



AGENDA

Board of Directors Meeting

Tuesday – October 31, 2023

7:45a – 9:15a

Remote Via Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83977296994?pwd=RDUzRnp2cFdVaXB6Slg0OCtsbkNhZz09>

1. Consent Items

- a. Financial report as of September 31, 2023 *(See Attachment 1)*
- b. Minutes of Board Meeting on August 29, 2023 *(See Attachment 2)*
- c. Minutes of Board Meeting on September 26, 2023 *(See Attachment 3)*

2. Updates

- a. New Town Manager
- b. TOD Capital Planning
- c. Design Review ~ Central Core Working Group
- d. Varney Heights AHTIF Request Next Steps
- e. Business Fit-Up Grants
- f. Downtown Momentum Grants
- g. Comprehensive Plan Consultant

3. FEDC Board Coordination

- a. Open seats (2)
- b. Future leadership transition planning

Upcoming Meetings

November Board Meeting ~ Tuesday, November 28th

December Board Meeting ~ Tuesday December 19th

Attachment 1: FINANCIAL REPORT AS OF SEPTEMBER 30, 2023

Freeport Economic Development Corporation

Profit and Loss

July - September, 2023

	<u>Total</u>
Income	
Town Appropriation	35,705.00
Total Income	\$ 35,705.00
Gross Profit	\$ 35,705.00
Expenses	
Advertising/Marketing	1,379.13
Business Support Expense	2,092.33
Client/Public Meetings	64.61
Conferences/Trade Show/Training	512.57
Dues/Membership	150.00
IT Services	115.00
Payroll Expenses	513.70
Fica/Medicare Exepenses	8,236.11
Gross Wages Ex. Director	17,615.38
Retirement Contribution 403b	2,678.57
Total Payroll Expenses	\$ 29,043.76
Payroll Processing Fees	264.20
Total Expenses	\$ 33,621.60
Net Operating Income	\$ 2,083.40
Other Income	
Savings Interest	2.38
Total Other Income	\$ 2.38
Net Other Income	\$ 2.38
Net Income	\$ 2,085.78

Friday, Oct 27, 2023 08:49:27 AM GMT-7 - Accrual Basis



Draft

MINUTES

Board of Directors Meeting

Tuesday – August 29, 2023

Remote Via Zoom

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS.

Attending Board Members. Mary Davis, Mark Malone, Candice Rinaldi, Nikki Yanok Schneider, Stefanie Millette, Becky Doten-Lizzotte, Tawni Whitney, Dan Bacon, Leanne Barschdorf-Nichols, Dan Piltch.

Not Attending. Jason Sulham, Sarah Tracy, Ken Sparta, Nikki Yanok, Chip Gray, Caroline Pelletier, James Hendricks.

Others Attending. Brett Richardson

CONSENT ITEMS

The Financial report as of July 31, 202 and Minutes of Board Meeting on July 26, 2023 were unanimously approved as presented.

BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Mary Davis was unanimously voted in for a three-year renewal on the Board and agreed to serve as President for the coming months. Mary shared her perspective that the Board should consider identifying a new President for the longer term to ensure that the organization benefits from new ideas. Sarah Tracy was also unanimously welcomed for another three-year term. Mary noted that longtime Board leader Chip Gray was enjoying retirement, but she explores Chip's interest to stay connected to FEDC as an Emeritus member of the Board.

Mary noted that Chip has big shoes to fill and that FEDC would benefit from recruiting a local representative of the hospitality industry.

Brett noted that Board member Jimmy Hendrix has not had the capacity to engage regularly with the Board. Mary offered to reach out to Jimmy. Should Jimmy vacate, there would be two open seats.

VARNEY HEIGHTS AHTIF REQUEST NEXT STEPS

Brett provided an update on the Varney Heights TIF request that the FEDC Board recently reviewed and approved as consistent with the Town TIF policy. On behalf of FEDC, the Varney Heights development team and Brett would present the project to the Town Council on September 5th.

Mary noted that the State had a budget surplus of approximately \$800 million that would be deployed for affordable housing development and that Freeport should make every effort to pursue funds for local projects.

Brett noted that the development team had inquired about whether the Town would be willing to fund the creation of an 800-foot long sidewalk connecting the project with Main Street. The sidewalk would cost approximately \$100,000.

