

Town of Freedom  
Regular Board Meeting Minute  
Monday, July 20, 2020

Officials Present: Dustin Bliss, Geoff Milks and Supervisor Randy Lester  
Absent: John Hill

Other Officials: Constable Robert Harrington

Others: 10

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Meeting called to order at 7:06 pm by Supervisor Randy Lester

- I. PLEDGE TO THE FLAG:** Led by Supervisor Randy Lester
- II. REVIEW OF MINUTES:**

Town Board Meeting Minutes from June 15, 2020

A motion was made by Dustin Bliss to accept the Meeting minutes of June 15, 2020 as submitted. Motion seconded by Geoff Milks.

Roll Call: Ayes-3 Dustin Bliss, Geoff Milks, and Supervisor Randy Lester

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**III. Resolution #25-2020**

**RESOLUTION #25-2020 SUPPORTING THE CATTARAUGUS COUNTY REAL  
PROPERTY TAX SERVICES IN UPDATING THE Town of Freedom ASSESSMENT  
ROLL**

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Freedom, Town Board supports the efforts of Cattaraugus County's Real Property Tax Services in updating the Town of Freedom assessment roll to full-market value, and

**WHEREAS**, the Town feels that it is necessary to conduct a reassessment project of all properties to maintain a uniform standard of assessment for the Town; and

**NOW, THEREFORE**, it is hereby

**RESOLVED**, by the Town Board of the Town of Freedom, New York, that the Town of Freedom hereby requests State assistance, specifically from the New York State

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Office of Real Property Tax Services, to do a reassessment project to maintain a uniform standard of assessment in accordance with Section 305 of the Real Property Tax Law

Motion by: \_\_\_\_\_, Seconded by \_\_\_\_\_

Roll call:

Bliss:

Hill:

Milks:

Lester:

Clerk: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: / /

NO VOTE WAS TAKEN

Discussion on this Resolution: Councilman Dustin Bliss asked who proposed this resolution. Town Clerk Mindy Holland stated the Assessors, Supervisor Randy Lester stated the Cattaraugus County Assessors. Dustin asked when did they request this, Mindy stated they sent a email last week to put this forward to the board. Dustin asked is this asking the Board for approval continuing reassessment of property values. Randy stated yes. Councilman Geoff Milks asked is this what the Town Board signed up for last year with Cattaraugus County Assessors doing Assessment. Randy stated yes. Mindy stated this would be everyone property being reassessed and updated. Dustin asked if this is any different than regular services the Assessor provide. Dustin stated back in 2012 the Town did a Town wide reevaluation for full market value. He would like to know why the County is asking to reevaluate again. Dustin feels the County is asking to do the States bidding by jumping assessment. Dustin does not feel his property value has gone up in the last 5 years. Dustin also said that it seems that the County is asking to keep jumping property values. Randy stated they could go down. Dustin said I do not mind people paying their fair share, he has a problem with the State and the County taking the opportunity to jump property values. Randy stated for example the property next to him its assessed for \$90,000. Dustin said he feels that the property owner's responsibility to grieve it with the Assessor. Geoff asked Mindy about what the timeline is when they have to have this approved. Mindy stated that it was supposed to be done last week. After discussion about how the Assessor was emailed from a reginal director, Dustin stated he will vote no on this resolution. Randy said this will not go to the State, this will go to

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Cattaraugus County and the Town of Freedom. Dustin said that this came down from a regional director of the State, had this come from Cattaraugus County he would have been less superstitious. Randy stated that Assessor Kate Harrington told him that the cost to do this would be absorbed by them as part of the agreement. Geoff is asking to have the Assessor come to the next meeting. Randy said if someone feels their assessment is too high, they can always grieve it on grievance day. John Fahy said that they had Grievance Day did it during Covid and you were not supposed to leave your home to go to grievance. John talked to Kate and she said that her office did not close at all during this. He missed the Grievance Day and the Assessor told him that he would have to do it next year.

**IV. Resolution 24 of 2020: Adopting Local Law 2-2020  
“Town of Freedom Wind Energy Facilities Law”;**

A motion was made by Geoff Milks to table this till November. Motion was not carried through.

