

Freetown Board of Selectmen  
Meeting Minutes

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2023 JAN 24 AM 10:12

Tuesday, January 10, 2023 – 6:30pm  
Police Station Community Room  
15 Memorial Drive, East Freetown, MA

**Call to Order**

Selectmen Matthews called the meeting to order at 6:00pm. He noted the meeting was being recorded and would be on the Town's YouTube channel. Selectmen Zager, Town Clerk Cheryl Estrella, Assistant Town Clerk Timm McIntosh, Fire Chief Ashley and Executive Assistant Lu-Ann Souza were also present. Selectmen Lopes was not in attendance.

**Board of Selectmen**

Discussion/possible action on the following topics:

1. Discussion, and vote on whether to approve the meeting minutes from 1/3/23.
  - Motion to approve the meeting minutes from 1/3/23 was made by Selectmen Zager and seconded by Selectmen Matthews
  - Vote: was approved in a unanimous roll call vote
2. Discussion, and vote on setting the Annual Town Meeting & Special Town Meeting date/time and place.

Selectmen Matthews noted the date for the Annual/Special Town Meeting was 6/5/23, 7pm at the Apponequet High School. He asked if the Apponequet High School had been confirmed. Ms. Souza said the school had confirmed the reservation today.

- Motion to approve 6/5/23 7pm for the Special and Annual Town Meeting at the Apponequet High School 100 Howland Road, Lakeville, MA was made by Selectmen Zager and seconded by Selectmen Matthews
  - Vote: was approved in a unanimous roll call vote
3. Discussion, and vote on whether to approve the Annual Town Meeting & Special Town Meeting timeline.

Selectmen read the timeline proposed for the Annual & Special Town Meeting.

- Motion to approve the Annual Town Meeting & Special Town Meeting timeline was made by Selectmen Zager and seconded by Selectmen Matthews
- Vote: was approved in a unanimous roll call vote

4. Discussion regarding the status of South Main Street Bridge.

There was a brief discussion about the current state of the South Main Street Bridge. Deb Pettey noted she was bringing this to the Board's attention as repairs will be needed and she would suggest putting away monies for this purpose. She also noted that the Town didn't own land

adjacent to the bridge to make it wider to meet State regulations and that not being able to meet the regulations State monies wouldn't be available. Ms. Pettey noted that the plan would most likely be to build an overlay on top of the bridge which would increase its overall height but would be the best option. The Board thanked Ms. Pettey for bringing this to their attention.

5. Discussion and vote on moving forward with Fire Station addition/renovation.

Deb Pettey walked the Board through the six different schemes presented by Architectural Consulting Group and both she and Chief Ashley agreed that Scheme six (6) would be the best fit and recommending to move ahead with this option. Scheme six (6) would add an additional bay to keep equipment indoors and out of the elements and a bunk house to accommodate female and male firefighters on the second floor. It was mentioned that they could have this on the second floor without an elevator as in order to be a firefighter one has to meet certain criteria and would need to be able to access a second story area. Ms. Pettey noted that the next step would be to send out a RFQ for an OPM to manage the project.

- Motion to move forward with the Fire Station addition/renovation was made by Selectmen Zager and seconded by Selectmen Matthews
- Vote: was approved in a unanimous roll call vote

6. Discussion, and vote on whether to accept the donation from the Tuesday Club to the Council on Aging in the amount of One Hundred Dollars.

Selectmen Matthews asked what the spending plan for this donation. Lu-Ann Souza let him know the COA Director noted this donation was to help a needy family.

- Motion to accept the donation from the Tuesday Club to the Council on Aging in the amount of One Hundred Dollars was made by Selectmen Zager and seconded by Selectmen Matthews.
- Vote: was approved in a unanimous roll call vote

7. To discuss and vote as to whether to use \$350,000 of Bristol County ARPA funds to purchase the updated public safety radio equipment.

Interim Town Administrator Pettey noted that we have monies set aside to cover this cost through Town Meeting. However, she saw other communities utilizing their ARPA funds for this purpose and she recommends Freetown does the same and then repurpose monies from town meeting if needed.

- Motion to \$350,000 of Bristol County ARPA funds to purchase the updated public safety radio equipment was made by Selectmen Zager and seconded by Selectmen Matthews.
- Vote: was approved in a unanimous roll call vote

8. Presentation from Town Clerk on Annual Local Town Election.

The Town Clerk presented a PowerPoint presentation the preparations for the Annual Town Election on April 3, 2023. She explained that interested registered voters could pick up

nomination papers in the Town Clerks office 1/3/23-2/9/23 and completed forms must be returned by 2/13/23 at 5pm for the following available positions; Board of Selectmen & Personnel Board, Board of Health (3 openings one for 1 year, one for 2 years and one for 3 years), Board of Assessors, Cemetery Commission, Finance Committee, Housing Authority (2 openings), Library Trustees, Planning Board, Water & Sewer Commission, and Regional School District Committee. The Town Clerk also noted that the final day to register to vote in the 4/3/23 election is 3/24/23 and her office would be open until 5pm that day. Ms. Estrella noted the polls will be open 12pm-8pm on 4/3/23 at the Freetown Elementary school.

