

# Freetown Board of Health

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FREETOWN TOWN CLERK

Minutes of Meeting of Thursday, May 4, 2023 at 4:00 PM **2023 JUN 22 AM 10: 32**  
(First Meeting of Newly-elected Board of Health)

Hybrid Meeting Held at Senior Center – 227 Chace Road and Via Zoom

Board Members present in person: Robert P. Jose, Mary Bowen  
Board Member via Zoom: Margaret M. French  
Members Absent: None

Also present in person: Keven Desmarais, Health Agent, Lori Desmarais, Town Nurse, Dale Barrows, Health Services Inspector (arrived soon after meeting called to order), and Humberta St. Louis, Board of Health office Senior Clerk. No additional attendees via Zoom.

## Call to order

Keven Desmarais, Health Agent, called the meeting to order at 4:03 pm indicating that as the Board had not yet been organized, he as a non-member is calling the meeting to order for the purpose of seeking nominations for Chairperson and the Chairperson, once elected, will then take over.

Keven Desmarais then read the notification of the Governor's March 29, 2023, extension of the temporary provisions to the open meeting law as to virtual/hybrid meetings and then indicated that counsel is available should there be a need at today's meeting.

## Discussion / Action on Organization of the Board

Chair position: Keven Desmarais asked for nominations for Chairperson. After discussion by the members of the Board, Mr. Robert Jose volunteered to serve for the remainder of his term. Motion made by Keven Desmarais, seconded by Mary Bowen to elect Robert Jose as Chairperson of the Board for the remainder of his term.

**Vote: Was approved in a unanimous roll call vote**  
Margaret French, yes; Mary Bowen, yes; Robert Jose, yes.

**Mr. Robert Jose, newly-elected Chair, took over conducting the meeting.**

Vice Chair position: Mr. Jose called for nominations for Vice Chair. After discussion, Margaret French volunteered. Mr. Jose made motion to nominate Margaret French as Vice Chair, seconded by Mary Bowen.

**Vote: Was approved in a unanimous roll call vote**  
Margaret French, yes; Mary Bowen, yes; Robert Jose, yes.

## Review and Discussion on the Budget

Mr. Jose inquired of Keven Desmarais concerning the FY24 proposed budget. Keven Desmarais gave an overview of the Health Inspection Services and Trash Collection and Disposal budgets, further

stating the Health Inspection budget includes some \$55,000.00 for engineering review and compliance for Excel Recycling; that outside vendor services have been solicited to come up with testing protocols for noise, dust, storm water, ground water, and such, the focus of the testing then to be decided, taking into account the issues with the most complaints received.

Further discussion took place as to staff salaries, trash budget, and funds/resources coming from the collaborative that Freetown Board of Health has joined providing inspection software, ipads and other equipment and training, thereby resulting in significant savings to the Town.

Further discussion took place as to Excel Recycling monitoring in order to address residents' concerns. Keven Desmarais indicated a company ("Apex") is now working to develop this monitoring protocol and that he and Town Administrator spent significant amount of time interviewing them and working on this and that, hopefully, people understand it will take some time to develop before it is actually implemented.

### Introduction of Staff and Discussion of Responsibilities

Lori Desmarais, Public Health Nurse, introduced herself – part-time, here Tuesdays and also available as needed. Has focused the past two years on establishing supply and billing chains to provide vaccines directly instead of bringing in outside vendors. Flu vaccines have been ordered for the Fall clinic through a revolving fund the Town established with \$5,000.00, which now has over \$5,400.00 not including, between COVID and flu vaccines, still some 20 to 30 doses yet to get reimbursed. This change in the process of providing vaccines has shown so far to be more beneficial for the Town.

Some discussion took place on Fire Dept.'s role in providing vaccines; that Fire Dept. does provide support at vaccine clinics, but prior to last year flu clinics were held thru Stop & Shop. Fire Dept. are allowed to administer COVID but not flu vaccines.

