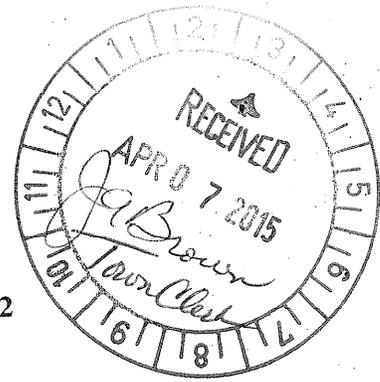




**TOWN OF FREETOWN  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN**  
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**MINUTES OF MEETING OF MONDAY NOVEMBER 3, 2014**

**COUNCIL ON AGING  
227 CHACE ROAD, EAST FREETOWN, MASSACHUSETTS**

**6:00 P.M. Call to Order** by Selectman Lisa Pacheco those present are Selectman Lee Baumgartner, Selectman Paul Sadeck, and Town Administrator Jack Healey. The meeting is being recorded by MCCAM and Selectman Sadeck and John Garcia from Standard Times. Selectman Pacheco reads the Agenda aloud.

**6:05 P.M. Presentation by Tony Roselli from Roselli, Clark and Associates regarding the Town's Annual Audit**

Mr. Roselli-Thank you for having me tonight this is the 1<sup>st</sup> year we have done the audit for town of Freetown. On Page 2 of management letter where does the town stand financially and economically in relation to peers? Town has accumulated quite a bit of funds 2.2 mil in stabilization and an additional 2.2 million in undesignated fund balance so the Town has 4.4 million in reserves. That's about a \$600,000 increase over the prior year. How does this relate to other towns? One of the things we look at is we divide the reserves by the expenses & come up with at reserve ratio that will give you an idea of how much flexibility you have in your budget. When I do that math it comes out to about 20% which puts the town right at the top of all communities in Massachusetts. Don't know of any higher. The Towns bond rating is AA+. AAA is the highest. That's very very important, fortunate and town should be proud of that. Didn't happen by accident. There's a plan behind that & it seems to be working. I wanted to highlight that because that is very important. Freetown is moving along well. Some items to work on if the town wants to go to AAA level. Other things the Rating Agency looks at are

1. The ability to provide long term forecast so 1 of the things the Town Accountant along with Town Administrator and the Treasure can work on is a 5 year forecast. Where will our expenses be where will our revenue be? Creating a Financial Reserve Policy is another item they would want to see. A Debt Policy, a Capital Improvement Plan, and an Investment Policy, are things that if in place makes the bond rating better. How does a high bond rating help you?

Selectman Baumgartner says Investment Policy we are kind of restricted. My Roselli states yes you are restricted by the State in what you can invest in and a lot of towns defer to the state & if that's going to be your policy then you need to document that. Some towns make it more restrictive then the state but you can

never go beyond the state. A higher bond reduces finance rate when you do a bond offering and if you're doing capital projects it allows you to borrow at a cheaper amount. Which saves the tax payers \$ and over a 20 year period of time that accumulates into a quite a bit of \$. That's 1 of the benefits of having a high bond rating. Borrowing rate is a benefit of higher bond rating. Capital improvement is the town where it needs to be on the infrastructure side or do buildings need to be improved? What does the Town have to do that? This has caused the town to be very well positioned. The bond market is very vibrant right now. It is very inexpensive to borrow right now. Now is the time for capital improvement. Selectman Pacheco states we do have a 5 year Capital Improvement Plan & we just finished a feasibility study and we are going to have a meeting on that December 10<sup>th</sup> and at that point we will decide which way we are going to go with feasibility study & building projects. Infrastructure helps the tax payer. Infrastructure helps maintain property values; it helps attract people to town which also leverages property taxes so infrastructure in reasonable amounts is a good thing.

Now some observations

Collectors-office and recently the Collector has gone to a lock box which promotes efficiency. The \$ gets in bank faster, records are updated quicker & more efficient to reconcile for Collector & Accountant. I spoke to the Collector to see if she has evaluated offering electronic billing as another means. It is optional thru email saves postage & wireless payment. This has to be approved by BOS if she wishes to want to undergo

Tax titles are higher than they should. Collector has been more aggressive I guess we will see the results in 2015. There is an option about assigning tax title not emergency but an option is if too large there is companies that come in & buy. Paul what do they buy at? Mr. Roselli states they have to buy them at the value they are recorded at and no lower than that. They can bid higher if they want but they cant bid lower. The full amount including accrued interest. There are about 30 communities doing this right now but they have cash flow problems. Selectman Baumgartner asks if buying at high end what's their profit? Mr. Roselli states they hold on to it & they earn a high rate of interest. Selectman Sadeck states at some point they foreclose putting people in a worse situation.

