

**Town of Freedom  
Regular Board Meeting Minutes  
April, 18, 2022**

Board Members Present: Josh Aarum, Geoff Milks, John Hill, R. Nick Morgan  
& Supervisor Dustin Bliss

Other Officials Present: Highway Superintendent Jim Haggerty,  
& Planning Board Member Lyle Morgan

Others: 8

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Meeting called to order at 7:00 pm by Supervisor Dustin Bliss

**I. PLEDGE TO THE FLAG: Led by Supervisor Dustin Bliss**

**II. REVIEW OF MINUTES:**

**A. Work Session on Employee Hand Book- March 21, 2022**

A motion was made by John Hill to accept the Work Session Minutes as submitted. Seconded by Dustin Bliss.

Roll Call: Ayes-5 Josh Aarum, Geoff Milks, John Hill, R. Nick Morgan,  
& Supervisor Dustin Bliss

**Town Board Meeting – Monday, March 21, 2022**

A motion was made by John Hill to accept the Meeting Minutes as submitted. Seconded by Dustin Bliss.

Roll call: Ayes-5 Josh Aarum, Geoff Milks, John Hill, R. Nick Morgan,  
& Supervisor Dustin Bliss

**Special Meeting minutes & Work Session -Monday, March 28, 2022**

A motion was made by John Hill to accept the Special meeting & Work Session meeting minutes as submitted. Seconded by Dustin Bliss.

Roll Call: Ayes-5 Josh Aarum, Geoff Milks, John Hill, R. Nick Morgan,  
& Supervisor Dustin Bliss

**III. OLD BUSINESS:**

**A. Open bids on Tractor and Mower:** Supervisor Dustin Bliss said that the stipulation on bidding of the tractor and mower was that the board would take the highest price on each individual item, whether if a person bid on one or both. If they are bidding on both they were to have separate prices on each one. Dustin's father put a bid in so he had Councilman Geoff Milks open the bids. Geoff said that they had two bids, one from the Town of Franklinville and one from Rob Bliss. Rob Bliss bid \$15,000 on the mower only. Town of Franklinville bid was \$52,000 for the tractor and brush hog. Java Farm Supply gave numbers of \$40,000 for the auction value for the tractor, market value of \$49,000, and asking price of \$52,000. The brush hog was \$9,000 auction, \$11,200 for market value and \$11,900 for asking price. Dustin talked to the guy from auction international and they can get \$50,000 for the tractor.

**Dustin Bliss made a motion to sell the brush hog to Rob Bliss and to list the tractor on auction international immediately. Seconded by Geoff Milks.**

**Roll Call: Ayes-5 Josh Aarum, Geoff Milks, John Hill, R. Nick Morgan,  
& Supervisor Dustin Bliss**

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- B. Park fences and town hall fence and back stop:** Supervisor Dustin Bliss asked if the Highway guys could put new boards on the back stop on the side of the town hall. Highway Superintendent Jim Haggerty said they could repair it. Councilman John Hill asked about the fence. Dustin has not heard back from Nate Fox.

Dustin stated that him and Jim will go look at the powder coated steel trash cans and tables that need to be put up at Sandusky Park. This came with the playground equipment and has sat in boxes.

- C. Planning Board Applications:** The Planning Board wrote a statement saying that they interviewed Mike Kauffman for the planning board position and recommended him for the position.

**A motion was made by John Hill to hire Mike Kauffman as a new Planning Board Member to finish the term that expires in 2026. Seconded by R. Nick Morgan.**

**Roll Call: Ayes-5 Josh Aarum, Geoff Milks, John Hill, R. Nick Morgan,  
& Supervisor Dustin Bliss**

- D. Highway Superintendent Jim Haggerty did not get a motion from the board during the March Regular Board Meeting, regarding if his son Matt will be hired back to do mowing part time, as well as the Highway Department doing most of the mowing:**

Geoff Milks made a motion to approve Matt Haggerty to be hired back to do the mowing part time, as well as the Highway Department will do most of the mowing. Seconded by Dustin Bliss.

