

MINUTES
FREEPORT TOWN COUNCIL MEETING #23-21
TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 30 MAIN STREET, FREEPORT
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2021
6:30 p.m.

<u>ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS:</u>	PRESENT	EXCUSED	ABSENT
Edward Bradley, 242 Flying Point Road	x		
Jake Daniele, 264 Pownal Road	x		
John Egan, 38 Curtis Road (Chair)	x		
Henry Lawrence, 93 Hunter Road	x		
Daniel Piltch, 25 Quarry Lane	x		
Tawni Whitney, 56 Baldwin Road (Vice Chair)	x		

Chair Egan called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and welcomed everyone. He took the roll and everyone was present including the Town Manager, Peter Joseph.

FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS: Pledge of Allegiance

Everyone stood and recited the Pledge.

SECOND ORDER OF BUSINESS: To waive the reading of the minutes of Meeting #22-21 held on October 19, 2021 and to accept the minutes as printed.

MOVED AND SECONDED: To waive the reading of the minutes of Meeting #22-21 held on October 19, 2021 and to accept the minutes as printed. (Lawrence & Daniele) **VOTE:** (6 Ayes) (0 Nays)

THIRD ORDER OF BUSINESS: That the Town Clerk report on the returns of the November 2, 2021 Election.

Joyce Veilleux advised that she has been working the polls with our Town Clerk since she has been in town and wanted to let everybody know how lucky we are that we have her. She runs a tight ship and the best elections she has been able to participate in. Everything is very transparent and there is never any question about the results. She thanked Ms. Wolfe for everything she does and feels she does a great job.

Town Clerk, Chris Wolfe added that elections are a lot of work and some people think it is just Election Day but it is the month before and the three weeks following for the Clerk's office. They really do place a very high importance on the elections and they do their very best. She announced the election results:

Town Councilor-at-Large: Darrel Fournier-2,696 * was elected and ran unopposed.

Town Councilor District 3: Matthew Pillsbury-613 * was elected to fill Doug Reighley's vacancy

Town Councilor District 4: Henry "Chip" Lawrence III - (was re-elected)

RSU #5 Board of Directors: Colin Cheney and Dung, Nguyen were elected.

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Sewer District

Michael Ashby-was re-elected

Adam Morse- was re-elected

Sara Randall- was re-elected

Water District: Jonathan Gagne won with 7 write-in votes and has accepted that position

Ms. Wolfe added that the Total No. of Registered Voters on Election Day was 7,673. The number of registration cards handled at the Registration Desk was 95 and it was not anticipated. This is an off-year election so they didn't think they would have that much new voter registrations.

The Total Number of Ballots Cast for this election based on the State Ballot Return was 3,676. She was thinking that we had broken a record for an off-year election. There has been one election that beat us and that was in 2009 where 4,000 voters showed up and voted on the Same-sex Marriage Question.

The percentage of voters that cast ballots was 47% so Freeport again came through with that higher than Portland, higher than Westbrook and higher than Bath total. We always have good voter turnout. 1,321 Absentees were requested and we had almost a total return at 1,262. That was 34% of the ballots cast. She is very grateful for our drop-off box. It has made such a difference for us keeping people feeling safe and not having to come into Town Hall with COVID.

Two little hiccups were experienced. We continue to have to use the rear entrance of the gymnasium. That was the choice that the School made as the hallway is now being used as a lunch room. We cannot for the time being, use the front entrance which is why we had to direct voters to the rear entrance to the gymnasium.

The second hiccup we had was on Election Night, we had a memory stick that would not print a total that was from all the ballots we processed early the week before on Thursday. It is a hiccup in one of the sticks that happened. She was told it happens for some reason but they are not really sure why. They are looking into it now. What resulted was two clerks showed up here on Wednesday morning and started re-running all of the Absentee ballots. They fed them back through the machines. They got the tapes and had the results by noon. It was not anything that was major.

Chair Egan pointed out that he had an e-mail from Chris at 11:50 saying, "I think we are going to have to do this tomorrow." Mr. Joseph thanked Ms. Wolfe for the way she handled it. It makes him comfortable knowing she has the ballots quarantined in the vault for early processing, locked and sealed as everyone is supposed to do because when a hiccup happens and you can't have the totals anymore, you can just pull them out, make sure everyone knows what is going on, you have witnesses and you rerun them. Election integrity was top notch. He thanked Ms. Wolfe. When he read the e-mail along with Chair Egan, he had about 30 seconds of panic but he said, nope, it will happen exactly as it should. He felt it was a nice job and thanked all the election workers who were dealing with that at 11 o'clock. It must have been pretty frustrating. Ms. Wolfe added that we have the best Election Clerks. She feels she has a great team and she can only be as good as her team.

