

Freetown Board of Selectmen  
Meeting Minutes  
Monday, October 24, 2022 – 6:00pm  
Police Station Community Room  
15 Memorial Drive, East Freetown, MA

RECEIVED  
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2022 NOV -8 PM 12: 39

### Call to Order

Selectmen Mathews opened the meeting at 6:00pm. He noted we would be going into Executive Session and returning to open session to discuss number one below. He noted the meeting was being recorded and would be posted on the Town's YouTube Channel. Selectmen Zager, Selectmen Lopes, interim Town Administrator Deb Pettey, Chief Abbott, Matt Parent and Executive Assistant Lu-Ann Souza were also present.

- Motion to enter Executive Session was made by Selectmen Zager and seconded by selectmen Lopes at 6:01pm
- Vote: was approved in a unanimous roll call vote
- Vote: Selectmen Lopes – yes, Selectmen Zager – yes, Selectmen Matthews – yes

### Executive Session

Discussion/possible action on the following topics:

1. M.G.L. c. 30A, sec. 21(a)(3) – to discuss strategy with respect to litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares – **Solar Farms**, all as they are the Board of Selectmen of the Town of Freetown

The Board returned from Executive Session at 6:22pm. Selectmen Matthews noted we will be doing Personnel interview first

### Board of Selectmen

Discussion/possible action on the following topics:

2. Discussion, and vote on whether to approve, not release the Executive Session Minutes from 10/18/22.
  - Motion to approve, not release, the Executive Session Minutes from 10/18/22 was made by Selectmen Zager and seconded by Selectmen Lopes.
  - Vote: was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.
3. Discussion, and vote on whether to approve the Open Session Minutes from 10/18/22.
  - Motion to approve the Open Session Minutes from 10/18/22 was made by Selectmen Zager and seconded by Selectmen Lopes.
  - Vote: was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.
4. Discussion, and vote on town offices/services/hours for day after Thanksgiving and observation of the Christmas and New Year's holidays.

There was a discussion on having the Town Hall closed to the public and staff can take day off but need to use their paid time off. This will avoid having residents coming to Town Hall and not being able to get full services. Selectmen Lopes said to ensure that this is publicized so the public is aware. Deb Pettey noted that the Transfer Station would prefer to have the holiday on the Saturdays Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve instead of the Tuesday after the holiday.

- Motion to close the offices and services the day after Thanksgiving was made by Selectmen Zager and seconded by Selectmen Lopes
  - Vote: was approved in a unanimous roll call vote
  
  - Motion for the Transfer Station to observe the Christmas and New Year's holidays on the Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve was made by Selectmen Zager and seconded by Selectmen Lopes
  - Vote: was approved in a unanimous roll call vote
5. Discussion, and vote on closing Town Hall, Highway, Libraries, Transfer Station, and Council on Aging at 12:30pm on 12/21/22 for staff holiday party.

The Board had a brief discussion on closing for this celebration and agreed to close early for the day and stressed to ensure the public is notified.

- Motion to close the Town Hall, Highway, Libraries, Transfer Station, and Council on Aging at 12:30pm on 12/21/22 for staff holiday party was made by Selectmen Zager and seconded by Selectmen Lopes.
  - Vote: was approved in a unanimous roll call vote.
6. Discussion, and vote on whether to designate two parking spaces at Town Hall closest to the door as visitor only.

Deb Pettey noted we have an obvious parking issue at Town Hall and that when residents come to do business perhaps, we should make two spots near the door for visitors only. On second thought we do not have enough spaces to accommodate current staff, so it needs to have more thought before making a decision. Selectmen Lopes noted the handicap parking spot requires the person to go out into the road to access the entrance to the ramp and noted that we should scrap the current spot and put the handicap spot on the other side near the entrance to the ramp.

The Board asked to postpone this discussion to a future meeting.

7. Discussion, and vote to award the Supply & Installation of Water Meters Bid.

Selectmen Matthews noted the bids were very detailed and that the town had received two complete bids. The lowest bid was from Baystate Win Supply with a bid of \$383,567.25. Deb Pettey noted all their documents were in place and they have

numerous excellent references. Selectmen Matthews asked where is this money coming from? Deb Pettey noted that \$373,000 is coming out of ARPA grant funds and the remaining \$10,000 would be coming from the water and sewer commissions budget. Selectmen Matthews noted that this company has done a lot of work for other communities.

- Motion to award the Supply & Installation of Water Meters Bid to Baystate Win Supply was made by Selectmen Zager and seconded by Selectmen Lopes.
  - Vote: was approved in a unanimous roll call vote.
8. Discussion, and vote whether to approve the contract between the Town of Freetown and Baystate Win Supply for Supply & Installation of Water Meters.
- Motion to approve the contract between the Town of Freetown and Baystate Win Supply for Supply & Installation of Water Meters was made by Selectmen Zager and seconded by Selectmen Lopes.
  - Vote: was approved in a unanimous roll call vote.

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### **Board of Health**

Discussion/possible action on the following topics:

- No topics for discussion

### **Personnel Board**

Discussion/possible action on the following topics:

9. Acknowledge the resignation of Logan St. Louis effective 10/17/22.
- Motion to acknowledge the resignation of Logan St. Louis effective 10/17/22 was made by Selectmen Matthews and seconded by Selectmen Zager.
  - Vote: was approved in a unanimous roll call vote.
10. Discussion, and vote to confirm committee's makeup and on who to appoint to the Council on Aging/Library Community Building Committee.