There is an exemption out there for up to \$10,000X tax rate town can elect not to tax businesses but it has to go to a Town meeting thru an article. Usually it is Personal Property that are very difficult to collect because you can't do tax liens you can't do tax title you have to go to small claims court to collect those delinquents this removes that & spreads it across the rest of tax payers which may raise everyone taxes a couple of cents. This eliminates the need to collect small mom & pop Personal Property taxes up to \$10,000.

Next topic which has been on the rise when economy went down hill in 2009 is fraud. Cash handling departments were missing \$

Develop fraud policy & get to all employees stating that the Town will not tolerate fraud. Indicate what fraud is. Is taking tools home fraud? It would have to be defined in the town policy. Also create an Internal audit process which begins accounting office Town Accountant should be visiting departments rotate 1 per

month unannounced. Review receipts against documentation. It goes a long way to send message to employees that we are protecting assets. I encourage the town to do this. Selectman Sadecks asks what you think of a town collector. Mr. Roselli thinks it's a great idea it centralizes the cash function.

Bristol county retirementsystem= town has very good cash flow pay up front would save \$15000 last year. I highly encourage. The state giving state aid monthly bigger towns saving \$400,000-500,000 by paying upfront. Selectman Pacheco states the teachers used to get a lump sum payment in June now that the teachers get a monthly check and the town is completely regionalized is the time to do it.

What are town policies, procedures document everything. Jack has an excellent sample of what he does in previous town. Selectman Pacheco states we have 1 started somewhere. Purchasing order over \$10,000 good control follow 30B Anything over \$1,000 put some sort of purchasing order in place. This allows the towns financial department to know that a purchase is happening before it happens. Selectman Pacheco is it available thru vadar Jack states that yes it is. Selectman Pacheco states the first person would be the creator then to second approver then finally to Town Accountant. Mr. Roselli states pick an amount & stick with it. Selectman Sadeck states \$1,000 is a good amount. Cash handling went over policy with Treasurer. It was written in a prior year and it needs to be updated a little bit. When I asked where do dept heads store cash before its turned over & she didn't know. That's a problem. It needs to be in cash handling policy where will it be held & when turned over. All cash handlers should be bonded should be covered under town umbrella policy be sure to document it. Bring in a little bit more control to cash handling. No borrowing town property. The town is liable if something happens. It's a bad thing waiting to happen. Town vehicles should not be brought home unless it's written into contract and there should be some taxability for it. Selectman Baumgartner stated he paid \$1500 for taking company vehicle home previous employer. This is an area to look at. Selectman Sadeck asks if some are allowed. Mr. Roselli states yes emergency vehicles Indirect cost study done years ago it's not implemented I suggest it's something you look at. Enterprise funds what is the burden on the town. Go thru each position take a % of that from Enterprise fund & transfer back to enterprise fund. Selectman Sadeck states we are doing that now. Mr. Rosellis states yes its amount that they have been using but there is no formal process. Selectman Sadeck asks what is the purpose of an enterprise fund? Mr. Roselli state it isolates the Enterprise Fund on its own got to support itself increase its rates to support deficit. It doesn't infringe on the town. Selectman Sadeck we only have 2 Enterprise Funds water & sewer. When created it was significant debt \$ we owed couple lawsuits against the town before created. It cost a lot of \$ to make town whole then shifted to 600 people. I have always had a big issue with it. Selectman Sadeck states it went from all tax players to 650 people. Mr. Roselli states it should have had town meeting to shoot it down. Selectman Sadeck states Water is still absorbing the suits.

Treasurers' cash book did find some variances that have been around for awhile \$9600 was a positive variance. The prior Treasure advised to do it as a receipt.

Another 1 for \$7000 shut down bank account & open a new 1 when everything cashed thru will review it next year. 1 account that's is on Treasurers books for \$900 but no bank statement & can't get info from State Street Bank. Mr. Roselli states he told her to keep looking and trying. Selectman Sadeck asks who is the authorized signer. Mr. Roselli states not sure. Jack do we have year? Mr. Roselli states no we have nothing.

