

Freetown Board of Selectmen  
Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, March 8, 2023 – 6:30pm  
Police Station Community Room  
15 Memorial Drive, East Freetown, MA

RECEIVED  
FREETOWN BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
2023 MAR 21 AM 11:42

### Call to Order

This meeting was called to order by Selectmen Trevor Matthews at 6:30pm, and will be recorded and will be available on our Town's YouTube page. Selectmen Trevor stated he has joined the call remotely due to illness. We will be going into Executive Session and then returning back to open session. We will be going to Executive Session for the following two reasons below. Also in attendance is Selectmen Jared Zager, Selection Carlos Lopes, Interim Town Administrator Deb Pettey, Executive Assistant Lu-Ann Souza and Administrative Assistant Lola Furtado.

- Motion to enter Executive Session made by Selectmen Zager and seconded by Selectmen Lopes
- 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 collective bargaining with **Public Employees Union, Local 1144 LIUNA (all bargaining units), the Freetown Police Association and the Freetown Full-Time Firefighters 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)(2) – to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with non-union personnel.
- Motion to adjourn Executive Session at 7:05pm and to return to Open Session was made by Selectmen Zager and seconded by Selectmen Lopes
  - Vote: was approved in a unanimous roll call vote
  - Vote: Selectmen Lopes - yes, Selectmen Zager – yes, Selectmen Matthews - yes

### Board of Selectmen

Discussion/possible action on the following topics:

In Attendance are Victoria D'Antoni, Lynn Furtado, Linda Fournier, Jeff Amaral, Margaret French, and Steve Tripp.

3. Discussion, and vote on whether to approve, not release the Executive Session minutes from 2/6/23.
- Motion to approve, not release the Executive Session minutes from 2/6/23 made by Selectmen Zager and seconded by Selectmen Lopes.
  - Vote: was approved in a unanimous roll call vote
  - Vote: Selectmen Lopes - yes, Selectmen Zager – yes, Selectmen Matthews - yes

4. Discussion, and vote on whether to approved the open session minutes from 2/6/23 & 2/17/23.
  - Motion to approve the open session minutes from 2/6/23 & 2/17/23 made by Selectmen Zager and seconded by Selectmen Lopes
  - Vote: was approved in a unanimous roll call vote
  - Vote: Selectmen Lopes - yes, Selectmen Zager – yes, Selectmen Matthews - yes

5. Discussion and Vote on Procedures for Reserve Fund Transfers.

Margaret French, Chair of the Finance Committee, stated the reserve fund is a finance committee budget. When any department requests a transfer from the reserve fund it is the finance committee's money to transfer or not. They know you want to know what is going on with the budget and they do agree, but they feel that you, the Board, do not need to actually vote on it. Ms. Pettey stated the reserve fund transfer procedures is when we get a request from department heads, we have to bring it to the Selectmen for approval, then it has to go to the finance committee for approval and the process can take four to six weeks. Sometimes we cannot pay bill because we do not have the reserve fund transfer. There is no bylaw or statute that requires the Selectmen have to approve the reserve fund transfers. In the past they wanted to see them, but the Board really do not need to approve them. Finance Committee has a budget of One Hundred and Seventy-Five Thousand Dollars in reserve fund transfers and from experience, they vet them very well. Selectmen Matthews stated he relies on the Finance Committee to make the decisions. The Board will still get copies of them.

- Motion to approve the updated procedures as presented for Reserve Fund Transfers made by Selectmen Zager and seconded by Selectmen Lopes
  - Vote: was approved in a unanimous roll call vote
  - Vote: Selectmen Lopes - yes, Selectmen Zager – yes, Selectmen Matthews - yes
6. Discussion, and vote on whether to approve the Ambulance Write Offs & Abatements for January 2023 in the amount of \$121,384.79.
    - Motion to approve the Ambulance Write Offs & Abatements for January 2023 in the amount of \$121,384.79 made by Selectmen Zager and seconded by Selectmen Lopes
    - Vote: was approved in a unanimous roll call vote
    - Vote: Selectmen Lopes - yes, Selectmen Zager – yes, Selectmen Matthews - yes
  7. Discussion, and vote on whether to approve the list from COA Director of Senior Work off approved candidates for 2023.
    - Motion to approve the list from COA Director of Senior Work off approved candidates for 2023 made by Selectmen Zager and seconded by Selectmen Lopes
    - Vote: was approved in a unanimous roll call vote
    - Vote: Selectmen Lopes - yes, Selectmen Zager – yes, Selectmen Matthews - yes
  8. Discussion, and vote on whether to apply for Fiber Grant for municipal buildings.

