



TOWN OF FREEPORT

Town Council Meeting #01-26

Tuesday, January 6, 2026

6:00PM

Town Council Chambers
30 Main Street, Freeport, Maine

Webinar: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83002265775>

Phone: (646) 558-8656 ID: 830 0226 5775

FCTV: [Click here for FCTV Live Stream](#)

AGENDA

- I. Pledge of Allegiance**
- II. Roll Call**
- III. Waive reading and accept as printed on [December 16, 2025 \(#26-25\) Meeting Minutes](#)**
- IV. Announcements (10 minutes)**
 - V. Information Exchange (15 minutes)**
 - a. Councilors**
 - b. Committees**
 - i. Greater Portland Metro Update (Freeport Representative, Bill Rixon)**
 - VI. Town Manager's Report (10 minutes) [Town Manager's Report #2026-01-06](#)**

VII. Public Comment Period (Part I): Limited to Comments on Items Not on the Agenda
Part I is for In-Person Attendees Only (15 Minutes)

VIII. New Business

ITEM # 01-26 To consider action relative to adopting the January 6, 2026, Consent Agenda.

BE IT ORDERED: That the January 6, 2026, Consent Agenda be adopted.

01-26 (a) Accepting the following Donations totaling \$8,312.10

HEATING DONATIONS	
Gladys and Dan Cofrin	\$5,000
Richard Trub	\$400
Julia and Douglas Dahmer	\$50
FIRE DONATIONS	
Julia and Douglas Dahmer	\$50
Richard Trub	\$100
Dale and Diane Inman	\$50
Terry Hutchinson	\$50
Matthew Carpentier	\$50
LIBRARY DONATIONS	
Julia and Douglas Dahmer	\$50
Linda Roberts	\$25
Darryl Uy and Robert Brown	\$100
Daniel Freund	\$100
Susan Gillies	\$100
Dale and Diane Inman	\$50
Alan Weiner	\$100
Sally and Peter Esponnette	\$250
Miscellaneous Cash Donations	\$47.10
Anonymous	\$2000

(Council Chair, Joanna Benoit) (5 minutes)

ITEM # 02-26 To consider action relative to an appointment to the Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG) as an Alternate Delegate for a one-year term.

BE IT ORDERED: That _____ be appointed as the Alternate Delegate to the Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG) for a one-year term.

** Note: After discussion, Councilors will insert the name of an individual and vote on the appointment.*

(Council Chair, Joanna Benoit) (5 minutes)

ITEM # 03-26 To consider action relative to bid acceptance for the [Flying Point Road Reconstruction and Drainage Project.](#)

BE IT ORDERED: That Crooker Construction be awarded the bid for the Flying Point Road Reconstruction and Drainage Project in the amount of \$599,875.00.

Note: \$480,000 was appropriated for this project in the FY2023 Capital Improvements Budget. If approved, the remaining balance of \$119,875 would be appropriated from the Public Infrastructures Reserve Account, which currently has a balance of \$3,631,229.

(Public Works Director, Earl Gibson) (10 minutes)

VII. Public Comment Period (Part II): Limited to Comments on Items Not on the Agenda
Part II is for Virtual Attendees Only (15 Minutes)

IX. Other Business:

1. Discussion of [Short-Term Rental Registration Ordinance](#)
(Council Chair, Joanna Benoit) (15 minutes)
2. Discussion of [Creating Associate Member Positions for Town Boards and Committees](#) (Councilor, Matt Pillsbury) (10 minutes)
3. Discussion of [Non-Resident Use of the Recycling/Transfer Facility](#)
(Assistant Town Manager, Caroline Pelletier) (15 minutes)

END OF AGENDA (Estimated time of Adjournment 7:45 PM)



TOWN OF FREEPORT

Town Council Meeting #26-25

Tuesday, December 16, 2025

6:00 PM

**Town Council Chambers
30 Main Street, Freeport, Maine**

MINUTES

- I. Pledge of Allegiance**
Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.
- II. Roll Call**
Chair Benoit, Vice-Chair Smith, Councilor Brown, Councilor Lawrence, Councilor Sparta, and Councilor Pillsbury. Councilor Piltch arrived at 6:10 pm.
- III. Waive reading and accept as printed the December 2, 2025 (#25-25) [Meeting Minutes](#)**
Moved and Seconded: (Smith & Lawrence)(7-Ayes)(0-Nays)(Video Record Time: 00:01:04-00:01:30)
- IV. Announcements (10 minutes)(Video Record Time: 00:01:30 – 00:03:51)**
The **Award for Freeport Citizen of the Year** is given annually to a Freeport individual or community group that has substantively contributed to the quality of the Town, the well-being of the citizens, and the reputation of Freeport, that has caused a measurable improvement in the circumstances of a significant number of townspeople (Persons employed by the Town of Freeport are not eligible). The name of the honored recipient (or group) will be permanently displayed on a plaque located in Town Hall, so that all may remember their service and contributions. The deadline for submission of candidates is December 31, 2025. As of today, we have not received any nominations.

