

Freetown Board of Selectmen
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 18, 2023 – 6:00pm
Police Station Community Room
15 Memorial Drive, East Freetown, MA
meeting in person and on Zoom

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2023 MAY 16 PM 12:22

Call to Order

Selectmen Trevor Matthews call to order the Freetown Board of Selectmen meeting at 6:00pm and read the following Governors order. Selectmen Jared Zager, Selectmen Carlos Lopes, Interim Town Administrator Deb Pettey and Executive Assistant Lu-Ann Souza are also present.

The meeting will be available for in person attendance and on Zoom – On March 29, 2023 Governor Healey signed into law Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023 which, among other things, extends the expiration of the provisions pertaining to Open Meeting Law to March 31, 2025. Specifically, this extension allows public bodies to continue holding meetings remotely without a quorum of the public body physically present at a meeting location, and to provide “adequate, alternative” access to remote meetings. This meeting of the Freetown Board of Selectmen will be conducted in person as well via remote participation to the greatest extent possible. Specific information and general guidelines for remote participation by members of the public can be found on the Town of Freetown’s website, freetownma.gov

For this meeting, members of the public who wish to listen to the meeting may do so in the following manner: downloading Zoom and entering the meeting ID below, calling the number listed below and entering the Meeting ID listed below, or by going to <https://us02web.zoom.us/join> and entering the Meeting ID listed below.

Although in person attendance is available for this meeting every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings in real time via technological means. In the event that we are unable to do so, despite best efforts, we will post on the Town’s website and YouTube Channel an audio or video recording, transcript. Or other comprehensive record of proceedings as soon as possible after the meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting

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Meeting ID: 889 6782 5479

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Board of Parks Commission

Discussion/possible action on the following topics:

1. Discussion, and vote on the *Proposed Enhancements for Pocasset Park/Freetown Town Beach and Long Pond Landing Report* from Community Program Director.

Newly appointed Community Program Director Jeff Amaral who has also served as the Chair of the Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee has top priorities on preparing for the beach and boat ramp season coming up. Staffing and cleaning up on both sites is needed. His concerns with Pocasset Park / Town Beach are; do we or not staff it. Problems such as parking violations for non-residents and people launching boats, jet skis and other watercrafts out of the area have been issues in the past and not intended use for that area. He will do a study and gather more information. Signage is an issue and ongoing. Policies may need to be updated. Opening day questions. Different organizations using the park and parking lot, church groups, ball fields, parking overflow for sporting events need to be addressed. For safety reasons in, out and around of the water is the launching of watercrafts. It is also an issue and we need to find a way to discourage this. Another concern is the utility shed located there. It has out lived its usefulness. Th building inspector, commissioner and highway surveyor have looked at it and the recommendation is, to have it dismantled. Right now, the doors have been screwed shut. We have received quotes to take it out or we can take it down internally but the issue is getting rid of the debris afterwards. Routine checks with cleanup and cleanliness of the beach area will be under control quickly. We have disposal containers, recycle bins as well as porta-jons coming for both beach and boat ramp first week in May.

Long Pond Landing Boat Ramp has in the past have 2 people staffed together. We would be best served continuing this with having new candidates as well as reappointments from the previous year. Signs for the boat ramp is simpler because of state mandates. Our new signage deals with paying at the kiosk. A new shed has been installed, items for the attendants have been purchased. Cash transactions is now available at the kiosk. Selectmen Matthews asked about the part of the boat ramp that was falling apart last year. Being state-owned and operated by us is a sticky situation. Ms. Souza stated Doug Cameron from the state was sent photos and is aware of the situation. To properly fix that they would have to shut down the boat ramp for a period of time. They are putting it in their queue to get it done at some point and they also want to take care of the bumps in the parking lot. It would need to close during the busy time because most of the materials would need to cure in warm weather. They are also putting in the sliding gate hopefully in May. Selectmen Zager stated about fencing or putting in a gate at the town beach. We would need to make it wide enough for handicap accessible and they will find a way into it no matter what we put there for smaller crafts. Selectmen Lopes mentioned a suggestion that the Open Space Plan had, was to extend the sand out and maybe put a volley ball court in the middle to deter people from carry the crafts thru and over to the beach. Anything we put there may or may not deter them anyway. Selectmen Matthews mentioned when they discussed putting cameras in. But then who would monitor the cameras and be responsible for them. They thanked Jeff for doing a great job so far.

2. Discussion and vote on existing lease with Freetown Lakeville Athletic Association (FLAA), and Sub-Lease with Apponequet Junior Football, Inc. (AJFC).