Abandoned property. Checks not cashed becomes property f of town if you follow procedures under M.G.L. 200A right now there is about \$29,000. She is going to start working on that,

Data security audit there are firms out there. Make sure portals are secure people can't come in & invade. Cyber criminals thrive on small towns. What are passwords? How are you protecting people's identities? Do you have the proper firewalls? It is important to protect citizens. That concludes the audit. Are there any questions? none. Selectman Sadeck grand scheme where do we stand on a scale of 1-10? Mr. Rosellis states town is clearly near the top. These are typical issues with small towns. The records were very easy to go thru & audit. Rank the town very near the top. These are suggested improvements not deficiencies. Not difficult.

Joe Montour asks about painting of the lines on Chace Rd, Slab Bridge Road. Selectman Pacheco states Jack will find out. She think it's because they still need to do some sweeping. Mr. Montour asks how can police say someone crossed line if there is none there. What would you do Paul if someone had a head on? Selectman Sadeck states they crossed the center of the roadway. Mr. Montour states he emailed Scott Rose but hasn't heard back. Selectman Pacheco states there must be a certain amount of time after doing work on it before they can paint lines. Selectman there are some streets that don't ever get marked Dr. Braley Rd. Selectman Pacheco said Jack will look into it.

6:30 P.M. Soil Board Meeting

**Signing of Biweekly payroll/vendor warrants  
Weekly Public Discussion period**

**Consent Agenda:**

**Board of Selectmen: Action relative to:**

- IMA Approval-Lisa Pacheco states which well will hold off on til Wednesday. We have 2 things to work out. Have to make sure we don't give up things, Mark Reich looking into things. Selectman Sadeck asks will he be available Wednesday Selectman Pacheco states yes if we call him. Selectman Sadeck states it would be a good thing to have him there. Selectman Pacheco states there are 2 things that came back. We don't have issues but Mark does. Comes from Assessor's part of the job & having fall river doing all the assessing but as Board of Selectman we can have them do all the work up front and have

Assessors vote on it. They can't set our tax rate but they can do the assessing of building. Fall River will own 60% we will own 40% Mark is checking into it with the Department of Revenue. Selectman Sadeck asks about the building permit he thought the way Mark wrote it that it gave everyone the opportunity to work together. Selectman Pacheco state it does. Fall River was worried about that aspect of it. Why should they do 2 sets of plans and have to 2 different building inspectors review it. She doesn't see it like that. She sees 1 set of plans and 2 building inspectors coming in and working on it together. Mark didn't know that at the time but once she clarified it with him he was good with that. Mark doesn't want us to do anything illegal.

- Town Administrator's Report Action Items-copy from his report

Jack Healey states he would like to wish everyone a Happy Halloween and congratulate everyone on a successful Special Town Meeting

- Update on various matters.-update on Freetown Screw Factory on way to landfill in Ohio. Selectman Baumgartner states his bride took some picture before and she will take some after. Selectman Sadeck states he went by today and only a little bit in front there. Selectman Baumgartner states they took 15 trailer truck full of debris.
- Acushnet town officials and our own Senior Housing Commissioner who happened to come to the site about the possible acquisition of the lot in Acushnet we need to clean up and use for the Senior Housing project it's been a dream of John Ashleys for decades and they willing to discuss possibility of doing it. The Feasibility Study for the Senior Housing on that site requires the use of that Acushnet lot. While they haven't taken it for taxes yet the concept will be to do it all in same day, foreclose and transfer to senior housing.
- Republic services-Chris October Company is working on equipment will be having Kelly Engineering draw plans for the road improvement over the Winter months and will be doing building renovations and road improvements in the Spring
- Unemployment compensation service agreement-Jack states I have attached an agreement you first saw last Spring. I have reviewed this and talked to Diane and Andy Albano and I believe this is a potentially valuable service that will cost very little (\$410.00 per quarter). I recommend we try it out for up to a year and see if it has been helpful to us in that time period. Selectman Pacheco states we don't have anyone on it at this time and with the way things are going it doesn't look like we will. Selectman Sadeck states we may. Selectman Pacheco says ok we may have 1 person on unemployment. Selectman Pacheco asks do you want to put this on the next agenda? Selectman Sadeck says Jack you had this in Westport was it beneficial? Jack says yes. Selectman Sadeck asks who represents us now? Jack says we would have to represent ourselves and that's no fun if you have ever been there. Jack states he will bring it back next meeting. Selectman Sadeck states they have come down before maybe we can bring them down again so we can ask specific questions and it may clear this up for everyone. Jack says ok. He will have Mr. Albano in. Selectman Sadeck states if he don't have any cases then

we are not saving any money. Selectman Pacheco states we have no one now what can they do for us.