2026 Dog Licenses are due by December 31st. Don't forget this gift to your canine family.

The **Exit 20 & Exit 22 Bridges Replacement/Multi-Use Path Project** is Complete! The rebuilding project included adding multi-use pathways along with sidewalks, so pedestrians and bicyclists can safely and efficiently make their way from one side of town to the other, strengthening communities and businesses on both sides of the highway. This project also ties in nicely with the Village Corridor Initiative, opening doors for future growth. To learn more people can watch a Town-produced video featuring key players on our website at freeportmaine.com. MDOT continues to work with their engineering staff to dial in the traffic lights.

V. Information Exchange (15 minutes)(Video Record Time: 00:03:51 – 00:04:11)

- a. Councilors-No information
- b. Committees-No information

VI. Town Manager's Report (10 minutes): [2026-12-16 Town Manager's Report](#) (Video Record Time: 00:04:11 – 00:15:40)

The Manager will transition to a written Town Manager's Report.

Correction regarding Memorial Park Pavilion: The money appropriated for the pavilion are Capital funds, not ARPA funds.

New Deputy Public Works Director, Matt Laubauskas, was introduced to the Council. He comes to Freeport with extensive work background in trades and technical knowledge.

Daycare CDBG-We are supporting the Grant. First steps involve allowing the town to be part of the team for a Letter of Intent to Apply. We would do promotion and provide general support for the program. No matching funds are required. Cumberland County runs the CDBG program for all municipalities in the region. There are two ways municipalities can apply; one is as a sole applicant which is limited to one application. The town can support a regional effort without it counting against our ability to make an application. This is our third joint venture with Westbrook.

Multi-use paths and bridges: Complete Streets discussed concerns as to whether to clear snow on multi-use trail on the bridges. There are constituent safety concerns; it will take time for multi-use trail connections to be completed. There have been two incidents of cars driving onto the multi-use trail. We have spoken with MDOT about our concerns. The town requested "Do not enter" signs on each of the ramps.

VII. Public Comment Period (Part I): Limited to Comments on Items Not on the Agenda Part I is for In-Person Attendees Only (15 Minutes)

Video Record Time: (00:15:44 – 00:26:25)

Darrel Fournier and Joyce Veilleux: Asking permission to host a September 11th Memorial to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the event. They have secured Pipes and Drums Band, ladder trucks, the Color Guard, and a speaker from New York. The intent is to close West Street from 8:15 am to 9:30 am. Main Street will not be shut down. High School students will be participating again as they did 5 years ago. There are no costs for the town. One issue is securing insurance coverage. The Town Manager is assisting with this task. Several groups are volunteering and providing donations to cover costs. The Lioness are providing food and snacks. Tonight, the request is to make this a town event and have the town help with promotion for the event. It was agreed that this should be a town event.

Joyce Veilleux: Offered a donation of fifty 12" Wreaths to be placed on veteran stones at small ancient cemeteries in Freeport. The American Legion will put out and pick up.

Daniel Freund: Continues to have serious concerns about the MMEHT excessively high health insurance costs. He offered his assistance should the town wish to explore further. He questioned whether the town has met their fiduciary obligations.

VIII. New Business

ITEM # 152-25 To consider action relative to adopting the December 16, 2025, Consent Agenda.

BE IT ORDERED: That the December 16, 2025, Consent Agenda be adopted.

- 152-25 (a) Appointing Christine Wolfe as the Registrar of Voters effective January 1, 2026-January 1, 2028.
- 152-25 (b) Accepting the resignation of Fred Reeder from the Winslow Park Commission.
- 152-25 (c) Accepting the resignation of Barbara Giffin from the Complete Streets Committee.
- 152-25 (d) Accepting the following donations to the Freeport Community Library:

Richard and Toni Merrick	\$200.00
Miscellaneous Cash Donations	\$118.10
Herbert Taylor	\$25.00
David and Elaina Lowell	\$750.00
Allison O'Donnell	\$40.00
Benjamin and Anne Niles	\$100.00

The Appointments Committee members brought forward the concept of non-voting associate members for our Boards and Committees. We recently had several interviews and had more outstanding applicants than positions available. We want to use this time to create a bench of volunteers waiting for vacancies. The town should capture this surge. The first step forward is to schedule for other business in January with staff bringing back boiler plate language. Many communities do this. This would need to go to the Ordinance Committee. The concept of adding more student bodies to the committees on an internship basis. There are currently two positions on the Police Advisory Committee. We have difficulty getting student involvement.

