

TOWN OF FRENCHBORO

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Selectboard:
Sarah Brake
Christopher Hodgkins
Joseph Lunt

Selectboard Meeting
Minutes
September 23rd, 2019
6:00pm

Meeting called to order at 6:01pm pm by C. Hodgkins

I. Approval of Minutes

Motion by C. Hodgkins to approve the minutes from September 9th second by J .Lunt.

Motion Passed

II. Old Business

- a. Excise Tax Collector- The board reviewed the situation that happened the week of September 9th- 13th. A statement outlining the events as seen by board member S. Brake are below; also attached to these minutes is the email thread from a concerned town citizen. From this situation R. Bishop will be our new excise tax collector, appointed by the board to finish out this year's term of H. Kelley
- b. BMV paper work was signed and approved. R. Bishop will take over as Excise tax collector for the remainder of the year.
- c. October 2nd the board will be committing taxes.
- d. Code Enforcement Officer- The board would like to revisit the idea of a code enforcement officer. We would need to get up to date on all ordinances first but the board believes having someone contracted to do roughly 10 hours a month would be suitable for the town needs.

III. New Business

a.

IV. Warrant

C. Hodgkins motions to approve the town warrant dated 9/20/2019, second by J. Lunt.

Motion Passed

C. Hodgkins motions to approve mail associated warrant dated, 9/20/2019, second by J. Lunt. **Motion Passed**

V. Mail

VI. Next Meeting October 7th 2019

MOTION by C. Hodgkins to adjourn at 7:06 pm, second by J. Lunt . **Motion passed**



TOWN OF FRENCHBORO

Excise Tax Situation:

September 6th - S. Brake receives a call from Tim Wiggins stating Heidi Kelley will not be returning to the island due to being placed on dialysis.

September 9th – S. Brake calls the state BMV office and explains the situations and ask how to proceed. She spoke to Tina Gowell. Mrs. Gowell said the town has two options. One find someone in the town who would be willing to take the position over or we can contract out to another town who would be willing to help. If we choose option two, we need a contact signed by both towns board members, as well the both towns collectors and treasurers, as there is money exchange involved.

September 10th - S. Brake contacts Rachel Bishop, due to her having done this position before. Rachel agrees to help the town. Rachel informed S. Brake that she was leaving on the Wednesday ferry (11th) and returning on the Thursday ferry (12th) and she would call the state on Friday and ask what she needs to do to be able to fill the position.

September 11th- Town citizen B. Ransom calls S. Brake cell phone stating she needs her truck to be registered immediately. They are off island with the truck and the registration ran out in August. S. Brake stated that she had call the state on Monday and that R. Bishop will be taking over the job as soon as it is all sorted out. B. Ransom was not ok with that answer and stated her truck needed to be registered immediately. S. Brake said she was sorry for the situation but it is what it is at the moment, and could not help. B. Ransom became hostile on the phone and said that it needed to be done, and that as a board member S. Brake needs to call Tremont for this emergency. S. Brake agreed to call Tremont. S. Brake called Tremont and spoke to Katie Dandurand the town clerk. Katie stated she would love to help but can not in this situation as Frenchboro is a manual registration town and Tremont is electronic, and that it would not be possible. S. Brake then sent a text a B. Ransom stating: *“I called Tremont, they can’t do it because they are electronic and we are manual. I am sorry but you will have to wait”* Later that evening S. Brake receives a text message from D. Swain the towns treasurer and tax collector. The text reads: *“The state is willing to give Frenchboro their registration privilege back right now. Basically I’d be the agent but Rachel would be what they consider a clerk. We’d also be at the new level. Is this ok or should the select board ok it first?”* Confused by this message S. Brake called D. Swain and asked to explain why he was coming to her with this information. It was relayed that the state BMV received a complaint from one our citizens that we were not providing a service. Daniel also explained the state agent called his personal cell phone multiple times until Daniel was able to answer. S. Brake stated to him that he did not have permission to sign anything from the state, and from what S. Brake has been told she would need full board approval for him to do so.

September 12th- S. Brake called the state BMV office to investigate the situation. She spoke with Wendy King, this is also the person who B. Ransom had spoken to the day prior. W. King stated that the town was trying to “victimize” our citizen and we were not providing a service that we were legally obligated to provide. When S. Brake tried to explain the situation W. King became very



TOWN OF FRENCHBORO

agitated and S. Brake felt like she was being bullied by a member of the state. S Brake said that this conversation is making her uncomfortable and she would need to get off the phone at this time and that no paper work was to be signed until she had full board approval. After some time of composing herself S. Brake called W. King back and asked for her to explain how the town was not legally providing a service. W. King then started to back track and stated that we were not doing all that we could to help a town citizen. S. Brake stated the town is working on being able to process such request, when she called on Monday and spoke to Tina that situations like these would need board approval and that she would like to know how W. King going around the town is acceptable. W. King became extremely agitated and started to yell at board member S. Brake. When the phone call ended S. Brake was extremely distraught and made to feel like a villain in a situation she believed to be correct in. Once again she took some time to compose herself and then called Daniel Swain and stated he could sign the paper work for this special exception in fear of what the state would do to the town. She then called Tremont and stated they could process the request and B. Ransom could go register her vehicle. S. Brake did this without board approval knowing full well that she could end up in the wrong, but felt she had no other options due to the W. King threatening her. S. Brake called B. Ransom and left a voicemail as she did not pick up the phone stating she could go register in Tremont.

September 13th- S. Brake was informed by R. Bishop that W. King had called her. W. King stated to R. Bishop that her supervisor had stepped into the situation and that W. King had absolutely no reason to give a special circumstance to our citizen and that she was not allowed to go around the town authority and do what she did. W. King stated to R. Bishop the supervisor had called B. Ransom and stated to her she would need to wait for the town to be able to register her vehicle, the board can not confirm or deny that phone call was placed.

September 17th- S. Brake was working the Post Office when B. Ransom entered and asked if she had any packages, S. Brake stated no you do not. B. Ransom then starts to ask questions about the situation and who gave authority for her to go to Tremont, as my voicemail had stated to her, S. Brake replied she did. B. Ransom then started to get very agitated, S. Brake stated she was not going to get into this situation with children around. B. Ransom started to turn away but then came back to S. Brake and began to yell at her that she wasn't even allowed to explain herself. S. Brake asked how that is so, and B. Ransom once again began to yell at S. Brake. B. Ransom then left the post office and got into the truck of K. Smith. Later that day K. Smith sent a town wide email.

The email thread is available for viewing.

