

Freetown Board of Selectmen  
Meeting Minutes  
Monday, January 8 2024, 6:00pm  
Council on Aging, lower level and virtually  
227 Chace Road, East Freetown, MA

### Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Selectmen Trevor Matthews at 6:00pm at the Freetown Council on Aging. He noted that the meeting would be on Zoom as well as in person and recorded and posted to the Town's YouTube channel. Selectmen Matthews read the Governor's statement below regarding virtual meetings. Selectmen Jared Zager, Town Administrator Deb Pettey, Executive Assistant Lu-Ann Souza and Administrative Assistant Lola Furtado, were also present. Selectmen Lopes was not in attendance.

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](http://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

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84304818033?pwd=ckQ5L25ndEprQkJSzNSa09LM2dldz09>

Meeting ID: 843 0481 8033

Passcode: 646961

One tap mobile

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• +1 646 931 3860 US

• +1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)

• +1 305 224 1968 US

• +1 309 205 3325 US

• +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

• +1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose)

• +1 719 359 4580 US

1 564 217 2000 US

• +1 253 205 0468 US

1 386 347 5053 US

• +1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

1 507 473 4847 US

• +1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

1 669 444 9171 US

Selectmen Matthews continued that they will be going into Executive Session and then back into open session and will be going into Executive Session for the following reasons.

### **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 – **Macomber vs. Town of Freetown**
2. M.G.L. c.30A, Sec. 21(a)(3) – to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with **Public Employees Union Local 272 LIUNA (Clerical Union)** because an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body and the chair so declares
  - Motion to enter Executive Session by Selectmen Zager and seconded by Selectmen Matthews
  - Vote: was approved in a unanimous roll call vote
  - Vote: Selectmen Zager – yes, Selectmen Matthews – yes

### **Board of Selectmen**

Discussion/possible action on the following topics:

3. Discussion, and vote on whether to approve, not release the executive session minutes from 12/18/23
  - Motion to approve, not release the executive session minutes from 12/18/23 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

4. Discussion, and vote on whether to approve the open session minutes from 12/18/23
  - Motion to approve the open session minutes from 12/18/23 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
5. Discussion, and vote on additional dropbox for document collection at an East Freetown location.

This agenda item has been passed on due to Selectmen Lopes could not be here tonight

6. Presentation from Town Clerk/Chief Election Official regarding Annual Local Town Election.

Freetown Town Clerk Cheryl Estrella presented information about the upcoming 2024 Annual Town Election and public outreach. It will be held on Monday, April 1, 2024, polls are open 12pm to 8pm at the Freetown Elementary School. Positions can be seen on our website under Town Clerk & Elections, under Elections Department, under the 2024 Annual Town Election. New Voter Registration Deadline is March 22, 2024. Nomination Papers are available at the Town Clerks office now, deadline to obtain papers are Thursday February 8, 2024 and deadline to return papers is Monday, February 12, 2024. Vote by mail was signed into law and is here to stay but is an option for this annual town election. Postcards will be coming from the Secretary of the Commonwealth's office stating all of the state and general elections for this year. More information can be found at [VoteInMA.com](http://VoteInMA.com). The Town will not be opting in to In-Person Early Voting for the 2024 Annual Town Election. If you wish to vote ahead of Election Day is encouraged to utilize Vote by Mail or Absentee voting.

7. Discussion on budget strategies for FY25

Ms. Pettey is in process of getting the budgets ready for the departments, with her recommendations of keeping their budgets level funded and incorporate the 2% raises. She is waiting to see where Bristol Plymouth baseline will be. The State is talking about a decline which will affect the amount of funding we get. There are concerns and uncertainty coming from the State.

8. Discussion, and vote on recommendation for raises for FY25 from Finance Committee

Finance Chair Margaret French stated last year there was a lot of raise requests all over the place. The Finance Committee for the Personnel Board decided to give a suggested guideline or recommendation for raises of 2 to 3.