Moved and Seconded: (Pillsbury & Lawrence)(7-Ayes)(0-Nays)(Video Record Time: 00:26:25 - 00:31:38)
(Council Chair Joanna Benoit) (5 minutes)

ITEM # 153-25 To consider action relative to the purchase of [Scott Air Packs](#). PUBLIC HEARING

Following direction from the Council, the Fire Chief has successfully secured the private sale of 17 of the 20 air bottles. MMA confirmed the town would not have further liability after the sale. The recommendation is to award to Fire Tech & Safety.

BE IT ORDAINED: That the bid to purchase Scott Air Packs in an amount not to exceed \$145,100 be awarded to Fire Tech & Safety with funds drawn from capital funds previously approved for this purpose.

Moved and Seconded: (Sparta & Lawrence)(7-Ayes)(0-Nays)(Video Record Time: 00:31:38 – 00:34:08)

(Fire Rescue Chief, Robert Bernard) (10 minutes)

ITEM # 154-25 To consider action relative to the [Village Corridor Initiative Summer 2026 Demonstration Project\(s\)](#).

- **Background:**
 - VCI stems from the Downtown Vision (2020–2022), Climate Action Plan, Comprehensive Plan, and transit-oriented development studies.
 - Goals: Create a walkable, bikeable, vibrant downtown; integrate land use and transportation planning; leverage transit assets (train station, bus stops, Route 1, I-295).
 - Maine DOT is a key partner, funding 50% of the study; Stantec selected as consultant.

- **Upcoming Milestones:**
 - **Jan 13:** Complete Streets Committee meeting.
 - **Jan 14:** Public workshop at Freeport Community Services on land use and development opportunities.
 - **Feb 3:** Council workshop to review transportation alternatives.
 - Draft report by June; final recommendations and DOT coordination by September.
- **Key Learnings from Main & Bow Trial:**
 - All-way stop improved traffic flow without major degradation.
 - Design challenges noted (large vehicle turns, pedestrian sightlines, aesthetics).
 - Future designs will address crosswalk placement, visual experience, and bus stop integration.
- **Options Presented:**
 - **Full Demonstration at Main & Bow:** Intensive build-out with jersey barriers, crosswalk relocation, and expanded public space. Estimated cost: \$15,000 plus labor; requires night shifts and bid process.
 - **School & Elm Intersection Trial + Mallet Drive Signal Adjustment:**
 - Convert School & Elm to four-way stop; eliminate turning lanes.
 - Adjust Mallet Drive signal timing to prioritize northbound left turns.
 - Potential for permanent implementation if successful.
 - **High-Resolution Renderings & Landscape Sketches:**
 - 3D photo renderings for Main & Bow and sketches for School & Elm and other key corridor points.
 - Goal: Public engagement and informed decision-making. Estimated additional allocation: \$20,000 (town share \$10,000 after DOT match).
- **Staff Recommendation:**
 - Proceed with **Option 2** (School & Elm trial and Mallet signal adjustment) and **Option 3** (renderings and sketches).
 - Allocate \$10,000 for design/engineering and traffic count resources.
 - Ensure proactive communication and public feedback mechanisms (survey, meetings).
- **Council Discussion Highlights:**
 - Emphasis on clear public engagement and feedback channels.
 - Importance of involving urban design experts for renderings to reflect placemaking goals.
 - Recognition that renderings are conceptual, not final designs.
 - Confirmation that MDOT approval is required for signal timing changes.

Action Items

- Town Manager to work with staff, stakeholders, and consultants to implement **VCI demonstration projects (Options 2 & 3)** for Summer 2026.
- Prepare proposal for Maine DOT approval.
- Develop public communication plan and feedback survey.
- Schedule follow-up workshop on **February 3, 2026**.

BE IT ORDERED: That the Town Manager be directed to work with staff, stakeholders, and consultants to implement VCI Demonstration Projects Options Two and Three for Summer 2026.

Note: As drafted, this order represents the staff recommendation for 2026 VCI Demonstration Projects; however, the intent is for the Town Council to discuss and, potentially, amend the order to reflect its desired outcomes.

Moved and Seconded: (Lawrence & Smith)(7-Ayes)(0-Nays)(Video Record
Time: 00:34:08 - 01:14:52)

(Brett Richardson, Development Director) (10 minutes)

ITEM # 155-25 To consider action relative to adopting the [2026 Town Council Meeting Schedule](#).