This is related to the Police and Fire Stations needing fiber optics because of the extremely slow uploads speeds they have. Ms. Pettey stated this is two separate things. There is a fiber grant that will allow us to connect all of the municipal buildings together, Police, Fire, Town Hall and

others to the two communication towers. The transfer station is out of the loop because it would be too far and too expensive. The grant is for Two Hundred and Fifty Thousand Dollars. The reason for her asking the permission to apply for the grant is we would own the fiber optics. If a tree fell and broke the line, we would be responsible to fix it. The benefits are, we will only need one internet service and it would supply internet to all of the buildings. Currently we are paying Three Hundred Dollars to Six Hundred Dollars for each Fire Station, Transfer Station, Town Hall, COA, and the Highway Barn. The Police Station is another matter. By getting the Fiber Grant and connecting all the buildings by fiber, we would only have one internet service that will be superfast. Ms. Pettey has asked for 24 strands of fibers instead of 12 so that if, in fact, we were going to supply fiber to the residents it would already be there. This is not something as a town we want to entertain at this point because that would mean we would manage the fiber like Comcast manages and we are not in the position to do that. We are looking at saving the Town Two Thousand Dollars a month. Ultimately there may be some maintenance costs down the line. Selectmen Matthews stated the savings would potentially pay for any repair fees. Verizon owns our poles and will allow us to put them on the poles with out a charge.

- Motion to apply for Fiber Grant for municipal buildings made by Selectmen Zager and seconded by Selectmen Lopes
- Vote: was approved in a unanimous roll call vote
- Vote: Selectmen Lopes - yes, Selectmen Zager – yes, Selectmen Matthews - yes

9. Discussion, and vote on whether to approve the agreement between The Town of Freetown and Comcast for fiber delivered internet/IMC Fire Integration.

There is a problem about upload speeds. The Police Station is wired with fiber. The Fire Station has the problem and this will fix the problem. Officer TJ Ashley has done his homework and Ms. Pettey was working with him with the negotiations of the contract. We really need this for the Fire Station integration. Selectmen Matthews stated we were to get a 60-month quote, but we can not enter into a contract that long without getting a two-third majority at town meeting. The risk is that it might not get approved and will delay everything. So, we ended up getting a 36-month quote which is a little bit more money but now hearing about this grant, we do not want to be locked into a long-term contract if there is a different approach we can take where we are paying for one internet fee for the whole town. The current bill is around Twelve Hundred Dollars a month and using the coax and going to the super high-speed fiber it will go up about One Hundred Dollars a month. The build out and construction cost required for all this will be covered by Comcast.

- Motion to approve the agreement between The Town of Freetown and Comcast for fiber delivered internet/IMC Fire Integration made by Selectmen Zager and seconded by Selectmen Lopes
- Vote: was approved in a unanimous roll call vote
- Vote: Selectmen Lopes - yes, Selectmen Zager – yes, Selectmen Matthews - yes

10. Discussion, and vote on whether to approve the agreement between the Town of Freetown and Greenman-Pedersen, Inc. (GPI) for grant funded pedestrian crossing on Memorial Drive between the Freetown Elementary School and Freetown Central Park.

Selectmen Lopes had some concerns about where the crosswalks would be and if we will get any use out of it. Ms. Pettey stated this was Mass DOT funded and we have to make it handicap accessible. The goal was to make it accessible for anyone. We also received the Safe Route to School Grant that is going to pay for a shared use path the whole length of Memorial Drive. The Grant was for Sixty-One Thousand Dollars. They will pay a portion of the engineering, and Ms. Pettey will be paying Two Thousand Dollars out of the Administration budget.

- Motion to approve the agreement between the Town of Freetown and Greenman-Pedersen, Inc. (GPI) for grant funded pedestrian crossing on Memorial Drive between the Freetown Elementary School and Freetown Central Park by Selectmen Zager and seconded by Selectmen Lopes
  - Vote: was approved in a unanimous roll call vote
  - Vote: Selectmen Lopes - yes, Selectmen Zager – yes, Selectmen Matthews - yes
11. Discussion, and vote on whether to approve the application from Rock Hard Racing to host the annual Mix Tape Cycling event on 4/16/23.
- Motion to approve the application from Rock Hard Racing to host the annual Mix Tape Cycling event on 4/16/23 made by Selectmen Zager and seconded by Selectmen Lopes
  - Vote: was approved in a unanimous roll call vote
  - Vote: Selectmen Lopes - yes, Selectmen Zager – yes, Selectmen Matthews - yes
12. Discussion, and vote whether to approve the Conservation Commission purchase of 0 Rear Keene Road, Map 245 Lot 65 using available funds in the Conservation Land Fund.