- Jack states there will be another TIF board meeting Wednesday & will hopefully set a town meeting. Selectman Sadeck asks they make a recommendation to BOS and the BOS make the decision. Selectman Pacheco & Jack confirm that is correct. Selectman Sadeck asks does it have to be a majority vote on TIF Board? Jack says Yes.
  - Selectman Pacheco says this is the first meeting since the announcement of Amazon and I am curious what you guys think? Joe Montour states it sounds like a good idea. Selectman Baumgartner down the road it will be beneficial for the town.  
Selectman Pacheco states it is bringing 1000 jobs and is a great thing for the area draws other companies to say Freetown is good with business. Selectman Sadeck it's a 30 billion company 1000 jobs available. It will attract other companies to come to Freetown. Selectman Pacheco will attract money for little businesses like gas, restaurants.  
Selectman Baumgartner states the board worked very hard & so did Mr Healey I commend you.
  - Jack states the last item is Dan LeBlanc's notice of retirement and at the Chairmans request he met with him and tried to talk him out of his decision but he was not successful. Dan recommends the Board consider Robert Klevecka, 1 year Navy Veteran with an IT background. He was recently hired as the Assistant transfer station attendant. Bob would continue to do weekend duty at the transfer station if chosen to do the part time Veterans Service Officer work. Dan wasn't able to attend and sends his regrets, its wifes birthday. Selectman Pacheco have personnel chair or whoever wants to go meet with Dan during week & report to board for recommendation. Selectman Sadeck states Mr. Klevecka is an outstanding gentleman and would be ideal for position. Selectman Pacheco asks what will it be in hours. Jack will check into it. Selectman Sadeck states he doesn't need benefits he's retired Navy. Jack will set it up
- Sign Net Metering Credit Purchase Agreement with Topeka Solar. Motion (Sadeck /Baumgartner) to approve agreement. Selectman Pacheco asks from now on any contracts that we do sign off from Town Administrator & Town Counsel that it's been reviewed and attach to contract.
  - Open and Close the Warrant for Special Town Meeting on Wednesday November 19, 2014- take care of Wednesday
  - Discuss Town Hall Business Hours for the day after Thanksgiving and the day after Christmas. Motion (Baumgartner/Sadeck) to close the Town Offices to the public. If any employee wishes to take the day off, they must use personal or vacation time. Passed unanimously. Everyone but Public Safety.

- Approve list of applicants for the Senior Work Off Program submitted by the Council on Aging Director, Barbara Place LaFluer. Motion (Sadeck/Baumgartner) to approve program as recommended by the COA director. Jack states there may be more coming.

**Board of Health:** 41 Water St the Sheriff served them and it will be taken care of. Chipaway Rd nobody lives there but someone comes and feeds the horse everyday.

**Personnel Board:**

- Discuss/Approve a request from Council on Aging Board of Directors to post vacancy for the Board of Directors.
- Email from Jeannette Tisdale Jack states he will share an email thread that he thought put this to bed. Selectman Sadeck asks if he wants to hold off. Jack says yes

**New Business**

- Dates for upcoming Board of Selectmen Special Town Meeting Wednesday November 19<sup>th</sup> and Monday December 1<sup>st</sup>. and Monday December 15<sup>th</sup>. December 29<sup>th</sup> cancelled.

**Old Business:**

- Status of Space Needs study. Meeting will be Dec 10 FES @ 6:30
- Freetown Elementary lease agreement. Jack states they won't change it so no lease. Put on next meeting
- Pending report of South Main Bridge scheduled for October 2014. Waiting on it.
- Union negotiation meeting. Nothing set. Jack got call from Joe McArdle no dates yet. Next meeting executive session to discuss
- Meeting with DESE. No meeting but sending email. Selectman Sadeck working on something a little more important
- Key Fobs
- Town Bounds
- Status of employee requesting reduction of hours.
- Status of 4 South Main Street Building. Mary and Scott are discussing.

**Executive Session:**

Motion to adjourn (Sadeck/Baumgartner) at 7:29pm. Passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Nadine Dimond, Senior Clerk