

**Town of Freedom
Selectmen's Meeting
Monday, April 19, 2021**

Present were Selectmen Leslie Babb, Ernest Day Jr., Melissa Florio, and Stacy Bolduc, Administrative Assistant, who recorded the minutes. Town Administrator Ellen White was absent. This meeting was held at the Town Hall.

Also present were Rob Cunio, Josh Shackford, Scott Brooks, Gary Williams, David Brothers, Senior Aging Advising Committee members- Renee Wheaton, Bev Perry, Linda Habif, ZBA members- Scott Lees, Craig Nüler, John Krebs, Karl Ogren, Dennis Anderson, Public- Carol McIntire, David Brothers, Rich Gray, Kate Chaput, Brian Chaput, Anne & Scott Cunningham, Bill Elliott, Jeff Nicoll.

Chairman Babb called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

Babb made a motion to go into Non-Public under RSA 91-A:3, II(a), motion seconded by Day; Motion passed by Roll call vote-Les-Yes, Day-Yes, Florio-Yes.

**Entered Non-Public at 6:35 p.m.
Public Session Reconvened at 6:45 p.m.**

Review of Mail, Sign Manifests, Approval of Minutes

The accounts payable and payroll manifests were reviewed as well as the red folder containing correspondence.

Department Head Updates:

Fire Department – Chief Rob Cunio reported 6 medical aid calls, 1 mutual aid fire, 1 PD assist.

Discussion- There was a fuel spill on Liberty due to a transformer that brought wires down last month. DES was notified and they have contacted Eversource to send a cleanup crew and Scott Brooks has been made aware.

3 AEDs have been ordered and the Forestry 2 truck is back in service. The three locations that have been chosen will need to have someone AED CPR certified. Chief Cunio explained when we come up with a time that is good for everyone, he will reach out to Action to set the date for getting certified. It will cost \$5.00 a person. Before the AEDs can be registered with the State someone has to be certified to use them in the location where they are being used.

Chief Cunio updated Selectmen that he is leaving for Boston after work tomorrow night and he has three people on the department signed up for large animal rescue training in June to help out with future rescues from multiple towns.

Road Agent- Scott inquired if the check for the one-ton has been signed. It has and he will pick up the check tomorrow. He reported we will not see the all-wheel-drive truck until the first quarter of 2022. The road bans will come off all of the roads this coming Monday.

Police Chief reported on activity for the past week. Some calls consisted of a possible alarm going off on Huckins Rd., motorist assists, suspicious activity in Square Brook turned out to be someone

sleeping in their car because they have no heat, three welfare checks, untimely unattended death in Square Brook, VIN verification, a domestic issue. Josh also got an email from the Admin Assistant regarding drug paraphernalia found on East Danforth and Fife and Drum Road but he said he did not get the pictures.

Melissa commented that on the Family Friends page on Facebook that someone posted a burglary at a home on Youngs Hill and everyone chimed in on it. She was questioning if safety officers could hold classes regarding general safety things you can do to protect yourself from scams and how to keep neighborhoods safe.

Public Comment- None

Kate Chaput reported on Freedom Old Home Week. She reported that the committee is concerned for the Community's safety with COVID. Therefore, activities will be COVID cautious, safe, flexible and, family-focused. Ducky Day will be virtual this year via Facebook and youtube. Tickets will be available the traditional way at the transfer station or online. More information can be found online at freedomoldhomeweek.net. Dates for Old Home Week will be July 30th-Aug 8th. The Parade has been canceled. The 5K race will be held on Saturday with modifications. The details for the Lawn party and ice cream social are still being discussed. They will look different than they have in the past.

In the past the Town has donated money to help with the cost of Old Home Week however, this year no donation will be needed.

Zoning Board of Adjustment- Chairman Scott Lees and Zoning Board Members came before the Selectmen to discuss the ZBA having their own attorney. This is a continuation of a discussion from last year before COVID. The ZBA was under the impression that the Selectmen were not happy with their choice for the attorney due to an invoice he sent. Les responded that was not the reason and said it can only be discussed in non-public.

Chairman Babb made a motion to go into nonpublic under RSA 91-A:3, II (c) at 7:10 p.m., motion seconded by Day; Motion passed by roll call vote- Babb-Yes, Day-Yes Florio-Yes.

Entered non-public at 7:10 p.m.

Public Session Reconvened at 7:15 p.m.