Ms. Pettey suggested our Town Counsel look over the deed and we run a title search as well.

- Motion to approve the Conservation Commission purchase of 0 Rear Keene Road, Map 245 Lot 65 using available funds in the Conservation Land Fund pending Town Counsel approval of the transaction made by Selectmen Zager and seconded by Selectmen Matthews
  - Vote: was approved in a unanimous roll call vote
  - Vote: Selectmen Lopes - yes, Selectmen Zager – yes, Selectmen Matthews - yes
13. Discussion, and vote on whether to establish, approve the charge and makeup for the Master Plan Committee.
- Motion to establish and approve the charge and makeup for the Master Plan Committee made by Selectmen Zager and seconded by Selectmen Lopes
  - Vote: was approved in a unanimous roll call vote
  - Vote: Selectmen Lopes - yes, Selectmen Zager – yes, Selectmen Matthews - yes
14. Discussion, and vote whether to approve the Interim Town Administrator to sign SRPEDD Master Plan Contract.
- Motion to approve the Interim Town Administrator to sign SRPEDD Master Plan Contract made by Selectmen Zager and seconded by Selectmen Lopes
  - Vote: was approved in a unanimous roll call vote
  - Vote: Selectmen Lopes - yes, Selectmen Zager – yes, Selectmen Matthews - yes
15. Discussion, and vote whether to grant permission to Plymouth County Mosquito Control the use of Freetown’s airspace for arial spraying project.

- Motion to grant permission to Plymouth County Mosquito Control the use of Freetown's airspace for arial spraying project made by Selectmen Zager and seconded by Selectmen Lopes
- Vote: was approved in a unanimous roll call vote
- Vote: Selectmen Lopes - yes, Selectmen Zager – yes, Selectmen Matthews - yes

16. Discussion, and vote whether to authorize the Interim Town Administrator to sign letter authorizing Plymouth County Mosquito Control to use Freetown's airspace for arial spraying project.

- Motion to authorize the Interim Town Administrator to sign letter authorizing Plymouth County Mosquito Control to use Freetown's airspace for arial spraying project made by Selectmen Zager and seconded by Selectmen Lopes
- Vote: was approved in a unanimous roll call vote
- Vote: Selectmen Lopes - yes, Selectmen Zager – yes, Selectmen Matthews - yes

17. Discussion, and vote on whether to approve the April 3, 2023 Annual Local Town Election Warrant.

Selectmen Matthews was concerned about the Bristol Plymouth Regional Technical School debt exclusion question. Ms. Pettey stated she has reached out to Town Council for their opinion on the wording, again. She also asked the Board if they wished to do a post card or advertising of any kind. Rehoboth has not voted us in yet, therefore it has not been approved to let us join. We could come up with a figure to let people know but it will fluctuate year to year. We currently have a debt exclusion coming up for Sixty Thousand Dollars a year, that would be falling off in fiscal year 2024. If we are in the district by then and one debt falls off and the new one will pick up and continue. We can have something to hand out at the meeting explaining it. Ms. Pettey will talk to Cheryl Estrella about it. We will put it on Facebook as well.

- Motion to approve the April 3, 2023 Annual Local Town Election Warrant Selectmen Zager and seconded by Selectmen Lopes
- Vote: was approved in a unanimous roll call vote
- Vote: Selectmen Lopes - yes, Selectmen Zager – yes, Selectmen Matthews - yes

18. Discussion, and vote on whether to approved the engagement letter for audit services from Roselli, Clark & Associates effective for years ending 6/30/23-6/30/25.

Ms. Pettey stated it is the same firm we have used before. Selectmen Matthews stated the amounts are Twenty-Two Thousand for year 2023, Twenty-Two Thousand and Five Hundred in year 2024 and Twenty-Three Thousand in year 2025.