Jonathan Watkins, Vice President of the AJFC Board along with Derek Vincent, Samantha Fourier, Ashley Boucher and Kayla Barrows all Board Members. Selectmen Zager stated that we are willing to open up these leases in order to

try and redefine what we are going to do with all the sport spaces. The leases are with Freetown Lakeville Athletic Association and Apponequet Junior Football, Inc. He asked the FLAA if they are willing to open up and negotiate what is happening with some of these fields in order to redefine who gets what and how it works out. FLAA President Jacob Robitaille stated yes, we are here to do what is right for our community. Selectmen Zager asked if everyone could have a representative from each group and talk about who they are and what they do, their size and their possible needs and then make a determination with the Board as how to redefine the spaces.

Mr. Robitaille stated under their lease falls Central Park, KRR and Long Pond. Central Park for baseball, Long Pond is used for football and we have one small baseball field there that we use strictly just for practices for rookie and t-ball. At KRR there are four fields, we use the two fields in the front. We work with the softball teams, there is no lease or anything per se, they renovated one of the fields they are using. They are also able to use one of the other fields that we are currently using if needed. The big field in the back does not get used. There are roughly 350 kids and 32 teams this year. 33 teams once Babe Ruth starts later. They utilize Ted Williams and the field that we just redid over at Central Park. We also hold tournaments. The Cal Ripken Program relies on us to host several big tournaments, such as regional championships for both the 12U and 8U divisions so the best teams from New England will gather at our complex middle of July. We have run out of practice facilities so we also use Ted Williams and the field at Assawompsett Elementary School.

Jonathan Watkins for the Apponequet Junior Football Program has about 150 students coming from the tri-town area, starting ages 5 or 6 up to 8th grade. Consists of 4 teams, maybe 5 or 6 depending on changes from the league on the size of our 5th and 6th grade program. We exclusively use Long Pond for practice and games. We are spending about Eleven Thousand Dollars on field maintenance to upkeep the grass. There are 4 home games every season which runs from September to end of October. 4 to 8 games on Saturdays. We are in the Old Colony Youth Football League. Similar to Pop Warner, differences are, that we have weight limits on our players for safety. Selectmen Lopes stated if other teams needed to use the fields, they would reach out to the Boards to see when they are not in use or use in the off season. Selectmen Zager would like to give ownership of certain fields to certain teams, to take pride of your own field. Each having their own lease or area that they can call their home. Ms. Pettey is leaning towards to terminate the lease and issue a series of license agreements to each of the sports, to the best of the Boards ability. Attorney Shirin Everett from KP Law stated the initial terms were 5 years that could be extended for 3 periods of 5 years each with each party's consent. You get to review every 5 years how each team is doing. Plus, the license could be terminated at any time with 60 days' notice to any other party. Selectmen Matthews stated it makes it more flexible. License agreements sounds like a better option then long term leases for all parties involved. It would be needed to set it up into sub-sections so that each sport has their own space.

Freetown Lakeville Soccer Club Vice President John Ricciardi is excited to expand into Freetown again. 25, 30 years ago they actually started in Freetown with agreements from other areas including St. John Neumann Parish. Currently they play only in Lakeville for our game fields. Similar to football we are constantly reserving areas in field space to reseed and irrigation. We support over a thousand players in Freetown and Lakeville and we play all year round with our fall season, recreational program with over 400 players, our spring program starting at the end of this month with 250 players. We offer year-round inter town travel programs. We are part of Southcoast Soccer Program under Mass Youth Soccer. They play towns anywhere from Norton to Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket and we host those teams too at Ted Williams. We are looking to help our Freetown residents have a place here they can call home and play. They are challenged at Ted Williams for space. At one time they reached out to use the large Copeland field at KRR for U14 players but it never happened. They are eager to explore and understand the ownership of the space and the co-ownership of it moving forward. There is quite a bit of capital investment that needs to take place in the fields. Practice space has always been a challenge. Ms. Pettey asked how many of the thousand players are Freetown? We follow along with the Regional School District in around 60 40. Do you pay to use Ted Williams? The Town of Lakeville charges anyone who uses Ted Williams a fee per player. That does not include field maintenance and upkeep. We are responsible for water irrigation and reseeding. Ms. Pettey stated we are not charging fees but you are going to have to put the money into the field.

Lisa McLaughlin from Southcoast Field Hockey Program stated it was \$30.00 a head for field hockey this coming year. She is new and they started last summer with 65 girls' kindergarten through 8th grade. Freetown Lakeville never really offered a field hockey program. They started in middle school, and a few of us from town got together and

finally had some know-how to get up and running. They play at Ted Williams in a small space which is all they had to offer us last year. They would really like to have a full-size field here in town and be able to include high school girls. They had a great turnout and the girls just loved it. We are just looking for space. Field hockey is comparable to a full-size soccer field. The lines are a little different but you can use different colors. Selectmen Lopes stated they reached out to FLAA to share use of the J Copeland Field at KRR which is roughly the same size they were looking for. FLAA didn't use that field and was a good option for them.