The Board consensus was to keep the Varney Heights TIF request simple and if the Town has an appetite to participate in funding the sidewalk, that could take place later through capital planning.

COUNCIL HOUSING WORKSHOP & NEXT STEPS

Brett provided an update on the August 22 Town Council Housing workshop. The workshop was well-attended by the Council, Project Review Board, Planning Board, Housing Task Force, and general public. Brett summarized the data shared at the workshop that illustrated housing supply and cost challenges. Brett highlighted the good work of Muskie School intern did a great job supporting the community conversation about affordability.

Dan Piltch shared that next steps include the creation of a work group with diverse representation to make recommendations to Council on actionable design review updates to help make the project review process fair and efficient for all involved.

Mary thanked the Council for bringing together the Board and community for meaningful conversations about the critical topic of housing.

The Town Council will take the next steps at the September 5th Council meeting.

TOWN GRANT PROGRAMS

Brett shared that the Council would likely approve the Fit-Up Grant program on September 5th and the next step would be a press release and outreach to property and business owners.

A new Momentum Grant program will also be proposed to the Council on September 5th.

The Momentum program will focus on publicly accessible spaces with quarterly allocations.

FEDC will help coordinate the program and the Town Finance Department will administer the grants.

HOUSING EDUCATION AND MESSAGING

Mary highlighted a conversation with resident Joe Migliaccio and Joe highlighted the need for community education on why housing is important. Many residents feel like residential property values have gone up, but taxes have stayed relatively low, and that many residents' kind of like the status quo.

Becky agreed that clarifying the why is essential.

Dan Bacon highlighted the declining commercial values downtown. Dan reiterated the need for a cost-to-serve analysis that would demonstrate the downtown multifamily developments are high revenue producers with lower costs to serve than outlying single family homes.

Tawni noted that Freeport is in a rut with limited progress in advancing projects. Tawni highlighted an upcoming gathering with experienced community developer George Casey on September 13th to discuss how to rebuild the momentum.

Stefanie shared her perspective that FEDC should focus on bringing currently proposed projects to successful implementation, rather than adding additional messaging that could muddy the waters.

TOWN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Brett provided a brief overview of Muskie School intern Caroline MacLeod's findings as data that could help inform the comp plan update. The Town received 4 bids and the comp plan consultant will be selected in the weeks ahead.

Dan Bacon noted the importance of identifying model communities that Freeport could emulate as a positive benchmark for where Freeport is working to go.

Mark asked about an FEDC strategy to engage in the Comp Plan update. Mark noted that the update offered a great opportunity for the Board to contribute. Brett agreed and promised to coordinate opportunities for FEDC Board members to share their expertise.

The meeting adjourned at 8:52am.

Attachment 3: DRAFT MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 2023 BOARD MEETING



DRAFT MINUTES
Board of Directors Meeting
Tuesday – September 26, 2023
7:45a – 9:15a
Freeport Oyster Bar
43 Main Street

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS.

Attending Board Members. Mary Davis, Mark Malone, Jason Sulham, Ken Sparta, Stefanie Millette, Becky Doten-Lizzotte, Tawni Whitney, Dan Bacon, Leanne Barschdorf-Nichols, Dan Pilch.

Not Attending. Candice Rinaldi, Nikki Yanok Jason Sulham, Sarah Tracy, Nikki Yanok, Caroline Pelletier.

Others Attending. Ed Bradley, Mela Heestad, Doug Heestad, Brett Richardson, Tais De Los Reyes, Joanna Benoit, Kimberly Buck, Matt Pillsbury, Eric Smith, Suzanne Watson.

FEDC President Mary Davis opened the meeting by welcoming all Board members and guests to Freeport Oyster Bar, thanking Ken Sparta and the Oyster Bar team for hosting.

Mary noted that FEDC was thrilled to have five of the six Town Council candidates and the Desert of Maine principals, Mela and Doug Heestad, in attendance. All attendees introduced themselves. Mary then invited Mela and Doug to share the latest plans for the Desert of Maine, including an upcoming request to the Planning Board for an ordinance update allowing the Desert to host weddings in their barn, currently under renovation.

Desert of Maine Update and Ordinance Change Request.