- Motion to approve the engagement letter for audit services from Roselli, Clark & Associates effective for years ending 6/30/23-6/30/25 made by Selectmen Zager and seconded by Selectmen Lopes
- Vote: was approved in a unanimous roll call vote
- Vote: Selectmen Lopes - yes, Selectmen Zager – yes, Selectmen Matthews - yes

## **Board of Health**

Discussion/possible action on the following topics:

- No topics for discussion

## **Personnel Board**

Discussion/possible action on the following topics:

19. Accept the resignation of Donald B. Bullock as Constable effective 3/1/2023.
  - Motion to Accept the resignation of Donald B. Bullock as Constable effective 3/1/2023 made by Selectman Zager and seconded by Selectmen Matthews
  - Vote: was approved in a unanimous roll call vote
  - Vote: Selectmen Lopes - yes, Selectmen Zager – yes, Selectmen Matthews - yes
20. Discussion, and vote whether to approve the appointment of Steve Tripp as Associate Member of the Planning Board effective 2/7/23-6/30/25.
  - Motion to approve the appointment of Steve Tripp as Associate Member of the Planning Board effective 2/7/23-6/30/25 made by Selectmen Zager and seconded by Selectmen Matthews
  - Vote: was approved in a unanimous roll call vote
  - Vote: Selectmen Lopes - yes, Selectmen Zager – yes, Selectmen Matthews – yes
21. Discussion, and vote whether to move forward with the Flexible Spending Account Plan.
  - Motion to move forward with the Flexible Spending Account Plan as discussed made by Selectmen Zager and seconded by Selectmen Matthews
  - Vote: was approved in a unanimous roll call vote
  - Vote: Selectmen Lopes - yes, Selectmen Zager – yes, Selectmen Matthews - yes
22. Discussion, and vote on whether to approve the MOA between The Town of Freetown and Public Employees Union Local 272 LIUNA.
  - Motion to approve the MOA between The Town of Freetown and Public Employees Union Local 272 LIUNA made by Selectmen Zager and seconded by Selectmen Matthews
  - Vote: was approved in a unanimous roll call vote
  - Vote: Selectmen Lopes - yes, Selectmen Zager – yes, Selectmen Matthews - yes
23. Discussion, and vote to approve the combined Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Town of Freetown and Freetown Employees' Association/Public Employees Union Local 272 of the Laborers' International Union of North America AFL-CIO effective 7/1/21-6/30/24.
  - Motion to approve the combined Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Town of Freetown and Freetown Employees' Association/Public Employees Union Local 272 of the Laborers' International Union of North America AFL-CIO effective 7/1/21-6/30/24 made by Selectmen Zager and seconded by Selectmen Matthews
  - Vote: was approved in a unanimous roll call vote
  - Vote: Selectmen Lopes - yes, Selectmen Zager – yes, Selectmen Matthews - yes
24. Discussion, and vote whether to approve and sign the combined Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Town of Freetown and Freetown Full-Time Firefighters Association effective 7/1/21-6/30/24.
  - Motion to approve and sign the combined Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Town of Freetown and Freetown Full-Time Firefighters Association effective 7/1/21-6/30/24 made by Selectmen Zager and seconded by Selectmen Lopes

- Vote: was approved in a unanimous roll call vote
  - Vote: Selectmen Lopes - yes, Selectmen Zager – yes, Selectmen Matthews - yes
25. Discussion, and vote on whether to approve the Animal Control Officers job description.
- Motion to approve the Animal Control Officers job description made by Selectmen Zager and seconded by Selectmen Matthews
  - Vote: was approved in a unanimous roll call vote
  - Vote: Selectmen Lopes - yes, Selectmen Zager – yes, Selectmen Matthews - yes

### **Board of Parks Commission**

Discussion/possible action on the following topics:

26. Discussion, and vote on letter of support for the Open Space Plan requested by the Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee.
- Motion to approve the letter of support for the Open Space Plan requested by the Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee made by Selectmen Zager and seconded by Selectmen Matthews
  - Vote: was approved in a unanimous roll call vote
  - Vote: Selectmen Lopes - yes, Selectmen Zager – yes, Selectmen Matthews - yes
27. Discussion, and vote on whether to approve and support the Earth Day clean-up project on 4/22/23.
- Motion to approve and support the Earth Day clean-up project on 4/22/23 made by Selectmen Zager and seconded by Selectmen Matthews
  - Vote: was approved in a unanimous roll call vote
  - Vote: Selectmen Lopes - yes, Selectmen Matthews – yes, Selectmen Zager - yes
28. Discussion, and vote on whether to accept the donation from Stop & Shop in the amount of \$1,000.00 for support of Earth Day event.
- Motion to accept the donation from Stop & Shop in the amount of \$1,000.00 for support of Earth Day event made by Selectmen Zager and seconded by Selectmen Matthews
  - Vote: was approved in a unanimous roll call vote
  - Vote: Selectmen Lopes - yes, Selectmen Zager – yes, Selectmen Matthews - yes