Mark Tisdale, President of Freetown Lakeville Youth Softball Association for 5 years. About 6 years ago his daughter joined 8U Freetown Softball with 7 players on the team. He became president and reached out to Lakeville who were in the same situation with 2 teams. A total of 40 players between both towns. They play on the John Paun Fields on Vaughan Street in Lakeville, which has only 3 old softballs fields. We started a non-profit league. We used to have a field at Central Park here in Freetown but it got removed. Our only option is to play in Lakeville. Over the last year, we vetted our concerns with baseball and they allowed us to play on the Magno Field. We received some in-kind donations and put in a lot of work into it. We fertilized and seeded the field. We helped out with the concession stand plumbing and lighting. Cleaned around the flagpole. Doing our part and thanking baseball for allowing us to use the field. Now we have 140 players this spring. We also have a fall program and a travel team option called the Free Lake Flash for girls for a tournament experience. Hopefully softball is starting to rebound here and in Lakeville. They have informed Apponequet that hopefully this will be their last year to have 8th graders try out for the JV team. We have 14 teams. 6 8U teams, 4 10U teams, 3 12U teams and our first senior division team. We are here to get a license or a long-term lease. We are passionate about this and our girls need some equality in town. We want a field in town for Freetown for the foreseeable future. KRR has been great, it has been difficult, Freetown Lakeville is the same thing. We would like a central location in Freetown that makes it useable for both towns. One of the good things about softball fields is it's only 200 feet deep. Magno Field is a regulation softball field and we are vested into it. You could fit 2 of them inside of the big field. Softball fields take up a small footprint compared to baseball fields. We are hoping the lease includes the use of the building in conjunction with baseball and the parking area. I think that would be all rolled into the license. If Long Pond is an option, we would love a central spot for a practice area in Freetown. We are here to stay and growing every year. Anything you can do is greatly appreciated. Football asked what the schedule and timeline for Long Pond? Practices start in April to June, slows down for the summer, then ramps up in August thru October. We are not just football; we are football and cheer. 147 players spread across that area throwing footballs and their schedules collide a bit it will be tough. Mr. Tisdale stated he can appreciate that and hopes the town appreciates our softball girls need a central location. Selectmen Matthews brought up that we have to come up with some type of plan because of overlapping licenses at the same locations. Fairly and safely. Selectmen Zager brought up the issue of parking at Long Pond. The objective of this is to give everyone a little something more. He struggles to think that we are going to find away to do it without trying to do something with the backside of KRR Fields. He thinks something can come out of that area. Selectmen Lopes stated the original plan was to have a commissioner's meeting to discuss with the groups short and long terms to get the needs, wants and a schedule down and a plan in place with all the organizations. Ms. Pettey asked about Long Pond and if football and cheer uses the whole area. Yes, football and cheer use all of Long Pond. And as far as KRR is being used, Copley Field is for t-ball, rookie practice, and minor teams. KRR Field is used for major practices. Everything else is for whoever to do whatever. Copeland Field could be for field hockey. Another question from Ms. Pettey was, if the softball field can go back to Central Park? They said no. That was turned into a slightly bigger field for players 10, 11 and 12 so as not to lose them before they get to the even bigger field. Discussion on Long Pond for softball was discussed for practices and KRR Copley Field. Bases were seen at Long Pond so it looked like baseball can practice there now. They use it strictly for t-ball and rookie practice. There are other challenges because of the football players running. If you put the softball girls there that are cranking the ball a lot further than a t-ball team then it could cross a little bit. A suggest was a dog park and to cut into the hill to provide more space back there. But with more fields comes more people and no more places to park. Was asking the schools for use of there fields an option? The schools would charge for the use and would cancel even if it was a drizzle. They would cancel a game the morning of and it wasn't convenient at all so we opted out of using them. Old Colony would let us use their field for home games but charged \$600.00. Ms. Pettey stated a lot of things have changed because of security of the schools; they don't allow even walking on the premises. She can try to reach out to the superintendent. Dog feces and signage was also brought up for discussion. Selectmen Lopes

stated the Animal Control Officer has been working on signage for the parks. Chemicals for the grass is being laid next week and the coaches would like to get the word out about it to keep people and pets away from the fields.

- Motion to have Selectmen Zager as a Board Parks Commission Chair negotiate license agreements with each of the youth's sports leagues leadership made by Selectmen Matthews and seconded by Selectmen Lopes
- Vote: was approved in a unanimous roll call vote
- Vote: Selectmen Lopes – yes, Selectmen Matthews – yes

3. Discussion, regarding potential expansion of sports use at the Town own fields and parks.

President Chris Whitney asked about the expansion of land at Long Pond for more parking. The Highway Department cut it back about 60 feet. They would like to know if they can go the other way on the left side and around the corner more. To see if there is another option or to get help to make more parking. Selectmen Zager stated he will reach out to the Highway Department but part of the issue is we don't know how far the town owns the land.

