



# 2024 Annual Newsletter

3 North Main Street, PO Box 438, Assonet, MA | [freetownma.gov](http://freetownma.gov) | (508) 644-2201 ext.2

Cheryl C.A. Estrella, CMC

Town Clerk – [townclerk@freetownma.gov](mailto:townclerk@freetownma.gov)

Timothy J. McIntosh

Assistant Town Clerk – [tim@freetownma.gov](mailto:tim@freetownma.gov)

## The VOTES Act

On June 22, 2022, an election reform law entitled “**The VOTES Act**” ( **V**oter **O**pportunities, **T**rust, **E**quity and **S**ecurities) was signed into law, which made many of the election reform measures first enacted in 2020, now permanent.

### Vote by Mail: Now Here to Stay!

Vote by Mail is now permanently available for all State & Federal Primaries & Elections, however, it remains optional for towns to offer for their Local elections — for 2024, Freetown will have Vote by Mail for the Annual Town Election scheduled for April 1, 2024.

**Application Postcards:** On or around January 20th, all registered voters can expect to receive a Vote by Mail application postcard mailed to them *directly from the Secretary of the Commonwealth’s office*. The postcard will allow you to choose a ballot for March’s Presidential Primary, September’s State Primary, November’s Presidential Election or all elections in 2024, which would include April’s Annual Town Election. **If you are interested in having a ballot mailed to you for any or all of the elections in 2024, simply fill out the postcard by selecting which elections you would like to receive a mail-in ballot for and return it to the Office of the Town Clerk/Elections Department.** If you are applying for a Vote by Mail ballot for a Primary and you are not enrolled in a political party, you must select which Party ballot you wish to receive: Democratic, Libertarian or Republican.

*Voters can also apply for a vote by mail ballot online at [VoteInMA.gov](http://VoteInMA.gov).*

*The Secretary of the Commonwealth’s office is required by law to send out these postcards again over the summer and in September to all registered voters who have not applied for a Vote by Mail ballot – the VOTES Act does not allow for the ability to opt out of these postcards.*

**If you prefer to vote in person on Election Day or to take advantage of In-Person Early Voting, you do not need to return the postcard.** Just simply, show up on Election Day or during the posted In-person Early Voting hours on the dates and locations advertised.

### In-Person Early Voting Now Expanded!

In-Person Early voting has also been expanded and is a permanent option for all voters for State and Federal Primaries & Elections. For Local Elections, cities & town may choose/ opt-in to have in-person early voting. You do not need to apply in advance to vote early in-person, just be a registered voter by the applicable final voter registration deadline.

Voters can expect to have a week of In-Person Early voting before March’s Presidential Primary and September’s State Primary, and two weeks before November’s Presidential Election. As of this printing, a decision to opt-in for In-Person Early Voting for the April Local Annual Town Election has not been made yet.

2024	Presidential Primary	State Primary
<b>Election Dates</b>	Tuesday, March 5, 2024, 7am-8pm	Tuesday, September 3, 2024, 7am-8pm
<i>Mark your calendars now!</i>	<b>Annual Town Election</b> Monday, April 1, 2024, 12pm-8pm	<b>Presidential Election</b> Tuesday, November 5, 2024, 7am-8pm

## CivicReady

Freetown’s Citizen Notification System, featuring your choice of phone calls, texts and/or emails. Sign up today by scanning the QR code at right or by visiting

[freetownma.gov/civicready](http://freetownma.gov/civicready)



## From the Board of Health... Trash & Recycling Information

The Town of Freetown’s trash hauler: **Borges Bros. Trucking**  
Please call Borges Bros. Trucking directly with any issues: 508-644-2074

### Holiday Schedule for Calendar Year 2024:

*Trash & Recycling will NOT be picked up on the holidays listed below.*

*The pickup schedule will be delayed by one day for these holidays & for the remainder of that week.*

New Year’s Day .....Monday, January 1st	Fourth of July.....Thursday, July 4th
MLK, Jr. Day .....Monday, January 15th	Labor Day.....Monday, September 2nd
Presidents’ Day .....Monday, February 19th	Columbus Day .....Monday, October 14th
Patriots Day .....Monday, April 15th	Veterans Day .....Monday, November 11th
Memorial Day .....Monday, May 27th	Thanksgiving..... Thursday, November 28th
Juneteenth.....Wednesday, June 19th	Christmas.....Wednesday, December 25th