Discussion continued around the ZBA wanting a separate lawyer. The pros and cons were discussed including having a lawyer on a retainer. Craig Niiler explained that they are finding that the Municipal Law Board that the ZBA has access to is often inadequate and inaccurate and found Peter Malia's advice to be more correct. So that is why they were considering having someone they can make a quick call to when confronted with conflicting information. Cons would be the cost involved. Florio and Day support staying with the Town attorney and looking at issues that come up case by case if a different attorney would be needed. **The ZBA asked Selectmen to reach out to Attorney John Ratigan to get his opinion. Ellen will reach out to the town attorney to inquire.**

The Conroy property was briefly discussed. The ZBA was referred to Gary Williams. The Arnold property was discussed next. Gary reported that the building is watertight and the septic system had to be redesigned to meet the setbacks.

The ZBA asked the BOS about hiring a professional when there are complex site issues. Similar to

what the Planning Board does. John stated there are not a lot of cases but every year there seem to be more and more as the land gets scarce. **Les said there is a process and it would be another question for John Ratigan.** It was also suggested that the expense should be on the person purchasing the property. There was a discussion about the applications going between the ZBA and FCC. Jeff Nicoll the FCC Chairman stated the FCC does not always see what the ZBA decisions or opinions are on applications. Sometimes they have to backtrack to understand what happened with the property. Scott Lees explained the process how it is supposed to work.

Renee Wheaton reported she volunteered as a part of the COVID response team and updated Selectmen on Freedom Senior Community Organization Committee. She said people are starting to feel more comfortable and asking what can they do now that they are vaccinated and the mask mandate is being lifted. With the aid of a handout, she explained what the committee has come up with. Please see attached for more details. The committee is recommending a community garden. A grant for \$850.00 has already been approved from Grassroots Fund but will have to be returned if the garden is not approved. There are two other grants she has applied for that she is still waiting to hear back on. The committee suggests using 50 Eaton Rd to fill the requirements for the garden.

Les asked if the selectmen if they would like to hear more about the community garden. Selectmen said yes and Les asked that the Community Garden be on the agenda next week. He explained if there is a discussion about using town property it has to be on the agenda so everyone knows what is being discussed. **The use of town property for a community garden will be on the agenda next week.**

John Krebs addressed Airbnb's in town. He explained Conway's struggles with Airbnb and how they are becoming very problematic. He is asking Selectmen to start addressing the problem now regarding Airbnb's in Freedom before they become a problem for the town. He went on to state these are not second homes. He feels that people are buying these homes for the primary purpose of income. He suggested it's easy enough to find where they are by looking at VRBO or Airbnb. Once they are found he is suggesting sending a letter stating Freedom does not permit short-term rentals. The issue would be if they are recent Airbnb's or people who have rented for years and years. The following was discussed:

- The strain on town resources was discussed.
- There is no benefit to the town for allowing short-term rentals (there is no additional tax revenue or rooms and meals tax collected).
- The strain on septic systems.
- Les stated he found 83 online.
- Life safety.
- How would they be regulated?
- Affordable housing is discussed at the Planning Board meetings every month.

John will get a list of Towns that are effectively managing short-term rentals. Ann Cunningham clarified regulating vs. prohibited. Hanover and Durham are regulating short-term rentals. John Krebs reiterated he does not see an upside to short-term rentals and suggested asking John Ratigan if short-term rentals can be permitted. Renting a property for two months vs. all year or three months was discussed. John K said maybe short-term rental needs to be defined. The stress on the septic systems around the lake was discussed causing a problem for the lake. Josh said there was an article in NHMA regarding short-term rentals and the article stated a town needs to define what the time frame for a short-term rental is. Discussion ensued around the challenges with short-term rentals.

Day made a motion to confirm Jeff Fongemie as an alternate for ZBA, motion seconded by Babb; Motion passed.

Selectmen wanted it relayed to Ellen that the original Milfoil Schedule is fine.

Consent Agenda:

Minutes – Selectmen’s Meeting – 4/12/21	Approved
Payroll Manifest – week ending 4/14/21	Approved
Accounts Payable Manifest – week ending 4/14/2021	Approved

Correspondence:

Newsletter – N/A
Letter –Vegetation Control Service, Inc. given to Scott Brooks to review and NH DES Shoreland Application for Haverhill St. Tax Map #24, Lot#14.
E-mail – N/A

Being no further input, Florio made a motion to adjourn. Day seconded. All in favor, the motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Stacy Bolduc, Administrative Assistant

Approved by the Board of Selectmen on _____:

Leslie R. Babb

Ernest F. Day, Jr.

Melissa M. Florio