MOVED AND SECONDED: That the Town Clerk's report be accepted. (Piltch & Lawrence)
VOTE: (6 Ayes) (1 Excused-Fournier) (0 Nays)

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Ms. Wolfe swore in new Councilors Matthew Pillsbury and Henry (Chip) Lawrence and congratulated them.

<u>ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS:</u>	PRESENT	EXCUSED	ABSENT
Edward Bradley, 242 Flying Point Road	x		
Jake Daniele, 264 Pownal Road	x		
John Egan, 38 Curtis Road (Chair)	x		
Darrel Fournier, 3 Fournier Drive		x	
Henry Lawrence, 93 Hunter Road	x		
Matthew Pillsbury	x		
Daniel Piltch, 25 Quarry Lane	x		

Prior to the reception, Sarah Tracy asked if people would be allowed to say a few words and Chair Egan invited speakers to come to the podium.

Scott Gleeson recognized how much Tawni has done in her three years especially with the Re-visioning of the Downtown and the pop-up skatepark where he got to watch the kids every day using it. He advised the Council that now that it is gone, there are a lot of skateboarders skating around looking for a ramp. He gave kudos to the Council for going out and providing that skatepark. It was a smashing success. Being off the Council, he now knows how much time he has. He thanked Tawni and all the Councilors for all that they do. It is a lot of time and a lot of effort and it is good to have all of them on the Council. He appreciates everything the Council does.

Sarah Tracy wanted to honor Tawni because she has been an amazing Councilor. She has great energy. She has dug in and gotten things done. She came in and while we had identified Aging in Place, within six months we were an age-certified community with AARP and we had a Board. We had a bird feeder program for the Seniors and we had this whole system in place for the elderly that wanted to age in place in Freeport. With the decline of retail, we thought that maybe we should think about our downtown again. Within a year we had a consultant, reports being generated and surveys. In large part that was because Tawni not only served as a Councilor but it became her life. She thanked Steve for supporting her in that. He was definitely her partner in crime and required a huge family commitment. Tawni did this job for free probably 6-8 hours a day and probably at least 4 days a week. She committed so much time and energy to this position and took it so seriously that she really was an example to us all. When everybody was sitting around and asking how are we going to do it, Tawni said she would do it and she did. She brought people along with her feeling good about the projects and producing good results. She is a special person. Ms. Tracy feels she was privileged to serve with Tawni but we have been privileged in the town to have her for the last three years. We are privileged that she is now continuing to serve us in a different way. She thanked Tawni for all the time she spent being a fabulous Councilor.

Joyce Veilleux noted that when Tawni showed up at her door, she knew she was the person she needed to support to get on the Council. She did the work. She met the people. She gave people her phone number and her e-mail address and allowed them to contact her any time and responded immediately to them. She continued to do that throughout her entire three years on the Council. Not only was she good for the Town helping the town in the process of revitalization but she was good for the citizens in helping them. She thanked Tawni.

Mary Davis mentioned that collaboration is a word that is tossed around a lot but is seldom enacted. The thing that has been such a pleasure is that Tawni really believes in collaboration. So many times, she said to her, "we are so much better if we act together." You can see that in all the things that have happened

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with Tawni so she set a high bar for collaboration and Ms. Davis is hoping we will continue to do that as we go along. We can get so much done if we do it together.

Councilor Bradley advised that the first call he received when he was thinking of running for Council after 30 years was from Co-chair Whitney who said, "Hope you do it." He has witnessed in the past three years the transformation of a young lady into a Town icon. What has happened is through her care for other people, her energy, her ability to identify issues that are important to the town, she has taken her place in the ranks of Paul Powers, Edgar Leighton, Vaughndella Curtis and all the other people who come to mind when we think about how this town became what it is. He has no doubt we will watch her in the Chamber and beyond continue in that mold. He thanked her for the privilege to work with her. As a grandfather who watches this family, he has no idea where she finds the time to do it.