## Freetown Town Hall

3 North Main Street

PO Box 438

Assonet, MA 02702

### Hours:

Monday-Thursday, 8am to 4pm

Friday, 8am to 12pm

*Individual office hours may vary*

## Freetown Town Hall: 508-644-2201

Accountant.....	Ext. 4
Assessors/Cemetery .....	Ext. 8
Board of Health .....	Ext. 3
Board of Selectmen.....	Ext. 1
Building Department .....	Ext. 3
Conservation Commission.....	Ext. 7
Planning/Zoning Board .....	Ext. 6
Tax Collector .....	Ext. 4
Town Administrator/Selectmen.....	Ext. 1
Town Clerk/Elections/Registrars.....	Ext. 2
Treasurer .....	Ext. 4
Water & Sewer Department.....	Ext. 5

## Off-Site Phone Numbers

Fire Department.....508-763-4829

Police Department.....508-763-4017

*In an emergency, always dial 9-1-1*

Animal Control Officer.....508-386-8227

Council on Aging.....508-763-9557

Highway Department.....508-763-2359

J. White Library (East Freetown) .508-763-5344

Hathaway Library (Assonet).....508-644-2385

Transfer Station.....508-644-2403

Tree Warden.....508-264-8838

Veterans Agent.....508-763-3190

## Local Legislators—District Office Numbers

**Sen. Michael Rodrigues**.....508-646-0650

*First Bristol and Plymouth District*

**Rep. Carole Fiola** .....774-322-1313

*6<sup>th</sup> Bristol District, includes Precinct 1*

**Rep. Paul Schmid**.....508-567-5675

*8<sup>th</sup> Bristol District, includes Precincts 2 & 3*

*Rep. Fiola and Rep. Schmid have local (Freetown) office hours scheduled on a monthly basis. Check with Council on Aging or Board of Selectmen’s Office.*



**Annual Town Election**  
 Monday, April 1, 2024  
 Polls Open 12noon – 8pm  
 Precincts 1, 2 & 3 All Vote at  
 Freetown Elementary School Gym  
 43 Bullock Rd (Memorial Dr. Entrance)

Town Officer Positions available for election/re-election:

- (1) Selectmen/Personnel Board Member – 3 Year Term
- (1) Assessor – 3 Year Term
- (1) Board of Health Member – 3 Year Term
- (1) Cemetery Commissioner – 3 Year Term
- (2) Finance Committee Members – 3 Year Terms
- (1) Finance Committee Member – 2 Year Unexpired Term
- (1) Highway Surveyor – 3 Year Term
- (1) Housing Authority Member – 5 Year Term
- (2) Library Trustees – 3 Year Terms
- (1) Moderator – 3 Year Term
- (1) Planning Board Member – 5 Year Term
- (1) Planning Board Member – 2 Year Unexpired Term
- (1) Town Clerk – 3 Year Term
- (1) Tree Warden – 3 Year Term
- (1) Water-Sewer Commissioner – 3 Year Term
- (1) Regional School District Committee Member (Freetown) – 3 Year Term

**Interested in being a Candidate?**

To have your name placed on the **2024 Annual Town Election Ballot**, you must obtain nomination papers in-person from the Office of the Town Clerk. Nomination papers will be available from the Office of the Town Clerk beginning **Tuesday, January 2, 2024, at 9am through Thursday, February 8, 2024, by 5PM.**

Candidates must obtain signatures of registered voters from the Town of Freetown on their nomination papers. Town-wide candidates need to obtain signatures from 40 registered voters. For Regional School District, candidates need to obtain signatures from 50 registered voters. We advise candidates to obtain more than the required signatures, to ensure certifiability.

All completed nomination papers must be submitted to the Office of the Town Clerk/Board of Registrars **by 5pm Monday, February 12, 2024.**

**Important Note:** Once a candidate is officially elected or re-elected to office, they must be sworn in by the Town Clerk *prior* to their first/initial meeting of their newly elected term.


**From the Building Department...**

2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Town Hall, 3 North Main Street 508-644-2201 ext. 3

Freetown is pleased to now offer online permitting with PermitEyes! Entering your application online will accelerate the processing of your permit. Simply visit the online permitting page of the Town’s website: **freetownma.gov/onlinepermitting** and follow the instructions. A computer is located outside the Building Department for your convenience. If you have any questions regarding permitting, please contact the office directly.

While online applications are preferred, paper applications are still accepted. If you choose to mail or submit a paper application, it *must* be complete and filled out with all necessary information. An incomplete application will further delay your application.

Save the Date!  
**Annual Town Meeting**  
 Monday, June 3, 2024 /7:30pm  
*More Information available in May.*



**Voter Registration Information**

The Town Clerk/Board of Registrars maintains the voter list for Freetown, which is continually updated. At the time of this printing, Freetown has over **7,100** registered voters.