The proposed 2026 Town Council meeting schedule was presented, including monthly placeholder dates for workshops. Councilors discussed the timing of District Meetings, with a suggestion to move August 17th meeting to October 13th for better attendance.

BE IT ORDERED: That the 2026 Town Council Meeting Schedule be adopted as amended.

Moved and Seconded (Brown & Lawrence)(7-Ayes)(0-Nays) (Video Record
Time: 01:14:52 – 01:20:20)

(Council Chair, Joanna Benoit) (10 minutes)

ITEM # 156-25 To consider action relative to [Town Council Committee and Liaison Assignments.](#)

Committee assignments were reviewed. It was decided that Councilor Sparta will stay on the FEDC Board and Chair Benoit will be the Council Liaison.

BE IT ORDERED: That the assignments for 2025-2026 Town Council Committee and Liaison positions be made as discussed.

Moved and Seconded: (Piltch & Lawrence)(7-Ayes)(0-Nays)(Video Record Time: 01:20:20 – 01:21:55)

(Council Chair, Joanna Benoit) (10 minutes)

ITEM # 157-25 To consider action relative to [Winslow Park/Harb Cottage fees.](#)

Councilor Pillsbury discussed the need to revisit rates for Harbor Cottage rentals due to increasing expenses. The recommendation is to set a flat rate of \$2,200 per week for high season, replacing the high and low season rates. The Manager confirmed that lottery participants were informed that rates were under consideration on our website.

BE IT ORDERED: That the fee to rent Harb Cottage be set at \$2,200 per week for Short Term Rentals in the Summer Season.

Moved and Seconded: (Smith & Lawrence)(7-Ayes)(0-Nays)(Video Record Time: (01:21:55 - 01:27:23)

(Councilor, Matt Pillsbury) (10 minutes)

VII. Public Comment Period (Part II): Limited to Comments on Items Not on the Agenda
Part II is for Virtual Attendees Only (15 Minutes)

IX. Other Business:

1. Discussion of the Town Council's Process for Allocating Outside Agency Support Funding (Finance Committee Chair, Matt Pillsbury) (20 minutes) (Video Record Time: 01:27:23 – 01:58:05)

- **Background:**

- The Finance Committee previously allocated approximately \$56,000–\$57,000 for outside agency support in FY26.
- Historically, allocations focused on social services; recent years have expanded to include agencies supporting community vision and arts.
- ARPA funding influenced prior processes, creating broader eligibility.

- **Key Issues Identified:**
 - **Equity and Taxpayer Impact:** Councilor Henry Lawrence expressed concern about including outside agency funding in the regular budget, citing the burden on taxpayers who struggle to pay property taxes. Suggested funding from surplus after tax collection rather than raising taxes.
 - **Definition and Categorization:** Councilor Smith noted confusion around the term “outside agencies,” emphasizing that some nonprofits provide essential services comparable to contracted vendors. Recommended focusing on service necessity rather than nonprofit status.
 - **Return on Investment:** Highlighted the application process requiring agencies to quantify impact (e.g., \$1,500 donation yielding \$15,000 in services).
 - **Contractual vs. Discretionary Funding:** The Town Manager clarified that some agencies (e.g., FCTV, Historical Society) are embedded in the budget, while others rely on annual discretionary allocations.
 - **Sustainability:** Councilor Lawrence raised concerns about recurring funding without clear sunset provisions, urging nonprofits to develop independent sustainability plans.
 - **Data Needs:** Consensus emerged on obtaining data from town departments regarding referrals and reliance on agency services to inform funding decisions.
 - Total outside agency allocation represents a small fraction of the municipal budget (<0.5%).
 - Council acknowledged the importance of aligning funding decisions with town values and strategic vision.

Action Items and Next Steps:

- **Data Collection:** Town Manager Sophie Wilson will compile information on agency utilization by departments (e.g., GA Administrator, Police, Alternative Response Team).
- **Finance Committee Review:** Data and recommendations to be presented at the Finance Committee meeting on **January 22, 2026** (or February if data is delayed).
- **Policy Development:** Committee to explore categorization of agencies (contractual vs. discretionary) and potential funding mechanisms (e.g., surplus-based allocations).
- **Council Follow-Up:** Finance Committee will return with recommendations for council discussion and approval.
- Finance Committee meeting scheduled for **January 22, 2026**.
- Councilors are invited to attend and participate in the discussion.
- Broader policy conversation to continue during FY27 budget planning.