Lori Desmarais further stated that at a Mass Public Health Association Meeting she attended today, she was able to pick up three epi pens, State-provided, a substantial savings to the Town.

Dale Barrows, Health Services Inspector, introduced himself. Hired as interim Health Agent in 2021 until Keven was hired. Retired from Town of Mattapoisett Board of Health and also Chairman of Rochester Board of Health for many years. Also, has extensive background in solid waste. Now assisting Keven with inspections, food, septic, anything that comes up, more recently negotiating contract with Crapo Hill Dump.

Keven Desmarais reiterated Dale Barrows being an essential asset to Board of Health in providing timely services to meet the needs of residents and commercial establishments. He further pointed out that coverage has been critical as he himself was away sick for a while and also doing required training and vacations, this part-time position has been essential for the continuity of services.

Keven Desmarais reintroduced himself -- has been Board of Health Agent a bit over a year now – has a lot of local experience, loves the job, and feels his job helps the most amount of people.

Humberta St. Louis, Senior Clerk, introduced herself -- 27-hr-per week position. Came in in mid-June 2021 shortly after Dale Barrows, right after the Board of Health office was separated from Building Department. Has been working on putting records and files in order and continue to improve its records controls.

Robert Jose, newly elected Chair of the Board of Health, introduced himself -- has been serving in different capacities in Town since 2007. Call Firefighter here in Town 90 to 94, with Fall River Fire 93 to 98, paramedic for 12 years; started in 2007 at ZBA, Planning Board in 2012 to about a month ago, serving as Chair the last year; by way of experience, owner of a fuel company, also doing house rehabs and, consequently has some knowledge of septic systems. Medical experience. Also served as Selectman for three years which included being on Board of Health as Chair.

Margaret French, newly elected Vice Chair, introduced herself -- Finance Committee 3 years now, current Chair; Conservation Commission for a little over a year now. Educator, math at Mass Maritime. Having completed her time-consuming PHD dissertation, has extra time to devote to the Town.

At this point, Keven Desmarais brought to the attention of the Board that resources, training, associations and other aids for Board Members are available.

Mary Bowen introduced herself. Has lived in Freetown for 36 years with husband and son, Mike McCue, who is heavily involved in Town government; herself coming new into Town government, except voter registration for 16 years and as elections worker. Retired from long career in nursing. Looking forward to being of service.

### Structure of Meetings - Times and Dates

Discussion took place as to members' schedules and availability to meet. Suggestion made to have one set meeting date each month and a second meeting scheduled as needed. Meeting the second Thursday of the month, 5pm, at Police Station Community Room, depending on room availability, was discussed.

After discussion it was agreed to hold next meeting on June 15<sup>th</sup> and set a hard monthly date in the near future.

Some discussion took place as to the types of matters, including variances, that require coming before the Board.

Some questions from Margaret French concerning the (Lakeside) Festival coming up Memorial Day weekend, especially the concern with money handling and food handling and cross-contamination were answered by Keven Desmarais who further stated that inspections are done at start and during

the event. The same process is followed with other events such as the Strawberry Festival, Fourth of July event, marathons, bike races, and Robinson Estates yard sale.

Keven Desmarais reiterated the philosophy of the office of the Board of Health's response to the needs of residents, installers, engineers, and permit seekers being important, taking into account the investment and resources being spent by all and the practicality of moving projects forward while at the same time being sure that regulations and safety are being met and, if not, are rectified.

### Meeting Adjourned

Robert Jose inquired if there were any further questions or concerns or comments. There being none, he requested that a motion be made to close the meeting. Motion made by Mary Bowen, seconded by Margaret French to close the meeting.

**Vote: Was approved in a unanimous roll call vote**

**Mary Bowen, yes; Margaret French, yes; Robert Jose, yes.**

Meeting was adjourned at 5:20pm.

### Documents/Exhibits at Meeting:

- Meeting Notice/Agenda.
- FY2023 and Proposed FY2024 Board of Health and Trash Budgets

This is a True Record by me,

Attest:   
Humberta St. Louis, Senior Clerk