**What are the Qualifications to be a Registered Voter?**

To be a registered voter in Massachusetts, you must be:

- ✓ A U.S. Citizen, and
- ✓ A resident of Massachusetts, and
- ✓ At least 18 years old on or before the next election/town meeting

**How Do I Register to Vote?**

**Online** - To register to vote online, you must have a signature on file with the Registry of Motor Vehicles. In addition to registering, you can update your address, or change your party affiliation. You can register at [VoteInMA.com](http://VoteInMA.com) or by scanning the QR code at right.



MA's Online Voter Registration Portal

**By Mail** – Residents can download a mail-in voter registration form from [freetownma.gov/elections](http://freetownma.gov/elections) or by scanning the QR code at right. Forms can be mailed to P.O. Box 438, Assonet, MA 02702 or dropped off in the white dropbox in front of Town Hall (3 North Main Street in Assonet)



Voter Registration Form

**In-Person** – Residents can stop in to the Office of the Town Clerk / Board of Registrars at Town Hall to register to vote during all regular business hours (Monday-Thursday, 8am-4pm and Friday, 8am-12pm).

**Voter Registration Deadlines**

Each Election or Town Meeting has its own voter registration deadline for residents to be eligible to vote in that upcoming election or Town Meeting. For Town Meetings, State and Federal Primaries & Elections, the deadline is 5pm on the 10<sup>th</sup> day before the event. For the Annual Town Election, the final voter registration deadline is **Friday, March 22nd by 5pm.** For more information on a particular registration deadline, please contact the Office of the Town Clerk/ Elections/Board of Registrars directly at 508-644-2201, ext. 2.

**Town of Freetown on the Web & Social Media**

 **Official Websites:** [freetownma.gov](http://freetownma.gov) | [freetownpolice.org](http://freetownpolice.org) | [freetownfire-rescue.com](http://freetownfire-rescue.com)

 **Facebook Pages:** [FreetownMA](#) | [FreetownPDMA](#) | [FreetownFire](#) | [FreetownPublicLibraries](#) | [FreetownFireworks](#) | [Freetown Animal Control](#)

 **YouTube:** [youtube.com/FreetownMA](http://youtube.com/FreetownMA)

### From the Board of Selectmen...

2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Town Hall, 3 North Main Street 508-644-2201 ext. 1

The Board of Selectmen's Meetings are generally held bi-monthly at the Freetown Police Station Community Room. Selectmen and all other Board/Committee meetings are open to the public. For details on when meetings are scheduled, please visit [freetownma.gov](http://freetownma.gov) under the Calendar tab. Public attendance is strongly encouraged.

### From the Board of Assessors...

**Excise Tax Abatements:** Each February, the Town of Freetown sends out nearly 12,000 **excise tax bills** for motor vehicles and trailers. This usually results in a high volume of calls regarding abatements. Nearly all abatement questions can be answered by looking over the instructions on the back of your bill.

You can apply for an abatement ONLINE by scanning the QR code to the right, or by visiting our website at [freetownma.gov/mvabatement](http://freetownma.gov/mvabatement)



Excise Tax Abatement Application

If you are unable to complete the online application, required documentation can be e-mailed to [assessors@freetownma.gov](mailto:assessors@freetownma.gov). You can also apply via U.S. mail, or by dropping your application in the grey mailbox in front of the Town Hall.

**Freetown Veterans Real Estate Tax Work-Off:** Freetown has implemented a program allowing veterans to reduce their property taxes by up to \$1,500 in exchange for volunteer services. There is a wide range of potential services that could be anything from painting, landscaping, office support, etc. This program runs January 1st to October 31st each year. For more information, contact the Assessors at [assessors@freetownma.gov](mailto:assessors@freetownma.gov) or the Veteran's Service Officer Robert Klevecka at [vso@efreetown.com](mailto:vso@efreetown.com)

### From the Council on Aging...

Multi-Purpose Senior Center Rebecca Frias, Director  
227 Chace Rd, East Freetown E-Mail: [COA@Freetownma.gov](mailto:COA@Freetownma.gov)  
508-763-9557 Hours: Mon – Thurs, 8am-4pm & Fri, 7:30am-11:30am

**Are you aware?** According to the 2020 Census, 1 in 6 People in the United States were 65 and over. In the Town of Freetown, that number was **1,797**. This number jumps to **2,470** when you include residents 60 and over.

**Here at the COA,** our team's focus is to help seniors and their families understand and navigate the often complex issues that can result from the aging process. We also work to reduce social isolation and provide opportunities for active aging.