Motion to adjourn at 8:02 pm: (Lawrence & Piltch)(7-Ayes)

END OF AGENDA (Estimated Time of Adjournment - 8:20 PM)



MEMORANDUM

TO: Sophie Wilson, Town Manager
CC: Jessica Maloy, Finance Director
FROM: Earl Gibson, Director of Public Works
DATE: December 22, 2025
SUBJECT: Flying Point Reconstruction with drainage improvement.

In FY2023, the Town Council approved \$480,000 for the reconstruction, with associated drainage improvements, of a section of Flying Point Road from Upper Mast Landing Road to Pleasant Hill Road.

I assumed responsibility for this project in spring 2024 due to a staff transition and reorganization of Public Works and Engineering. Given the extensive nature of this project, the Town then engaged Sebago Technics to assess of existing conditions, create construction plans, develop bid documents, and assist with the bid process. Prior to finalizing construction plans, the Town held a public meeting with individual notice to property owners along and on connecting roads in this section of Flying Point Road. The feedback caused staff and our consultants to make some minor changes to the plans prior to placing the project out to bid.

After discussion with contractors and colleagues, I elected to hold the bid process until the winter in an attempt to ensure the most competitive pricing. Following the the pre-bid process, the Town received the following bids for this project: Crooker Construction (\$599,875); and Pratt & Son (\$828,675). Staff carefully reviewed the bid submittals and determined that Crooker Construction's bid was complete and responsive to the Town's request for proposals (RFP). This bid amount exceeds the original \$480,000 budget approved by the Town Council by \$119,875, primarily due to scope enhancements and inflation between 2022 and present day. Staff recommends that the remaining amount be funded from the Public Infrastructure Reserve account, which currently has a balance of \$3,631,229.

Recommendation

Based on bid results and what is best suited for the Town of Freeport, staff recommends awarding the bid to Crooker Construction in the amount of \$599,875.00 with funds drawn from the approved Capital Project (\$480,000) and Public Infrastructure Reserve Funds (\$119,875).

Town Manager's Report

January 6, 2026

Please note that operations were curtailed during the holiday season due to planned vacations and unexpected illnesses among staff. Expect operational reports for December in the next report.

Projects & Initiatives

RSU 5 Comprehensive Sustainability Plan Collaboration Opportunity

Staff from the Town Manager's Office has been invited to join RSU 5 in an exploration of joint sustainability and climate action initiatives. The initial meeting with RSU management and the Director of Green Schools is scheduled for January 14th.

Community Workshop – Freeport's Village Corridor

Councilors and community members are invited to join the Town and project partners on Wednesday, January 14th at 6PM at Freeport Community Services (FCS) to learn more about the future of Freeport's Village Corridor and plans to build the community's vision for new housing, inviting public spaces, and transportation for all.

Departmental Operational Reports

Freeport Community Library (FCL)

The Freeport Community Library continues to thrive as a central gathering place for the community. In December, programming drew exceptionally strong participation, including capacity stretching events with Colin Woodard and Noon Year's Eve. We continue to observe a high level of community engagement and creativity of Library staff. Staff are also advancing sustainability efforts connected to the Town's Sustainable Library Initiative certification, including a hands-on trash audit planned for mid-January and growing participation from both employees and trustees. Day-to-day operations are running smoothly, with the new cleaning service performing well and minor adjustments underway to address increased trash volumes associated with higher use. In parallel, Library leadership is exploring ways to better align services with the Town's Comprehensive Plan by expanding community education and outreach, while continuing to adapt operations to support the Library's consistently high level of use.

Human Resources

Staff gathered last week to celebrate Officer Mark Dorval's retirement from full-time law enforcement. We appreciate his many years of dedicated service and wish him all the best as he transitions into his next chapter!

Planning and Development Update

In December, Freeport's Project Review Board approved a solar project on Prout Road, reviewed the concept plan for a 46-unit multifamily development at 0 & 45 Depot Street, and issued a design review certificate for the construction of a new garage at 19 South Street. The Codes Enforcement Officer assisted the Town of Yarmouth's Codes Office with Electrical Inspector duties while they were working to staff a long-term vacancy.

Public Works

The Public Works crew was hard at work right before the holiday responding to a winter weather event that dropped approximately 17 inches of snow. Given the nature of the storm and new roles for several crew members, the team did a very nice job working systematically through the prolonged storm while also addressing equipment breakdowns. In the aftermath of the event, we fielded questions from both community members and Town Councilors about sidewalk maintenance responsibilities and mailbox damage in the right of way. Staff will provide additional information in the next report (1/20/2026).

