



## MINUTES

### Board of Directors Meeting

Tuesday – October 25, 2022

7:45a – 8:45a

1. **Welcome and Introductions.** The meeting convened at 7:48a.

**Attending Board Members:** Mary Davis, Mark Malone, Candice Rinaldi, Dan Bacon, Tawni Whitney, Stefanie Millette, Leanne Barschdorf-Nichols, Becky Doten-Lizzotte, Sarah Tracey, Chip Gray.

**Not Attending.** Jason Sulham, Peter Joseph, James Hendricks, Nikki Yanok Schneider

**Others Attending.** Dan Piltch, Ed Bradley, Brett Richardson, Leland Arris, Andrew Arsenault

The Board introduced themselves to special guests Andrew Arsenault and Leland Arris, A-Large Council Candidate and General Manager of the Freeport Sewer District, respectively.

2. **Consent Agenda Items**

**Minutes of September 27, 2022 Meeting.** The Board unanimously approved the draft minutes.

**Financial Report as of September 30, 2022.** The Board unanimously approved the draft report.

3. **Council Candidate Meet & Greet.** Resident Andrew Arsenault introduced himself to the Board as an At-Large Council Candidate. Andrew described his background as a long term resident who remembers when the shoe mills closed and is running because of his interest in moving the Downtown Vision forward. Andrew described the feedback he receives from property owners and vendors that Freeport is a hard place to develop and build projects of any scale. Route 1 South zoning is strict and has prevented positive development. Andrew is concerned about a loss of commercial tax revenue due to the decline of big national retail. Andrew anticipates a shift to more local businesses that focus on goods and services needed by residents as downtown residential developments

occur. Andrew would like to see policies evolve to support smart development with leadership from the Planning Board and Town Council.

- 4. Downtown Vision Workshop.** Mary provided an update on the October 11<sup>th</sup> Downtown Vision workshop at Freeport Community Center that was attended by 100 residents. Stations were set up with Vision project boards for different goals and projects, like public arts, sustainability, economic development and others. The “Be Walkable, Bikable and Accessible” table attracted the largest crowd.

As next steps, the Vision project management team will present to Council during their first meeting in December.

Stefanie suggested that November 8<sup>th</sup> election at Freeport High School offers a great opportunity to set up a Downtown Vision table and engage community members as they leave the polls.

Dan P. shared that the project management team is developing project plans for each of the priority projects to map out tangible goals and milestones to execute progress.

- 5. Sewer Update.** Town Councilor Ed Bradley shared his view that Freeport Sewer District’s significant need for repairs and upgrades elevates the sewer system above most other Vision priorities. Ed articulated how the District provides value to all residents of the Town, not just rate payers, because the District protects many of Freeport’s key assets, including the coastal recreation and Harraseeket River. The District has requested \$17.45 million from Rural Development (RD). RD is in the process of determining the level of grant funding that RD can provide. Ed believes that the total price tag to modernize the sewer system is \$30 million or more. Ed requested FEDC support to make a recommendation to Town Council that the Council should form a working group to explore opportunities for the Town to support the District. Ed anticipates conversations about organizational oversight at some point in the future but would like to focus on funding sources at this juncture. Ed highlighted that the availability of significant federal funding offers a unique opportunity to address the District’s long term infrastructure needs.

Leland Arris highlighted that the much of the District’s assets are 50 years old even though their expected service life expired after 30 years. The District functions well because of the strong operations team that understand the system and are able to keep it running, but investment is necessary for long term viability. Leland explained that the District has developed a new process to evaluate the condition of local sewer pipes and pump stations when adjacent new projects are proposed nearby. This process enables the District to understand the ability of adjacent infrastructure to serve increased demand from new projects. Leland welcomed the opportunity to explore options for collaboration with the Town.

Chip sees an opportunity for the Town to participate by seeking funds that are available to the Town but now available to the District. He believes that Freeport plays a uniquely

important role in protecting Casco Bay and all the regional benefits the Bay provides, making Freeport very competitive for grant funding.

Dan P. asked about the District's available capacity for increased demand to serve and how the proposed upgrades will affect the ability to support new development. Leland said that the District is using about 40 percent of the system's capacity. The proposed upgrades will make the system more efficient.

The Board discussed opportunities for FEDC to support a collaboration between the Town and Sewer District.

Sarah made a motion, seconded by Chip, stating support for Town / District collaboration. The motion below passed with 9 affirmative votes, while Stef abstained.

**Action. "FEDC supports a Town exploration of all possible funding sources for the Sewer District, including external sources, potential Town funding sources, federal funding and any other sources of funding, and that the Town form a committee to bring recommendations to the Town Council."**

6. **TIF District Development Update.** Brett shared that he has been gathering feedback from Councilors and other stakeholders and that in addition to a TOD TIF district that encompasses the Downtown, desire exists to understand the benefits and costs of establishing a larger district that includes Route 1 South in addition to the Downtown. The larger district option expands the development program options to include infrastructure, like sewer, water, and public safety facilities and equipment. Brett will work to develop the second option, as an "TOD-based infrastructure TIF district."
7. **The meeting adjourned at 8:50a for the Coffee with COG gathering.**