- Motion to recommend 2 to 3% raises for FY25 from Finance Committee 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
9. Discussion, and vote on whether to adopt the IRS increase in mileage rate of .67 cents per mile effective 1/2/24-6/30/24
    - Motion to adopt the IRS increase in mileage rate of .67 cents per mile effective 1/2/24-6/30/24 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
  10. Discussion, and vote whether to approve the Senior Work Off list from the Council on Aging Director for 2024
    - Motion to approve the Senior Work Off list from the Council on Aging Director for 2024 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
  11. Discussion, and vote whether to approve the agreement between the Town of Lakeville and Town of Freetown for boarding and adoption of dogs relinquished by Freetown Animal Control Officer
    - Motion to approve the agreement between the Town of Lakeville and Town of Freetown for boarding and adoption of dogs relinquished by Freetown Animal Control Officer 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
  12. Discussion, and vote whether to approve the Class II Motor Vehicle License renewals for:
    - a. Mark H. Bullock d/b/a Chipaway Auto Sales
    - b. DPF Enterprises Inc.
    - Motion to approve a and b Class II Motor Vehicle License renewals 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
  13. Discussion, and vote whether to approve the snowplow applications for winter 2023-2024 for:
    - a. Matthew Deneault
    - b. Russell Sherman
    - c. Chris Bernier
    - Motion to approve a thru c snowplow applications for winter 2023-2024 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
- 14. Discussion and vote on whether or not to use Twenty-Five Thousand (\$25,000) Dollars of ARPA funds to do a feasibility study on the Old Schoolhouse building for potential uses.

Mary Brown from the Historical Commission explained the history of the Old Schoolhouse. The Historical Commission members are in support to see the building utilized. Cheryl Estella mentioned her record archives are in the partially finished basement and need to be in conjunction with the State. They cannot be damaged or destroyed. She also mentioned there was an assessment done in the fall of 2021.

- Motion to use Twenty-Five Thousand (\$25,000) Dollars of ARPA funds to do a feasibility study on the Old Schoolhouse building for potential uses 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

- 15. Discussion, and vote whether to add a non-binding question on the Annual Town Election 4/1/24 regarding the preference of the potential improvements to the intersection at Assonet Four Corners (Water St, N. Main St, S. Main St)

Ms. Pettey stated this is the project we have been working on because of the issues with the four-way intersection in Assonet. The possibilities will be to do a roundabout or a light. They both have pros and cons to them, neither are 100% ideal. We did a mock roundabout at the Elementary School. We brought the biggest vehicles we have to maneuver through this. A thank you to KR. Rezendes Inc., Rod & Ross Rezendes for bringing their biggest truck along free of charge. Also, Chuck Macomber, the Police Chief, Fire Chief and Deputy Fire Chief came with their big fire engine and truck to maneuver through it. Residents are concerned about a streetlight being in the center of town because it being a historical location. A question on the ballot will have no validity but let us know how the taxpayers feel about this. Both options are around a million dollars. We believe we can get grants for at least half of that. But it will involve taxpayer's dollars. Some time in March we will have an informational meeting before the election. Town Clerk Ms. Estrella stated the deadline to place a question to the ballot will be Monday, February 26. A postcard to town residents may be another option along with the COA Newsletter and the School Department

- Motion to add a non-binding question on the Annual Town Election 4/1/24 regarding the preference of the potential improvements to the intersection at Assonet Four Corners (Water St, N. Main St, S. Main St) 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

## **Personnel Board**

Discussion/possible action on the following topics:

16. Discussion and vote whether to approve the following appointments:

- a. Julie Mikolazyk Election worker (unenrolled) effective 1/2/24-8/15/24
- b. Cheryl Gouveia Election worker (unenrolled) effective 1/2/24-8/15/24
- c. Kayla Churchill to Finance Committee effective 1/9/24 - Annual Town Election 4/1/24
- d. Edward Walsh as Seasonal Plow Operator effective 1/5/24-6/30/24

After a brief discussion, Selectmen Matthews and Selectmen Zager recommended for appointment c. to wait for Selectmen Lopes to return so that it can be a three-person board vote.