**Our Current Services:** Transportation (including our wheelchair van), Mobile Market (Brown Bag Program), Grab and Go, Senior Tax Program (Senior Work Off), LIHEAP (Fuel Assistance), Applying for SNAP Benefits, Freetown Public Health Nurse, SHINE, AARP Tax Assistance, Medical Equipment Loans, Podiatry Clinic, and our Veteran's Agent.

Please check out our website for more detailed descriptions:  
<https://www.freetownma.gov/whatisthecoa>

**Ongoing Activities:** Chair Yoga, Drums Alive, Line Dancing (at the VFW), Bingo, Book Club (at the police station), Pitch/Card Games, Pool Table and Art Classes.

**Special Events:** Ice Cream Socials, Karaoke, Musical Events, Cook-outs, Barbeques and much more coming soon! Keep your eye on our newsletter for all upcoming events!

If you don't receive our newsletter by postal mail or email, please call the Senior Center at 508-763-9557 and we'll add you to the list.

### From the Planning & Land Use Departments...

Freetown Conservation Commission, Planning Board,  
Soil Conservation Board and Zoning Board of Appeals

3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Freetown Town Hall Victoria Alfaro Duran  
3 North Main Street, Assonet Planning & Land Use Administrator  
508-644-2201 ext. 6 E-Mail: [planning@freetownma.gov](mailto:planning@freetownma.gov)

Current vacancies (as of October 15, 2023):

- Associate Member, Planning Board (3-year term)
- Member, Conservation Commission (term ending June 30, 2026)
- Alternate Member, Conservation Commission x2 (yearly term)
- Member, Master Plan Committee (yearly term)

### From the Water & Sewer Commission...

1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Town Hall, 3 North Main Street 508-644-2201 ext. 5

The Freetown Water & Sewer Commission would like to thank their customers for being patient during the 8 months it took for the Meter Replacement Project to be completed. We appreciate everyone's understanding while the process was underway. Having all new meters that are the same type will allow us to provide more efficient billing & we are able to provide usage information to customers as they request it going forward.

### From the Public Libraries...

James White Memorial Library Guilford H. Hathaway Library  
5 Washburn Rd., E. Freetown 6 North Main Street, Assonet  
508-763-5344 508-644-2385

Hours:

Tuesdays & Thursdays, 10am-7pm Mondays, 12pm-5pm  
Fridays, 10am-3pm Wednesdays, 10am-7pm  
Saturdays, 12pm-3pm Fridays, 12pm-5pm

The Freetown Public Libraries offer resources including books, audio-books, DVDs, CDs, magazines, Wi-Fi hotspots, puzzles, educational kits & discounted museum passes! We also receive the *Standard Times* and have desktop computers and printers (10¢/page) available for use.

### Free Mobile Service:

**Libby** – Download the app and borrow eBooks, audiobooks, magazines and more at no cost.

**Education Station** – Free ready-to-use, hands-on activities for kids to do at home or at school supporting kids, teachers and parents. Perfect for homeschoolers! Visit <http://educatestation.com/access/freetown-public-libraries-ma> for access!

### Programs at James White Memorial Library:

- **Adult Craft Night** – Every 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month at 4:00pm
- **Common Threads Knit & Crochet Group** – Every 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of the month (fall and winter) at 4:00pm
- **Homeschool Meetup** – Fridays (during the school year) at 10:00am
- **Story Time** – Tuesdays at 10:30am

### Programs at Police Station Community Room:

- **Wednesday Book Club** – 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of every month at 11:00a.
- **Thursday Book Club** – 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of every month at 6:30pm

For more information, including upcoming and additional programs, please visit us on Facebook at [facebook.com/FreetownPublicLibraries](https://facebook.com/FreetownPublicLibraries), and email us at [Library@freetownma.gov](mailto:Library@freetownma.gov) to sign up for our monthly digital newsletter.

## 2024 Dog Licenses

The 2024 Dog Licenses are available now through the Town Clerk's office. In accordance with Massachusetts General Law, all dogs must be licensed by March 31<sup>st</sup>, and a current rabies certificate from your veterinarian's office must be provided before any town license can be issued.

### Fees:

Neutered/Spayed Dogs \$10.00

Dog NOT Neutered/Spayed \$15.00

Residents aged 70 or older are eligible for one (1) free dog license per household.



Late fee is added on June 1st and on July 1st and additional ACO fee is added – do not delay!

Cash, check and credit card payments are accepted. Checks are made payable to **Town of Freetown**.