Solid Waste and Recycling

Town operations related to solid waste and recycling remain a priority, with staff implementing both outreach and operational improvements. Public communication regarding the closure of the Hunter Road silver bullet recycling location on January 5, 2026, has been extensive, using signage, social media, municipal bulletins, and informational sheets distributed with Transfer Facility sticker purchases. Messaging emphasizes the Recycling/Transfer Facility as the primary location for recycling services.

Staff continue to promote best practices for recycling and waste disposal, monitor 2026 Transfer Facility sticker sales, and provide updated informational materials to residents. A new Annual Clean-up Coupon system is being introduced to replace the traditional spring clean-up week, allowing households to redeem a coupon at any time during the year. Additional work includes reviewing and updating signage at the remaining silver bullet location, adjusting collection schedules as needed, and evaluating Recycling/Transfer Facility operations for potential site improvements.

Under new departmental leadership, efforts are underway to implement data collection and tracking systems that will support data-driven decision-making in the future. Staffing remains below full capacity, with one full-time laborer position currently vacant, leaving the department approximately 70% staffed. To maintain service levels, Public Works personnel have been assisting through overtime assignments.

The Assistant Town Manager also reports that Freeport Sustainability Advisory Board (FSAB) is advancing several initiatives to engage residents and promote sustainable

practices. Plans include a public art display at the Recycling/Transfer Facility featuring works created from repurposed materials, potentially in collaboration with Meetinghouse Arts. The Board is also preparing to launch a seasonal volunteer program to staff and organize the Swap Shop one Saturday per month, improving its visibility and enhancing related website content and signage.

Educational outreach remains a priority, with the return of FSAB's lecture series in partnership with organizations such as ecomaine and Garbage to Garden, as well as creative engagement opportunities like sustainability-themed trivia nights. Additional efforts include promoting composting through discounted bins and free compost events, developing a comprehensive list (and potential map) of local donation sites, and marketing the Recycling/Transfer Facility's services to encourage greater public use. FSAB will continue leveraging physical sites and online platforms for outreach, reinforcing the Town's commitment to waste reduction and resource recovery.

Concerns

Village Sidewalk Winter Maintenance

Staff fielded questions about responsibility for maintaining the sidewalks in the Village. Departmental operations have not changed for this season and the [Sidewalk Maintenance Ordinance](#) (Chapter 9) remains in effect. Residents are reminded that property owners remain responsible for sidewalk maintenance under this ordinance

Upcoming Events & Meetings (At Town Hall unless Otherwise Indicated)

Jan. 5 th at 8:00 AM	Coffee with Council Leadership
Jan. 5 th	Appeals Board Meeting (Cancelled – No Appeals)
Jan. 6 th at 6:00 PM	Town Council Meeting
Jan. 7 th	Planning Board Meeting (Cancelled – Community Workshop on 1/14)
Jan. 8 th at 6:30 PM	Shellfish Commission Meeting
Jan. 12 th at 6:00 PM	Winslow Park Commission Meeting
Jan. 13 th at 7:30 AM	Complete Streets Committee Meeting
Jan. 13 th at 4:00 PM	Town Manager's Office Drop-In Office Hours
Jan. 13 th at 5:00 PM	Appointments Committee Meeting
Jan. 14 th at 4:00 PM	Municipal Facilities Committee Meeting
Jan. 14 th at 6:00 PM	Coastal Waters Commission Meeting
Jan. 14 th at 6:00 PM	Community Workshop – Village Corridor Initiative at FCS, 53 Depot St.
Jan 14 th at 6:00 PM	Library Board of Trustees at Freeport Community Library

Staff Memo

To: Freeport Town Council

From: Sophia L. Wilson, Town Manager

Date: January 6, 2026

Re: Background for Discussion of Establishing Associate Member Positions for Town Boards and Committees

Background and Purpose

Councilor Pillsbury suggested exploring the concept of Associate Member positions for Town boards and committees as a way to capture growing community interest in civic engagement and to strengthen the Town's governance capacity. This idea comes at a time when Freeport is experiencing a surge in volunteer interest—perhaps due in part to the RSU 5/Town Civics 101 partnership earlier this year—and seeks to address several practical challenges:

- **Quorum Reliability and Recusal Management:** Associate Members could help maintain quorum and ensure robust deliberation when regular members are absent or must recuse themselves due to conflicts.
- **Succession Planning and Continuity:** Associates provide a pipeline for future full members, reducing vacancies and easing transitions.
- **Volunteer Flexibility:** These roles allow residents to participate meaningfully without the full commitment of a voting seat, supporting broader engagement.