### **Personnel Board**

Discussion/possible action on the following topics:

9. Acknowledge the resignation of Rob Jose from the Building Committee effective 1/3/23.

Selectmen Matthews thanked Mr. Jose for his lengthy service to the community.

- Motion to acknowledge the resignation of Rob Jose from the Building Committee effective 1/3/23 was made by Selectmen Zager and seconded by Selectmen Matthews.
- Vote: was approved in a unanimous roll call vote

10. Swearing in of Timmothy J. McIntosh as Assistant Town Clerk effective 1/1/23-6/30/23.

Town Clerk Cheryl Estrella invited Timmothy J. McIntosh to the podium and sworn him in as the new Assistant Town Clerk.

### **Board of Health**

Discussion/possible action on the following topics:

- No topics for discussion

### **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:

### **Public Hearing 7pm**

Selectmen Matthews opened the public hearing at 7:00pm and read the public hearing notice below:

Notice is hereby given that the Town of Freetown Board of Selectmen will hold a public hearing to consider opting out of vote by mail for the Municipal Town Election scheduled for Monday, April 3, 2023.

Said hearing will occur on Tuesday, January 10, 2023 at 7:00pm at the Police Department Community Room 15 Memorial Drive, East Freetown, MA 02717 during the Board of Selectmen meeting.

Said hearing will begin at 7:00pm and continue until completion and will be conducted pursuant to the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 54, Section 25B (a)(1).

Freetown Board of Selectmen  
Trevor R. Matthews, Chairman  
Jared C. Zager  
Carlos A. Lopes  
December 7, 2022

Town Clerk Cheryl Estrella presented a PowerPoint presentation on the features, benefits, and extra workload due to Vote by Mail option. Ms. Estrella noted that vote by mail is not required for local elections and she had met with the Board of Registrars who voted to not have the vote by mail option for the 4/3/23 election. She noted the cost to facilitate vote by mail is \$21,550. This figure is on top of the \$12,060 that the regular election costs. Town Clerk Estrella stressed that the absentee ballot option is still available so registered voters can request that type of ballot or come into the Town Hall once the ballots are available and cast their vote early at Town Hall.

Selectmen Matthews noted he didn't want to limit anyone's participation in voting and noted that since registered voters can request an absentee ballot that should make it so that every interested voter has access to voting. The Town Clerk agreed. Selectmen Zager noted that he agreed as well.

Selectmen Matthews closed the public hearing at 7:25pm

11. Discussion, and vote whether to Pursuant to MGL Chapter 54 § 25B(a)(1)/VOTES Act of 2022 regarding the option to opt out of vote by mail for the Annual Local Town Election scheduled for Monday April 3, 2023.
- Motion Pursuant to MGL Chapter 54 § 25B(a)(1)/VOTES Act of 2022 regarding the option to opt out of vote by mail for the Annual Local Town Election scheduled for Monday April 3, 2023 was made by Selectmen Zager and seconded by Selectmen Matthews.
- Vote: was approved in a unanimous roll call vote
- Vote: Selectmen Zager – yes, Selectmen Matthews - yes

#### **Old Business:**

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

- Town Buildings

#### **ARPA**

#### **Public Input**

Selectmen Matthews noted the Board would now sign documents associated with this evening's meeting.

- Motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:40pm was made by Selectmen Zager, Selectmen Matthews seconded the motion.
- Vote: was approved in a unanimous roll call vote

Respectfully Submitted,  
Lu-Ann Souza  
Executive Assistant

List of documents/exhibits utilized by the Board in this meeting:

- Agenda
- Minutes from 1/3/23
- Annual/Special Town Meeting Memo for timeline
- Inspection Report from 10/14/2020 on S. Main Street Bridge
- Photos of conditions underneath S. Main Street Bridge
- Schemes 1-6 Fire Station Renovation/Addition
- Email from Lu-Ann Souza re: donation from Tuesday Club
- PowerPoint presentations from Town Clerk on:
  - o Preparations for the Annual Town Election
  - o Vote by mail information & process vote by mail cost
- Letter of resignation Rob Jose
- Certificate of Appointment – Timmothy J. McIntosh
- Public Notice of hearing re: Vote by mail for 4/3/23 election
- Memo from Town Clerk re: Annual Town Election
- Board of Registrars letter on opting out of vote by mail for the 4/3/23 election