4. Discussion, and vote on potential license agreements between athletic sports groups and the Town of Freetown. Attorney Everett stated something helpful for the Board would be perhaps each organization could send you an email discussing their first two or three priorities, in order of preference, of the fields that they are interested in along with what kind of maintenance or improvements need to be done to that field. So that you can mix and match and see what works before meeting with them.

Someone asked about the sidewalks at FES. Ms. Pettey stated we received a grant to put the handicap accessible crosswalk with a beacon and make it 10 ft. wide. Eventually they will be a 10 ft. wide shared use lane all along Memorial Drive. Selectmen Zager mentioned we had the Highway Department move around millings a couple of years ago and if he can find millings at no cost to put them down there. Ms. Pettey will look into it.

Board of Selectmen

Discussion/possible action on the following topics:

- 5. Discussion, and vote on whether to approve, not release, the Executive Session minutes from 4/6/23.
 - Motion to approve, not release, the Executive Session minutes from 4/6/23 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

6. Discussion, and vote on whether to engage services with ArchiveSocial to archive the Town's social media accounts and next steps.

Ms. Pettey stated this is a follow up to the last meeting, the quote was \$350.00 a month. It would be \$4000.00 a year. Selectmen Matthews stated it would save us a lot of money if we ever need to bring legal purposes and pull any kind of social media activity. They have a lot of other bigger towns using them. Ms. Pettey will look into it and figure out what would we have them archive. They can do up to 12 social media accounts for this price. Selectmen Zager asked where is this funding coming from? We would have to put it into our budget for next year. Selectmen Matthews asked if we can cancel at any time? Ms. Souza would need to look at the contract. Selectmen Matthews wants to hold on this for now and talk a little more about numbers.

7. Discussion, and vote on whether to approve the ambulance abatements and write-offs for March 2023 in the amount of \$172,851.59.

- Motion to approve the ambulance abatements and write-offs for March 2023 in the amount of \$172,851.59 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 approve the ambulance abatements and write-offs from COMSTAR from July 2022 in the amount of \$102,830.07.
 - Motion to approve the ambulance abatements and write-offs from COMSTAR from July 2022 in the amount of \$102,830.07 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 Horsley Witton Group for Hazard Mitigation Plan.
 - Motion to approve the agreement between the Town of Freetown and Horsley Witton Group for Hazard Mitigation Plan 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

Personnel Board

Discussion/possible action on the following topics:

10. Accept the resignation of Victoria Brownell from Council on Aging Board effective 4/10/23.
 - Motion to Accept the resignation of Victoria Brownell from Council on Aging Board effective 4/10/23 made by Selectmen Matthews and seconded by Selectmen Zager
 - 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 appoint Alfred “Sonny” Barros to Council on Aging Board effective 4/18/23-6/30/23.
 - Motion to appoint Alfred “Sonny” Barros to Council on Aging Board effective 4/18/23-6/30/23 made by Selectmen Matthews and seconded by Selectmen Zager
 - 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:

Old Business:

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

Selectmen Matthews noted the Board will now sign documents associated with this evening’s meeting.

Executive Session

Discussion/possible action on the following topics:

The Board will be going to go into Executive Session and we will not come back into open session.

- Motion to go into Executive Session at 7:50pm for the following reason below made by Selectmen Zager and seconded by Selectmen Lopes
- Vote: was approve in a unanimous roll call vote
- Vote: Selectmen Lopes – yes, Selectmen Zager – yes, Selectmen Matthews - yes

12. M.G.L. c.30A, Sec. 21(a)(4) – To discuss the deployment of or strategy regarding security personnel or devices.

Public Input

Respectfully Submitted,



Lola Furtado
Administrative Assistant

List of Documents/Exhibits utilized by the Board in tonight's meeting:

- Meeting Agenda
- Proposed Enhancements for Pocasset Park / Freetown Town Beach and Long Pond Landing
- Current Lease - Freetown Lakeville Athletic Association – Amended Lease FLAA
- Current Lease - Apponequet Junior Football
- Draft Lease from KP Law
- Photos of KRR Complex, Memorial Field / Central Park, Pocasset Park / Long Pond Fields, Hathaway Park
- Freetown Property Map #239
- ArchiveSocial Quote #5358 and #5359
- Fire Department Abatement from Coastal
- Fire Department Abatement from Comstar
- Agreement with Horsley Witten Group
- Addendum to the Agreement for Hazard Mitigation Plan Services
- Resignation of Victoria A. Brownell
- Certificate of Appointment – Alfred (Sonny) Barros