A motion was made by Randy Lester to table this till the August meeting Local Law 2 of 2020. Seconded by Dustin Bliss.

Roll Call:

Dustin Bliss: Aye

John Hill: Absent

Geoff Milks: Nay

Randy Lester: Aye

**V. Old Business:**

1. Town Green: Supervisor Randy Lester stated following last month’s meeting he contacted Will at Clear Creek Survey; he had not returned Randy’s phone call as of yet. Randy updated the public and said that Will says he can’t not determine the survey line on the South side of the Town Green. Councilman Dustin Bliss asked if he won’t return calls and won’t finish the job should we hire a new surveyor. Randy stated yes, the person he would suggest is the person who surveyed the McKerrow property. The McKerrow property joins Randy’s property and the Tucker property. Randy says he thinks the problem is that the Town Green was never surveyed. Dustin stated that the two

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joining properties would have a survey, he feels there should be a survey for the Town Green being in the middle of the other properties. Randy stated that the Town Green side with Tuckers is the problem. Dustin asked why is the Town investing money to have the Town Green surveyed initially. Randy stated to determine where the lines are, so the Green could be developed. Dustin asked for what purpose? Dustin stated there is no parking. Randy told Dustin across the street at the Post Office. Dustin concern that the Town would be liable for someone getting hit to walk across the street to the Town Green. John Fahy asked how much property is with that, Dustin replied about a tenth of a acre. John asked for the assessed value on that. Dustin stated the assessed value is \$5,319.00. Dustin stated if the Town sold it for \$5,000.00, it would be worth then having to keep maintaining on it. Also, in his mind the only reason the government owns any property is for the safety and welfare of the Town Citizens. He stated people can say it has a historical significant because back in 1864 people congregated to go off to the Civil War. Dustin feels that the Town sound not spend tax dollars to maintain and own a piece of property that does not serve all tax payers. Randy stated then the Town should sell the property next to the Town Hall (baseball diamond) and the Town property where the school use to be. Dustin agreed. Doug Morgan stated that when the property was handed over from the school to the grange there was an agreement that it can never be sold. Dustin remarked in the State the appeal court is pretty stringent on the fact that a previous owner can not make demands on what the next owner does. Dustin is not supporting spending tax payer dollars on a piece of property that very few people can enjoy. Ron Previty asked what was the plan for the Town Green. Randy stated the property was given to the Town by Cattaraugus County in 1940's. Ron asked is there any records on the Town Green. Randy said he has attempted to find records and has found nothing on the Town Green. Ron also wanted to make a point that the Town is talking about putting more laws in but the board is not taking care of the laws they got. He is basically staying the Town can't tell how they got these laws, just like the Green no one as information on the Green. Randy stated he would try to get with the attorney and see what they can help the Town out with. Councilman Geoff Milks stated if the Town is not building on it and not officially selling it do, we really need to establish a property line on it. Dustin asked Geoff what he would you like to see done with it. Geoff stated he would like to speak with the local historical society, and get an understanding on the full historical value before making a decision. Geoff stated other then that if there is not a drive to put something there then see if the historical society would be interested in the property. Dustin asked Geoff if he would want to put something there. Geoff stated if the historical society wanted to carry the weigh on it then he be good for it. Dustin said that the historical society does not pay the bills for it, also they are always going to be biased because they will find something historical about the property. Dustin told the board he is not ok with paying thousands of dollars a year to maintain and landscape a Town Green in the Town of Freedom. He stated he would rather have pay to have potholes filled then to have a Town Green landscaped and maintain. Dustin also stated that any money that goes out to do anything for the Town that does not bring revenue is absurd. Dustin made

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it clear he will not stand for the Town to spend money that does not bring in more revenue.

