator)

Mr. DeManche says this went out to bid, and two companies submitted proposals. The low bid came in around \$22,360 a year from M&M Contract Cleaning and was based on specifications developed by the Chief of Police and Town Administrator. Selectman Grunwald questions what we are getting for that amount; Mr. DeManche will distribute the purchase description. He says this is a 1-year contract that would take effect once the building is occupied. Selectman Matthews asks if M&M is a big company; Mr. DeManche says we required them to submit references with facilities over 15,000 square feet, to ensure that they are applicable. Mr. DeManche says the funding for this is in the budget, and that there are obvious advantages over hiring just one employee.

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

9. Amended COVID-19 Travel Policy for Employees

This item is bypassed as it is not ready just yet.

10. AmeriCann Host Community Agreement Requirements

Mr. DeManche says there are questions on the payments required by the Host Community Agreement. Mr. DeManche says he's spoken to Tim Keough at AmeriCann and they are proposing that a payment in the amount of \$2,956 will be paid for the time operations began in February through August, then quarterly payments being made going forward. Mr. DeManche describes this arrangement as fair; Selectman Matthews agrees, saying that he would not want to make an enemy here if we didn't have to.

VOTE: Motion (Matthews/Grunwald) to accept the agreement that Mr. DeManche and Mr. Keough came to; motion carries unanimously after a roll call vote.

11. Design or Feasibility Study on an Addition to the Senior Center, A New Senior Center and a Combination Senior Center/Library, as voted on by the Building Committee on October 5, 2020

Mr. McIntosh spoke to Selectman Pacheco earlier today and, and she noted that a feasibility study was done in 2014, so one does not necessarily need to be done again right now. Mr. DeManche has framed out a Request for Proposals (RFP) to have a designer look at what we have and have them come up with a price proposal. He says the RFP would ask them to look at the pros and cons on each option laid out by the Building Committee, examine the existing programming, and see if the options would work, then perhaps give design suggestions.

Selectman Grunwald says we have already done this, and the Board of Selectmen have been pushing this back for a number of years now. He does not believe the Town has the appetite to do another large project like a new building for a foreseeable future, so we should be expending the \$500,000 that was appropriated to give the Council on Aging what they need. He takes issue with the fact that the Board approved a \$300,000 carport in just one meeting with no real discussion, but we are beating a \$500,000 building to death. He says this has already been approved, and we should be going ahead with this. Mr. DeManche says he acted on the recommendation of the Building Committee; Selectman Grunwald says it is the Board of Selectmen that makes these decisions, the Building Committee can only recommend.

Selectman Matthews says the issue is that we need to figure out how to start with the \$500,000, which is what Mr. DeManche is asking to do. We need estimates. Selectman Grunwald says that is correct, that we need to bring in an architectural firm to review the information and give us an estimate.

VOTE: Motion (Grunwald/Matthews) to bring in an architectural firm to review the addition/renovation and get us an estimate; motion carries unanimously after a roll call vote.

Selectman Matthews thinks this addition will buy us time, but we need to think about what this building will be used for once a new building is in place. He wants to throw that thought out there, to make sure everyone knows that we aren't spending this money to just throw it away later. Mr. DeManche thinks a building re-use committee would be a good idea.

Selectman Grunwald thinks we should be rolling that into the purchase description to get input from the architect to get their input. Mr. DeManche will work on this new purchase description; Selectman Grunwald will let Mr. DeManche know of a firm that he would like it sent to.

12. Minutes: October 3rd & October 5th, 2020

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

13. Town Administrator's Report

- a. Mr. DeManche has been working with Jean Fox and Superintendent Rick Medeiros to continue a series of pop-up mobile markets that have been held at Freetown Elementary School. The previous ones were sponsored by the United Way, but Mr. DeManche thinks we can continue them without the help of the United Way. He's spoken to the Fire Chief, who has a cargo wagon that could be utilized, perhaps with donations from Stop & Shop, who have been a tremendous partner with the Town.
- b. Mr. DeManche is happy to report that the Freetown Screw property successfully sold at auction last week for around \$160,000. These funds will go to the General Fund, and we will be released from our obligations with the Mass Development grant.
- c. Mr. DeManche says that five area communities will be going to red alert for COVID imminently. Freetown is not one of them, but there could be some overlap in terms of a reverse 911 message that will be going out.
- d. Finally, Mr. DeManche is putting together a list of projects and outstanding issues for his successor. He says he will always be a resource to the new person.

14. Police Station Update

With Selectman Pacheco not present, this item is skipped for the evening.

Board of Health

15. Discussion with Christopher Macera of Republic Services

Selectman Grunwald asks Mr. Macera to bring us up to speed on the complaints the Trash & Recycling survey had, and Republic's response to them. Mr. Macera certainly sees room

for improvement but says that the Covid-19 pandemic is a major culprit here. He says the pandemic has had a major impact on the company, due to the sheer increase in volume at the curb. We are up 16% in volume over the same period of time in 2019, and 17% in recycling. As an essential front-line service, Republic has not shut down at any point. Mr. Macera says at the start of the contract, Freetown required one co-collecting truck, but since Covid struck, a second or third truck is often needed, at a significant cost to Republic (though they have not asked for extra fees). These extra trucks may not have the same drivers that know the town like the usual drivers. These extra trucks also create staffing issues, as many towns are needing this same sort of increase in service. Selectman Grunwald says he has seen that the service varies neighborhood to neighborhood; Mr. Macera says the routes are the same each week, so the capacity issues tend to hit at around the same point. He understands the optics of the same issues recurring in certain areas, but that is just how it works out. Mr. DeManche says he has been regularly hearing from the residents in the area of Island Road; Mr. Macera says the issues specific to that area have been dealt with. He says he hates to keep pointing to Covid, but that is the reality of the situation. Mr. McIntosh asks if the second truck is a regular occurrence, why can't Republic start the day with a second truck. Mr. Macera says that is a good question, but that would be a case of reallocating resources from elsewhere, which would simply create issues in a different spot.