Payments can be made in-person at the Town Clerk's office (3 North Main St. in Assonet) during normal business hours, or paperwork can be dropped off in the white drop box in front of Town Hall. If you have an up-to-date rabies certificate on-file with the Town Clerk's office, you can also renew online at <https://www.freetownma.gov/dogs> or by scanning the QR code at right.



Online Dog License Renewal

If you have five (5) or more dogs on premises, whether for personal or commercial purposes, it will require a kennel license. Please contact the Animal Control Officer, Lisa Podielsky, for more information on how to obtain your kennel license.

### Resident Privilege Stickers

Resident Privilege Stickers are required to access the **Transfer Station** (49 Howland Road) and the **Town Beach** (Long Pond Road). Two (2) Transfer Station stickers are provided to each household free of charge as approved at the June 2022 Annual Town Meeting. Stickers are tied to your vehicle; current, valid vehicle registration and proof of residency must be provided. An additional sticker may be obtained for a \$10.00 fee. Stickers must be permanently affixed to the large rear window on the driver's side of the vehicle. Stickers may be obtained directly at the Transfer Station, and expire December 31st of each year.

**Conservation Stickers** are required to access the Town's Conservation lands, primarily Porter Pastures (Gramp Deane Road). Current, valid vehicle registration must be provided, stickers come free with the Resident Privilege Sticker or \$15 on their own or for non-residents. Conservation Stickers can be obtained at the Transfer Station and in the Conservation Commission's office, 3rd floor of Town Hall.

### From the Transfer Station...

49 Howland Road, Assonet

508-644-2403

**Hours, November—March:** Tuesdays-Saturdays, 8am-4pm

**Hours, April-October:** Tuesdays-Fridays, 8am-4pm

Checks made payable to: Saturdays, 4pm-6pm

Town of Freetown Sundays, 8am-12pm

Gate closes 30 minutes prior to closing.

Monday holidays are observed on Tuesdays.

A Resident Privilege Sticker is required to access the Transfer Station to dispose of approved items, available directly at the Transfer Station.

The Transfer Station also has a textile bin for residents use.

**Fees:** For a **current schedule of fees**, information as to what is accepted and other helpful information, please scan the QR code at right, contact the Transfer Station directly or visit their webpage at

<https://www.freetownma.gov/transfer-station>.



## 2024 Rabies Clinic

### For Dogs & Cats

**Sunday, March 24, 2024**

10am – 1pm

**Fire Station #3,**  
25 Bullock Rd, East Freetown

Bring your current rabies certificate!

*Note: In-person dog licensing will not be available at the clinic this year.*

## Animal Control Officer

**Lisa Podielsky**

508-386-8227

[aco@freetownma.gov](mailto:aco@freetownma.gov)

### New Office Hours

Tuesdays & Thursdays

Transfer Station,

49 Howland Rd, Assonet

### From the Fire Department...

**Non-Emergency Phone Number:** 508-763-4829

**Station 1:** 3 Elm St, Assonet    **Station 2:** 157 County Rd, E. Freetown

**Central Station 3 (HQ):** 25 Bullock Rd, E. Freetown

**Burning Permits:** Brush burning is allowed between **January 15<sup>th</sup>** and **May 1<sup>st</sup>** every year, for brush, branches, cane, driftwood & forest debris only! **Permit Fee:** \$5.00.

Permits can be obtained at [freetownma.gov/fire](https://www.freetownma.gov/fire)

### From the Police Department...

**Non-Emergency Phone Number:** 508-763-4017

15 Memorial Drive, East Freetown

The Freetown Police Department has installed a medication-return box in the lobby of the Police Station – you may dispose of any unwanted/expired prescription medications at any time. There is a flag-disposal dropbox located there as well.

### From the Public Health Nurse...

**Clinic Hours at Council on Aging**

Lori Desmarais, RN, BSN

227 Chace Road, East Freetown

2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of Each Month, 9:30am-10:30am

### Nursing Services Include:

Blood Pressure Screenings

Blood Sugar Screenings

Vitamin B12 injections (prescribed)

Wound Assessment

Referrals

Adult Immunizations

Health Education and Promotion

Home Visitation

Services are provided free of charge through the Board of Health. For more information, please contact Lori Desmarais, RN, BSN in the Board of Health's office: 508-644-2202, ext. 3

### Tax Due Dates for 2024

**FY24 Quarter 3 (Actual):**

February 1, 2024

**FY24 Quarter 4 (Actual):**

May 1, 2024

**FY25 Quarter 1 (Preliminary):**

August 1, 2024

**FY25 Quarter 2: (Preliminary):**

November 1, 2024

Excise taxes (motor vehicle & boat) are produced throughout the year, with due dates 30 days from the billing date.