2. Parks: Town Clerk Mindy Holland just updated the Board with the water issue at the Sandusky Park. The fountain out by the playground started leaking shortly after it was turned on, that fountain got shut of very quickly. Also, there was leaks found inside the building where the water comes in and the fountain over by the post office has leaks. All the issues are being repaired. Supervisor Randy Lester stated that he was not sure about the parts for the fountains are in yet. Mindy stated they are coming from overseas. Randy stated there has been a lot of mischief and garbage left behind at the Sandusky park. He said he took four handfuls to the garbage earlier in the day. He also said there is deep holes under the swings. Councilman Dustin Bliss stated when the Town owns property the Town has to also maintain it, he's not saying we cant own a park, but this park is a example, is the Town suppose to pay an employee to come down once a week to see if the property needs to be maintain. Then pay the highway employees to come down and take care of it. He stated that the Town Park in Sandusky is an example of why the Town should not own anymore property, the more we own the more its going to cost to maintain. Councilman Geoff Milks stated having the extra playground does require lots of maintenance. Geoff also is questing why we have two playgrounds for being such a small town. He said he understands that we are lacking in a parks department to maintain them. Dustin is saying that the Town should not be paying for things that all Town residents don't get benefits from. Geoff agrees with Dustin. Geoff said he wants to get a little more detail on the Town Green before he was willing to move on. Mindy asked about the fencing at the Sandusky Park, Dustin said it needs to be fixed. Dustin also said what is the purpose of it, just take it down. Geoff stated that Arcade does not have one around theirs. Geoff said either we invest in fixing the fence or take it down. Randy suggested putting Geoff and Councilman John Hill in charge of the playground and that they make a recommendation to the board regarding the fence, also what the Town should be doing, if they should be hiring someone to at least monitor the park, or should it be a Town Employee. Dustin did not want to pawn it off for another month, he asked Geoff if he was ok with getting rid of the fence. Geoff said he has no objections with that. Randy suggested to keep the fence along the road but he's fine with getting rid of the fence around the park. Dustin would like clarification from the Association of Towns regarding the Highway Employee's. Highway Superintendent Jim Haggerty instructs them but at the end of the day the Town Board decides their job responsibilities. Dustin can't see why on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday one guy can't take 15 minutes to come down to the park and check things out. Dustin said he feels the Town park is a lot of money, but is also a huge liability as well. Geoff agreed it make sense seeing that we don't have a Parks Department to utilizes the Highway Department. Dustin said maybe a Monday, Wednesday, Thursday. Geoff said Monday and Thursday. Dustin said something is better than nothing at this point.

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3.Future Meetings: Supervisor Randy Lester with everything that's going on and having approximately 20 people present this evening, that be about all we can get at the Town Hall is the maximum and based on the current orders by the State. Randy asked the board if they agree to meet at the Sandusky Shelter. The board agreed that was fine.

**V. Public Comments: NO COMMENTS**

**VI. REPORTS & COMMUNICATIONS :**

- A) Assessors – Report Submitted
- B) Building Committee –
- C) Building Inspector – Report Submitted.
- D) Highway Superintendent –Report Submitted.
- E) Clerk/Collector – Report Submitted.
- F) Constable –
- G) DCO – Report Submitted
- H) Highway Committee –
- I) Insurance Committee-
- J) Justices –
- K) Planning Board- Report Submitted
- L) Parks & Recreation-
- M) Supervisor – Report Submitted.
- N) Other Town Officials –

A motion to accept the reports & communications as submitted was made by Dustin Bliss. Seconded by Geoff Milks.

Roll Call: Ayes-3 Dustin Bliss, Geoff Milks, and Supervisor Randy Lester

**VII. APPROVAL OF VOUCHERS:**

General #130 to # 152, Amt. \$ 13,993.58, Yrly Amt. \$153,277.81.

Motion made by Geoff Milks to accept the General vouchers as written.  
Seconded by Dustin Bliss.

Roll Call: Ayes-3 Dustin Bliss, Geoff Milks, and Supervisor Randy Lester

Highway # 66 to # 82, Amt. \$121,380.33, Yrly Amt. \$ 308,183.59.

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Motion made by Geoff Milks to accept the Highway vouchers as written.  
Seconded by Dustin Bliss.

Roll Call: Ayes-3 Dustin Bliss, Geoff Milks, and Supervisor Randy Lester

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT:** Geoff Milks made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:56 pm. Seconded by Dustin Bliss.

Roll Call: Ayes-3 Dustin Bliss, Geoff Milks, and Supervisor Randy Lester

Respectfully Submitted

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Mindy M. Holland  
Freedom Town Clerk  
07/26/2020