Selectman Grunwald asks if there is anything specific Republic is doing to try to normalize service. Mr. Macera says an automated system with carts/distributed barrels would eliminate some of the problems we are seeing; he would encourage the Town look into that. He says that carts would need to be purchased, estimating that the Town would need around 6,000 carts at \$50/cart, so this would be a significant up-front capital purchase, and Republic would be allocating a different sort of truck. If it is the Board's desire, he can work out a proposal with specifics. Going into next year, Mr. Macera says the Board will need to decide what sort of system they would like to see: keeping the same system or the automate system. If the same system is preferred, he does not think that the contract value will be going way up due to the increased volume; Republic would be viewing Freetown as a two-truck town now. He says that an automated system would be more money up front due to the capital costs, but the Town would probably save money in the long run. He will need to run his models on that to give the Board a ballpark figure.

The Board will revisit this.

Personnel Board

16. Highway Department Staffing

Mr. McIntosh explains that there was a vacancy in the Highway Department created in the spring that was never filled, but there is currently no funding in place to fill it. Selectman

Grunwald thinks we should figure out what exactly it will take to fill the vacancy, and then proceed with filling it.

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

17. Appointment of Lu-Anne Souza as Senior Clerk, effective October 19, 2020

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

18. Appointment and Approval of Change in Status for C. Nils McKay as Recordings Clerk for the Zoning Board of Appeals, effective October 19, 2020

19. Appointment of Steve Terceira & Lola Furtado as Election Workers, effective October 19, 2020

20. Appointment of John Remedis, Abby Michaels, Jay Michaels, Mike McCue & Nicole Davignon to the Freetown Cultural Council, effective October 19, 2020
Selectman Grunwald asks to take all the appointments at once.

VOTE: Motion (Grunwald/Matthews) to appoint all as noted; motion carries unanimously after a roll call vote.

VOTE: Motion (Grunwald/Matthews) to approve the change of status forms for Lu-Ann Souza and C. Nils McKay; motion carries unanimously after a roll call vote.

Old Business

- Vocational Education Options – meeting set with Old Colony School Committee, Board of Selectmen & Freetown Vocational Education Exploratory Committee for October 27, 2020
- Phone System Upgrades – Town Hall completed, Council on Aging, Fire Department and Highway Department Upcoming
- Transfer Station Cameras- Comcast is needed to upgrade the internet to a sufficient speed for the cameras.
- Town Meeting Signs – Selectman Grunwald would like to look into electronic signs, instead of the wooden signs he spoke of previously. Mr. DeManche has begun poking around where to obtain something like that and has found that it will not be cheap. Selectman Grunwald says the bank by the rotary in East Freetown was willing to work with us on power or even utilizing their sign in the past, he will follow up with that. He and Mr. DeManche will have more information on that at the next meeting.
- Cable Negotiations – Next meeting of Cable Advisory Committee is scheduled for October 21, 2020

Unanticipated Business

- Mr. McIntosh lets the Board know that Highway Surveyor Charles Macomber brought a Chapter 90 request earlier today, involving paving a portion of South Main Street. He was hoping to get the request approved as soon as possible, as he has the paving company scheduled for a project in Town next week. The project entails paving 600 feet of South Main Street, northbound only, between Simpson Lane and Nottingham Way, which will cost an estimated \$11,951. Mr. Macomber said there is around \$30,000 in Chapter 90 funds remaining.

VOTE: Motion (Grunwald/Matthews) to approve the Ch. 90 project request; motion carries unanimously.

At 6:45pm, motion (Grunwald/Matthews) to adjourn; motion carries unanimously after a roll call vote.

Respectfully Submitted,



Timm McIntosh
Executive Assistant

List of Documents Utilized by the Board of Selectmen

- Spreadsheet prepared by Town Accountant and Regional Schools Finance Director re: Chromebooks project
- Excerpt of minutes of June 22nd meeting of the Board of Selectmen
- Draft license agreement between Town of Freetown and Verizon New England re: Utility Pole 70/9PB
- Draft Change Order Number 3 for Pomroy Associates, LLC
- Memo from Town Clerk re: election grant spending plan
- Draft Freetown Covid Travel Policy
- Copy of Host Community Agreement with Americann, Inc.
- Excerpt from the minutes of October 5th meeting of the Board of Selectmen and Building Committee
- Draft minutes of October 3th and October 5th, 2020 meeting of the Board of Selectmen
- Copy of 2020 Curbside Trash & Recycling Survey
- Correspondence from Chairman of Zoning Board of Appeals re: appointment of C.N. McKay
- Memo from Town Clerk re: appointment of election workers

- Letter of interest in joining Freetown Cultural Council from J. Remedis, A. Michaels, J. Michaels, M. McCue & N. Davignon
- Draft Certificate of Appointment for L. Souza, C. N. McKay, S. Terceira, L. Furtado, J. Remedis, A. Michaels, J. Michaels, M. McCue & N. Davignon
- Draft Change of Status Report for L. Souza, C. N. McKay