Doug and Mela provided background on their revitalization efforts at the Desert. They shared positive news about visitation and activities at the Desert, but also described financial challenges related to the ballooning upfront costs associated with restoring the historic Tuttle Barn and complying with modern building code requirements, plus the inherent challenges of sustainably operating an arts center. This is especially true in Maine, due to our small audience pools. Most, if not all, successful performing arts centers sustain themselves through means other than just ticket sales.

Mela and Doug shared their plans to host private meetings and gatherings, including weddings because weddings generate significantly greater revenue than other types of events. They also described their personal outreach to neighbors on the Desert Road about the proposed ordinance change over the last several months, including that many of the neighbors are supportive, but that two neighbors have concerns about noise and traffic and oppose the ordinance change allowing weddings.

Board members noted that the Desert's mission and activities are consistent with the Downtown Vision, specifically expanding Freeport's experiential offerings and encouraging visitors to stay for overnight visits that include multiple activities like the Desert's offerings. The Board shared their hope that the Desert will succeed and that all reasonable support from the Town was warranted.

Stef highlighted other arts and craft related activities that are emerging in Freeport and shared her perspective that the Desert of Maine is an important anchor in an arts-based economic development strategy.

Brett inquired whether the FEDC Board should support the ordinance change request during Planning Board review or speak generally about the positive impact of arts and experiential offerings to move Freeport forward.

Councilor Ed Bradley noted that he was concerned about opposition to the ordinance change and would like to avoid a contentious issue if possible.

Brett proposed that he be prepared to speak during Planning Board deliberations about the general benefits of experiential offerings like the Desert of Maine, while in the meantime seeking to learn more about the potential issues identify possible compromises.

Action. The Board supported general support for experiential arts-based activities and appropriate policies to support related investments.

Town Council Candidate Introductions

Mary transitioned the meeting to the Council candidate introductions, expressing gratitude that 5 of the 6 were in attendance that the Adam Ulrickson was fishing commercially and unable to attend.

Brett encouraged the candidates to share their connection to Freeport, why they were running for a seat, and their general goals if elected.

Tais De Los Reyes (At-Large Candidate) introduced herself as a local business owner and, with her husband, parent excited to raise her children in Freeport. Tais said that she is a strong proponent “local,” both for businesses and residents. Tais shared her goals on the Council as improving signage for visitors to navigate Town and access everything Freeport has to offer. She would like to increase foot traffic for local businesses, improve Town support for small businesses, and expand affordable housing options.

Joanna Benoit (At-Large Candidate) introduced herself as a relatively new resident who feels lucky to live in Freeport with an opportunity to raise her family in such a great community. Joanna is a program manager with the State of Maine overseeing an \$11 million budget and earned a Masters of Public Policy and Management from USM’s Muskie School of Public Service. Joanna’s priorities include affordable housing development and local business vitality to ensure that Freeport remains a vital and thriving community for young families into the future.

Kimberly Buck (District 3 Candidate) was accompanied by her infant son, George. Kimberly shared her priorities as affordable housing development, implementing the Downtown Vision Plan to revitalize Downtown for residents as well as visitors, and appropriate measures to support local businesses in order to expand the tax base and avoid regular tax increases by residents.

Matt Pillsbury (District 3 Candidate) shared that he is excited to run for Council again because, after a partial term on the Council, he has overcome the initial learning curve and is excited to help the Town take bold action on consensus priorities. Matt’s priorities are affordable housing development and improving the execution of Town goals by delegating greater autonomy to staff to execute policies set by Council. Matt is the Finance Director for Northeastern University’s Roux Institute and looks forward to using his long-range planning skills to help Freeport move forward with all the big initiatives in the works.

Eric Smith (District 2 Candidate) shared his background as a 3rd generation Freeporter and 16th generation Mainer. Eric offered that he grew up in downtown Freeport, worked at LL Bean in public relations. Eric offered that he has a unique perspective on the changes in downtown Freeport over time and how to move the Downtown Vision forward. Eric highlighted the need for affordable housing development and that his current role as Executive Director of the Freeport Historical Society positions him well to understand the community's needs.

Brett offered a standing invitation to all guests to future FEDC Board meetings, which occur the last Tuesday of each month at 7:45a. Meeting details and materials are available at www.choosefreeport.com.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15am.