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

Discussion/possible action on the following topics:

29. Discuss updating bathrooms at Town Hall.
- Ms. Pettey stated the bathrooms at the Town Hall are not handicap accessible. When she had the engineer at the Town Hall working on feasibility studies, she had them take a look and he presented a plan of how we could. We would take out the closet in the Assessors office and maybe a wall where the bubbler is if you recall when you walk in the Town Hall and make new bathrooms that would be handicap accessible. The projected cost is about Ninety Thousand Dollars. He said that was the high end but don't forget we have asbestos in the floor there. She didn't know what the Selectmen's thoughts might be on this project. She did talk to Carl Bizarro about this and he wondered why wouldn't we add to the side of the building which is a whole other project and a lot more money. While working on the budget every year, I put in projects that I think we should do for the town buildings and this one I didn't want to just put it in there. I

wanted to ask what your thoughts were because it is not an inexpensive project. No matter what we do with that building, long term, the bathrooms need to be updated. I don't know when the last time they were done. Selectmen Zager asked if there were any other concerns like lead. Ms. Pettey thinks the pipes are in good shape. She would do more vetting. Selectmen Matthews stated its crazy that our in our main public buildings our bathrooms are not handicap accessible. Ms. Pettey stated they are barely accessible for non-handicapped people. Selectmen Lopes stated as a person with disabilities I am all for handicap accessibility. Can we widen the door at a stall, add some grab bars? It does need refreshing. We just don't have the room to do that with in those confines. The library is also using our bathrooms, along with the Police during their routes using them at night. Selectmen Matthews stated it is not a no from me. What would we do if we hired someone in a wheel chair bound? Ms. Pettey stated we would be forced to do it immediately. Selectmen Lopes is all for the bathroom, it's a basic necessity for any town building. Is there any way and we can ask Carl, because he knows employees currently using the bathrooms to clean their dishes and everything else which is unacceptable in so many levels. Is there a way to put in sink somewhere? Maybe a microwave. Ms. Pettey said she would talk to Carl and thinks we would need the Assessors office for a little bit more room. She will keep looking into this. Also, she mentioned on how today was, due to people paying taxes and how the parking situation was absolutely horrendous. People were pulling in looking for a parking spot and having to pull out, people beeping their horns, people parking on both sides of the street, blocking the handicap ramp. It is not conducive to business; it is bad for the residents and it is not safe. There was a solution, but it got voted down. The annex at the bank would have mitigated all this. Residents can pay taxes on line but there is a fee and the higher the bill the higher the fee. Selectmen Lopes would like to look at that some more. Ms. Pettey will ask Patty Rodrick to look into it.

**Old Business:**

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

- Town Buildings

**Public Input**

The Board would now sign documents associated with this evening's meeting.

- Motion to adjourn at 8:22pm made by Selectmen Zager and seconded by Selectmen Lopes
- Vote: was approved in a unanimous roll call vote
- Selectmen Lopes - yes, Selectmen Zager - yes, Selectmen Mathews - yes

Respectfully submitted,



Lola Furtado

Administrative Assistant



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

- Agenda
- Questions for interview COA
- Rebecca Frias application packet
- Memo from Town Clerk election officials pay
- Appointment slips:
  - o Jeffrey Amaral – Community Program Director
  - o Carlos Lopes – Parade and Fireworks Committee
  - o Master Plan Committee (appt slip/letters to join)
    - Gregory Goodwin
    - Keith Mello
    - Nick Velozo
    - Patricia Kelleher-Parker
    - David Crose
  - Ronnie Frates – Heavy Equipment Operator
- Policies for Board approval
  - o Equal Emp Opp, Discrimination and Sexual Harassment Policy
  - o Code of Conduct
  - o Workplace Violence
- Memo donation to COA
- 4 S Main Street photos of condition & property card
- Letter from Sun Property Group – town owned land on Braley Rd.
- Property card 0 Crapo & o Sprague
- Ambulance abatements and write offs Feb 2023
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