Current Boards and Committees ([More info in Chapter 2, Article VI](#))

Board / Committee	Mission (Brief)	Regular Members
Planning Board	Reviews development, subdivisions, and land-use plans.	7
Project Review Board	Quasi-judicial review of site and design proposals.	7
Board of Appeals	Handles zoning and land-use appeals.	5
Board of Assessment Review	Hears property tax assessment appeals.	3
Conservation Commission	Advises on natural resource and land conservation.	7

Coastal Waters Commission	Oversees harbor and coastal resource management.	7
Shellfish Conservation Commission	Manages shellfish habitat and regulations.	7
Library Board of Directors	Oversees library policy and planning.	9
Winslow Park Commission	Advises on park operations and programming.	9
Cable TV Regulatory Board	Oversees cable franchise compliance.	5
Complete Streets Committee	Promotes multi-modal transportation design.	9
Sustainability Advisory Board	Advises on environmental sustainability strategies.	7
Hunter Road Fields Advisory	Oversees athletic field use and programming.	7

Associate Member Role Options

- **Option A – Fixed Non-Voting:** Associates attend and participate but never vote unless formally appointed to a regular seat.
- **Option B – Fluid Voting:** Associates are non-voting except when elevated during a meeting to replace an absent or recused member.

Recommended Next Steps

If the Town Council would like to pursue the creation of Associate Member positions, staff recommends first **reach out to Committee Chairs** to discuss the concept and gather feedback as well as to ensure alignment and transparency before any formal action.

Following that initial step, the next steps could include:

Pilot Program: Begin with a small pilot focused on the Town's more formal boards—such as the Planning Board, Project Review Board, Local Board of Assessment Review, and Board of Appeals—where quorum and recusal issues are most critical.

Draft Ordinance Amendments: The Town Clerk and Town Manager would work together to prepare proposed changes to Chapter 2 of the Administrative Code to define Associate Member roles, responsibilities, and options for participation.

Council Review and Adoption: Bring the proposed ordinance amendments back to the Town Council for discussion, refinement, and formal adoption.

TOWN OF FREEPORT

To: Freeport Town Council

From: Sophia L. Wilson, Town Manager

Date: January 6, 2026

RE: Background for Discussion on Non-Resident Use of the Recycling/Transfer Facility

This memorandum provides background for the Council's Other Business discussion on what appears to be the long-standing practice of issuing non-resident facility stickers for use at the Freeport Recycling/Transfer Facility. In late-December, staff paused the issuance of non-resident stickers pending Town Council guidance.

For many years, residents of Pownal, Durham, and North Yarmouth have been permitted to purchase an annual non-resident sticker, currently priced at \$40, which allows for disposal of recyclables and bulky waste at the Freeport Recycling/Transfer Facility. For context, in 2025, more than 300 non-resident stickers were issued. Institutional knowledge suggests this practice began during the early years of the Facility's operation, when the ecomaine recycling rebates helped offset the Town's operating costs. Over time, the practice continued without formal review or express authorization in Town ordinance. In fact, [the Town's Solid Waste Disposal Ordinance](#) (Chapter 28, Article 3, Section 28-301) limits use of the Recycling/Transfer Facility to Freeport residents, Freeport property owners, and licensed waste haulers. The ordinance does not include provisions authorizing facility use by non-residents.

Freeport currently pays increasingly higher fees to process and transport recyclables (\$110.50/ton for processing only) and bulky waste. While non-resident users contribute through sticker fees, those fees do not fully cover processing and disposal costs, which are otherwise borne by Freeport taxpayers. Neighboring municipalities manage residential solid waste independently and do not rely on Freeport's facility. In addition, staff have identified that the Recycling/Transfer Facility fee schedule has not been comprehensively reviewed in several years. This review is proceeding as a separate project, with potential updates anticipated for consideration by the Town Council Finance Committee later this month.

The Council may wish to consider the following policy options:

1. Maintain the current suspension of non-resident access;
2. Explore ordinance amendments that would allow limited non-resident use;
3. Direct staff to resume issuance of non-resident stickers under existing practices; or
4. Discontinue non-resident use to align with the current ordinance.

TOWN OF FREEPORT

To: Freeport Town Council

From: Sophia Wilson, Town Manager

Date: January 6, 2026

Re: Background for 'Other Business' Item – Short-Term Rental Ordinance Discussion

Purpose of the Discussion

The purpose of the Other Business agenda item on January 6, 2026 is to provide an opportunity for the Town Council to review and discuss the intent, effectiveness, and future direction of Freeport's Short-Term Rental (STR) Registration Ordinance. This discussion is intended to clarify Council priorities and explore options for data collection, enforcement practices, potential use of third-party software tools, and possible ordinance and/or fee changes.