Councilor Piltch advised that Tawni is one of the reasons why he joined the Council. She was an inspiration. Councilor Gleeson that came before him mentioned that you can make as much or as little on the Council as you want to being on the Council and Tawni is an example of how much you can really make on the Council. Tawni has given a tremendous amount and he will miss her enthusiasm and passion for Freeport. For those who have not had the privilege of working with Tawni on a project, the way he thinks of it is if you think back to when you were three years old and walking down the street with your mom and you are holding on to her pinky, you have just learned how to walk and are struggling to keep up by taking four steps for every step she takes. That is what he feels like when he is working with Tawni. He was trying to keep up. He thanked her for setting that example and he looks forward to working with her in the future.

Councilor Lawrence advised that he and Tawni started at the same time. When he has a problem, he works day and night until it is done. Tawni does that and has a young family. He doesn't know how she does it. Kudos to her. He thanked her for the pleasure of serving with her.

Councilor Daniele noted that it has been a pleasure getting to know Tawni. He wrote down that he is inspired by her passion, her energy, her enthusiasm and her we can do this attitude. She inspired him to try to do more. He is looking forward to seeing what she can do next but will miss her on Tuesdays.

Chair Egan added that her sign says Vice Chair but Councilor Bradley has it right. Co-chair is really the better title. He recalled that Tawni first appeared in his yard while he was out working. She was in a hurry because she had 500 other people to see that day. She introduced herself and asked a couple of questions. He gave one- or two-word answers and she said great, here is why I am running for Council and let him know exactly what her intentions were and her plan. He thought that is exactly the kind of energy that we can use on the Council. She immediately brought her focus to Freeport Community Services. We had an issue trying to resettle new Mainers and immigrants into our community and she was out in front with that as well as Freeport Friends. Every time we asked Tawni to do something, her answer was yes. She and Chair Egan pulled together the TIF agreement with L.L. Bean. She supported responsible and meaningful budget decisions and he says meaningful because he feels the budget in this town reflects a broad spectrum of interest not just the accounting side. Singlehandedly she took on the responsibility and the enormous undertaking of coordinating the Downtown Revisioning effort. She certainly had a fellow pilot plan actor with her and breathed life, love and caring to that plan, at least Phase One, which is what we have in front of us right now with lots more to do. Tawni's fingerprints are all over town, in people's homes, school grounds and here at Town Hall. There is no part in our community that she hasn't helped improved, coordinated, energized, rebuilt, spotlighted and brought love to. In case anyone has any doubts, look at the skate park we talked about. He recalled the COVID Parade from 2020 and the Town Walk we had in March of 2021 that yielded 2,500 comments and suggestions from residents. If anyone was not out

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there on that brisk March morning, it was fantastic to see. He is going to look for the biggest tree in Freeport and he is going to name it Tawni's Tower.

Pictures were taken. Chair Egan presented Tawni with a plaque for her three years on our Council as well as a bouquet of flowers and card.

RECEPTION FOR OUTGOING COUNCILOR: The Council recessed to recognize outgoing Councilor Tawni Whitney at 6:55 p.m.

At 7:20 p.m. the Council reconvened. Chair Egan thanked whoever arranged for the nice snacks.

FOURTH ORDER OF BUSINESS: To take action on the following items of business as read by the Council Chairperson:

ITEM # 212-21 To consider action relative to the electing of a Chairperson and a Vice-Chairperson for the Town Council.

MOVED AND SECONDED: To nominate Dan Piltch to be Chair of the Council for the upcoming year. (Egan & Bradley)

Councilor Piltch accepted the nomination and thanked Chair Egan for the vote of confidence. There were no other nominations presented.

BE IT ORDERED: That Dan Piltch be elected Chairperson of the Town Council. **VOTE:** (6 Ayes) (1 Excused-Fournier) (0 Nays)

MOVED AND SECONDED: To nominate John Egan to be Vice Chair of the Council for the coming year. (Bradley & Piltch)

Councilor Egan accepted the nomination.

MOVED AND SECONDED: That the nominations for the position of Council Vice-Chairperson be closed. (Bradley & Lawrence) **VOTE:** (6 Ayes) (1 Excused-Fournier) (0 Nays)

BE IT ORDERED: That John Egan be elected Vice-Chairperson of the Town Council. **VOTE:** (6 Ayes) (1 Excused-Fournier) (0 Nays)

MOVED AND SECONDED: To adjourn at 7:25 p.m. (Bradley & Daniele)
VOTE: (6 Ayes) (1 Excused-Fournier) (0 Nays)

Respectively submitted,

Sharon Coffin, Council Secretary