- Motion to approve the appointments a, b, and d 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

### **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:

#### 17. Update on ARPA

ARPA, is the American Rescue Plan Act. Ms. Pettey stated they just voted on applying \$25,000.00 of Federal ARPA money to do the feasibility study. There is a split between Bristol County ARPA and the Federal ARPA. In the Bristol County ARPA we receive close to \$1.6 Million and we have spent \$1.4 Million to date. Consisting of the Water Meter Project \$400,000.00. Sewer Line Engineering \$200,000.00. Public Safety Radio Project \$425,000.00, and \$35,500.00 on a generator for the Water Department. We have allocated \$300,000.00 to the Public Fiber Project. Which leaves about \$213,000.00. ARPA money needs to be allocated by June 2024 and have until 2026 to spend it. The Water Department has asked for a tractor to do the water lines or change water valves which is \$38,500.00 also some add-ons to the Sewer Line Engineering Extension Project of \$21,000.00. Which are additional applications totaling about \$60,000.00 and leaves \$154,000.00 of available Bristol County ARPA. Bristol County ARPA needs to be used for water sewer, public safety projects and just opened up for roadway projects such as the 4 Corners roundabout. Federal ARPA money was about \$950,000.00 which we have invested and we have been earning interest which is about a Million Dollars now. We have allocated \$750,000.00 to the Fire Station Project to do all the soft costs like the OPM and the architects which are under contract for roughly \$550,000.00 but we did get a grant for \$50,000.00. We will need to spend at least \$500,000.00. There may be some change orders coming through and we can reallocate the money. The Board approved \$30,000.00 for staffing in our office and the accounting office for all the grants applications. This money can be used for any Town purpose. We have \$200,000.00 uncommitted and may have more from the Fire Station. We

would have about \$450,000.00 that we could spend on upgrades to the School House. With the feasibility study we want to make sure we can get to be ADA Compliant, ramp, and a septic system for bathrooms. If we keep this in house, meaning Ms. Pettey, Carl Bizarro the Building Commissioner oversees it we might be able to do quite a bit of renovations for about \$600,000.00. If we apply ARPA money we are not really going to the taxpayers. The Town Hall is currently looking into renovating the bathrooms. The Schoolhouse will only be housing other departments to make more room at Town Hall. The situation has gone from critical needs to crisis. Federal ARPA money is in the bank already and earning interest. Ms. Pettey have been diligently working with the Treasurer on this issue. We will use grant money first and then the ARPA money.

### **Old Business:**

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

### **Public Input**

The Board signed documents associated with tonight's meeting

- Motion to adjourn the meeting was made at 7:52pm by Selectmen Zager and seconded by Selectmen Matthews.
- Vote approved by a unanimous roll call vote
- Vote: Selectmen Zager – yes, Selectmen Matthews – yes

Respectfully Submitted,



Lola Furtado  
Administrative Assistant

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

- Meeting Agenda
- Meeting Minutes for 12/18/23
- Drop Box in Freetown Email & Information
- 2024 Annual Town Election Presentation
- Finance Committee Budget Raises Recommendation
- Budget – Ledger History – Allocated Summary – Expenditure Ledger
- Senior Work Off List
- Agreement Between Lakeville & Freetown for Lakeville Animal Shelter
- Class II License - Mark H. Bullock d/b/a Chipaway Auto Sales
- Class II License – DPF Enterprises, Inc.
- Snow Plow Application - Matthew Deneault

- Snow Plow Application - Russell Sherman
- Snow Plow Application – Chris Bernier
- Memo – Cheryl Estrella – Appointment of Election Workers
  - Certificate of Appointment – Julie Mikolazyk
  - Certificate of Appointment – Cheryl Gouveia
- Certificate of Appointment – Kayla Churchill – Finance Committee
- Certificate of Appointment – Edward Walsh – Seasonal Snowplow Driver