Background on the Ordinance

[Freeport's Short-Term Residential Rental Registration Ordinance \(Chapter 61\)](#) was adopted by the Town Council in April 2021. The ordinance requires residential dwelling units rented for fewer than 28 consecutive days to be registered annually with the Town Clerk and establishes basic operational standards, local contact requirements, and a registration fee (currently \$100/STR unit). It also requires proof of liability insurance coverage and mandates that the Police Department and Codes Enforcement Office report annually to the Town Council on complaints related to short-term rentals.

Based on staff recollections from the time of adoption, the Council's intent was primarily to collect data about the prevalence and nature of short-term rentals in Freeport and to monitor potential neighborhood impacts, rather than to implement an active or technology-driven enforcement program. The ordinance was structured around registration, information gathering, and complaint-based response rather than proactive identification of unregistered units.

Operational Questions Raised

More recently, staff have heard from Councilors—and from individuals at the Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG) with whom some Councilors have spoken—about the potential use of software platforms designed to identify short-term rental listings and assist with standardizing enforcement efforts. These types of tools are used by some municipalities to

compare online STR listings with local registration records and to flag potential non-compliance and assist with initial enforcement efforts.

Specifically, GPCOG provides a suite of services to help municipalities understand, engage, govern, and enforce STR regulations. Services include ordinance drafting, cost analysis, and enforcement software that identifies unregistered STRs, manages licenses, and provides public transparency. The annual licensing fee for Freeport would be approximately \$3,500. [GPCOG's recent report](#) estimated about 175 STRs in Freeport (4.37% of housing stock) and identified 60 violations during initial review. Casco, Cape Elizabeth, and Old Orchard Beach actively use GPCOG's software to manage over 2,000 STRs collectively.

Implementing this type of software would represent a clear operational shift from the original approach staff recalls from when the ordinance was adopted. Such a shift raises broader policy questions regarding the purpose of the ordinance, the Town's desired level of oversight and enforcement, and how staff and budgetary resources should be allocated.

Staff initially raised this topic with the Town Council to confirm Council direction. The discussion that followed highlighted differing perspectives among Councilors and left unresolved questions about whether the ordinance is meeting its intended purpose, whether it should be modified, and what actions—if any—should be taken next.

Additional Information and Public Input

Since that discussion, staff have received additional information from the public, including outreach from a private company offering a product similar to those discussed through GPCOG.

A community member also reached out to the Town Manager's Office expressing support for short-term rentals when they involve homeowners renting their own properties but raised concerns about investors and corporations purchasing multiple homes and operating them like hotels in residential neighborhoods. The resident suggested an approach that places minimal regulatory burden on small, owner-occupied STR operators while imposing stronger limits on commercial operators, particularly in residential zones. Key ideas included allowing rentals in a primary residence, limiting non-owner-occupied STRs to one per owner in residential zones, capping them town-wide at 1% of housing units, and treating operators with five or more STRs—or STRs with more than four bedrooms—as lodging businesses subject to stricter requirements. The resident emphasized that these measures would help protect neighborhoods, preserve year-round housing, prevent STRs from becoming unregulated lodging businesses, and maintain fairness for legitimate lodging operators. They also noted that similar

regulatory frameworks have been adopted in nearby communities such as Kennebunkport, Cape Elizabeth, Brunswick, and Yarmouth.

Financial Considerations

When the ordinance was adopted, the registration fee generated revenue that has been used to offset existing staff time and administrative efforts related to short-term rental registrations and complaint handling. Effectively, while staff resources are used to manage the program and address STR and neighborhood concerns, there has not been a clear corresponding increase in departmental expense budgets.

The addition of software platforms, consulting support, or expanded enforcement activities would introduce new costs. Absent a fee increase or other revenue source, those costs would have a budgetary impact. Any decision to pursue enhanced monitoring or enforcement tools would therefore need to consider whether and how program fees should be adjusted to cover those expenses.

Summary and Next Steps

This agenda item is intended to help the Town Council clarify the purpose and future direction of the Short-Term Rental Registration Ordinance. The discussion may focus on the following questions:

- Should the ordinance remain focused on data collection and complaint-based enforcement, or move toward active identification and enforcement?
- Are ordinance amendments or policy refinements needed?
- Should staff explore software tools, fee adjustments, or other implementation changes?

Potential next steps, which the Council may expand upon or identify new options during its discussion, include:

- Continue current practices if the Council confirms a data-collection approach.
- Research enforcement tools, costs, and potential fee adjustments if active enforcement is prioritized. (*Initially, staff supporting Town Council or Finance Committee.*)
- Draft ordinance amendments if changes to scope or focus are requested. (*Initially, staff supporting Town Council or Ordinance Committee.*)