The Board discussed the makeup of the committee is three from COA/Senior three from Library, four Members at Large and one Selectmen. They decided to add two alternates who would be able to attend all meetings but would only be able to vote in the absence of other member. Deb Pettey noted we are unable to discuss specific appointments as the interested parties are not listed on the agenda. The appointment of members to this committee will happen at the next meeting.

- Motion to confirm the makeup of the committee will be three from the library, three from the Council on Aging, four members at large, two alternates and one Selectmen was made by Selectmen Matthews and seconded by Selectmen Zager.
- Vote: was approved in a unanimous roll call vote.

11. Discussion, and vote on whether to appoint Brenda Motta to the Council on Aging Board effective 10/24/22-6/30/25.

- Motion to appoint Brenda Motta to the Council on Aging Board effective 10/24/22-6/30/25 was made by Selectmen Matthews and seconded by Selectmen Zager.
- Vote: was approved n a unanimous roll call vote.

12. Discussion, and vote on whether to appoint James M. O'Leary as a Board of Registrar effective 11/1/22-3/31/25.

- Motion to appoint James M. O'Leary as a Board of Registrar effective 11/1/22-3/31/25 was made by Selectmen Matthews and seconded by Selectmen Zager.

13. Interview with final candidate Matt Parent, for Town Accountant position.

Personnel Chair Lopes asked:

Tell us a little bit about yourself. Mr. Parent noted that he is an accounting consultant senior accountant role, does a lot of monthly entries, works with department heads to finish projects. Previously was an accountant in an interim controller position. He noted he has a lot of experience in managing small teams.

Selectman Matthews asked if he lived in town. Mr. Parent stated yes, in fact he lives right across the street from Town Hall.

Selectmen Lopes noted Matt does not have municipal experience but has a very solid accounting background. He asked what makes you interested in being the Town Accountant? Mr. Parent said he likes helping people and having grown up in Freetown serving his community is appealing to him. His professional experience lines up with the job description and he is up to the challenge to learn any pieces he currently does not possess.

Selectmen Lopes asked if Mr. parent is looking to work for the Town long-term? Mr. Parent answered, yes and noted this was an opportunity that he was personally and professionally interested in. He believes it will provide him with an opportunity for personal & professional growth and he is looking to be in the position long-term.

Selectmen Matthews asked do you have your CPA and if not, are you interested in going down that path in the future? Mr. Parent said no, as due to COVID this was delayed but he is very interested in obtaining his CPA. He noted continuing education is important to him. Deb Pettey noted that the first courses for the municipal accountant required certification classes will be in March and Mr. Parent would be expected to attend.

Selectmen Zager asked do you find yourself good at working with people and different personalities and conflict. Mr. Parent said he has an even personality leaning towards shy but for the most part he gets along with everybody and has not had any issues in the past. He does like to work with people who are talkative but enjoys working with people of all types.

Selectmen Matthews noted you need to know how all the finances of the town work and noted that there is a lot of public speaking on budget at meetings and town meetings in front of the public and would be seated on the stage.

Selectmen Lopes noted the hiring team, the current town accountant and the staff from offices he would interact with on a regular basis, and everyone got along very well.

Selectmen Lopes asked do you have any questions for us? Mr. Parent asked what the Board would recommend for him to do in preparation for this new role? Selectmen Matthews suggested searching online for classes on municipal accounting, getting familiar with the town's budget. Deb Pettey noted we will get him a budget book if the Board decides to move forward with Mr. Parent's appointment.

Selectmen Zager suggested to go through the budget books and note down all your questions/concerns and will be able to get all the answers.

Deb Pettey noted the current Town Accountant has agreed to stay on for awhile to assist in training the new hire.

#### **Board of Parks Commission**

Discussion/possible action on the following topics:

- No topics for discussion

#### **Town Administrator's Report**

Discussion/possible action on the following topics:

##### **14. Update on radio communications**

Police Chief Carlton Abbott noted that we are awaiting the results of the microwave study. Once we have that information it needs to be incorporated into the lease agreements to avoid the lesser from changing your height later. Then we will need some engineering reports to ensure the towers can support the load of the equipment, need building permits and Deb Pettey and Chief will review agreements and bring suggestions back to the Board. Selectmen Matthews asked how long were the leases? Chief Abbott said he did not know. The Board noted they would like to have the longest lease possible. Chief Abbott said after this is done all equipment need to be programmed and then transfer from old to new radios and install in animal control and highway dept. vehicles as well. Selectmen Zager noted that the equipment would be stored in the base of the Berkley tower. Chief Abbott confirmed this was correct and the tower in E. Freetown need to purchase a storage area for the equipment there and both will allow access to backup generators for emergency power when needed. Deb Pettey noted that she was also working on potential grant to bring Fiber with TMLP to Town which may also help with this. Chief Abbott noted it should be complete in the spring.

#### **Old Business:**

Potential discussion on pending items – action will not be taken at this meeting:

#### **Public Input**

The Board signed various meeting related documents.

- Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Selectmen Zager and seconded by Selectmen Lopes at 6:58pm.
- Vote: was approved in a unanimous roll call vote.

Respectfully submitted  
Lu-Ann Souza  
Executive Assistant

List of Exhibits/Documents utilized by the Board during this meeting:

- Agenda
- Minutes from 10/18/22
- Nov-Jan calendars showing holidays
- Bid Tabulation – Water Meters
- Bids from companies for Water Meters
- Agreement between the Town of Freetown and Baystate Winsupply
- Resignation letter from Signal Operator St. Louis
- List of interested parties for COA/Library Community Building Committee
- Letter of recommendation and appointment slip for Brenda Motta
- Letter of recommendation and appointment slip for James O’Leary
- Matt Parent resume, interview question