**Roll Call: Ayes-5 Josh Aarum, Geoff Milks, John Hill, R. Nick Morgan,  
& Supervisor Dustin Bliss**

**IV. NEW BUSINESS:**

- A. Clayton Wood from Schwab Dairy Farm would like to address the Town Board regarding a State housing grant:** Supervisor Dustin Bliss stepped out of the board meeting, and he stated that he potentially would be an applicant and cannot be a part of the meeting at this time.
- Clayton told the board that he is the general manager for Schwab Dairy Farms. He said that there are three farms in this project, Schwab Dairy Farm, Edelweiss Dairy farm, and Bliss Dairy. They operate and own property in the Town of Freedom. They are requesting that the Town Board pass a resolution allowing the Town to apply for the New York State Development Block Grant. Individual Farms and Ag businesses cannot apply for this directly. This needs to be done through a municipality, county, or local governing

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body. The purpose of this grant specifically is to improve the quality of housing for medium to low-income farm workers. This is an effort to help prevent the spread of Covid-19 or any other future viruses. The grant can be used to renovate existing housing, build new housing, buy modular homes, etc. The individual farms have to provide proof that 51% of the employees living in the house that is being built and approved makes less than 80% of the medium household income from the county. Each individual project ranges up to \$200,000, and the municipality can allow for a total of a million dollars in aggregate. That is a total for the application. The three farms that would be applicants are requesting that the Town Board take the necessary actions to direct resources, so the grant application can be submitted in a timely fashion. The grant applications that are deemed completed are funded on a first come first serve basis. They would like to ask and propose that Mrs. Jessica Dart complete the application for a fee of \$30.00 an hour so that there is no cost at all to the town, the applicants would be more than willing to pay for that, including any other resources the town puts into it, putting together the application. Additionally, the Town Board needs to schedule a Public Hearing, in order for the application to be put in and accepted. The purpose of the hearing would be for interested parties or individuals to make comments on the Town of Freedom community's development needs, and discuss the possible submission of the community development block grant, applications for the 2022 program year. The hearing will provide further information about the CBBG program and will allow citizens participation and development of any proposed grant applications and provide technical assistance in development turn of proposals. Comments on the CBBG program or proposed projects will be received at the time of the hearing. The hearing is conducted pursuant to section 570.486 of part one of the CFR and in compliance with the requirements of the housing community development act of 1974. The deadline for the application is June 15. This is through the NYS Cares ACT. Councilman John Hill asked does the application have to be completely finished by Jessica Dart before the Public Hearing. Clayton stated that it needs to be mostly done, they need to provide to the public at the public hearing about the projects that they are planning to do, and how they plan to be done. Town Clerk Mindy Holland called Bookkeeper Jessica Dart to ask if she is on board doing the application and grant for the three farms. John explained to Jessica that the three farm groups would be paying \$30.00 an hour and it is not funded by the Town of Freedom. Jessica stated that her understanding from Cornell Cooperative Extension regarding this grant is that the town gets the grant money and the town distributes the money to the farmers, 5% of the money from the state goes to the town. The town is supposed to pay the grant writer out of the 5%. Clayton stated what they are proposing if they did not get the grant Jessica would get paid \$30.00 an hour for preparing the application. If the grant is approved 5% comes to the board and the Town Board will decide what amount goes to Jessica. Jessica asked if she is getting paid \$30.00 an hour, this would not be through the town, it be self-employed, she would have 30% of that gets taken out for taxes. Clayton asked if it is something they can pay the town directly. Jessica said that CCE said it did not sound like the farmers are not supposed to be paying her at all. She was under the impression that any grant writer gets

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paid out of the grant if they receive it. Clayton said they are willing to cover whatever cost needs to be covered. Aaron Saykin suggested having the Board engage her for a particular price, they can make that contingent, that they can cut an agreement with the farmers to reimburse the town as part of the process for any cost that the town incurred. The Town Board would be hiring Jessica if there is some kind of hurdle, this way it makes it very simple. The Board should get it in writing and authorize that as part of the engagement. Jessica stated with everything that had been said she is fine with that.

**Josh Aarum made a motion that the Town Board proceed to fulfill the application for the grant requirements for the Farmworker Safety House Grant Program. Geoff Milks added with the understanding that the applicant will reimburse any cost incurred as discussed, he seconded the motion.**

**Roll Call: Ayes-3 Josh Aarum, Geoff Milks, & R. Nick Morgan  
Abstain-1 John Hill  
Supervisor Dustin Bliss was absent for this motion.**

**John Hill made a motion to have a Public Hearing on the Farmworker Safety Housing Grant Program May 16, 2022 at 7:01, at the Freedom Town Hall, 1188 Eagle Street. Seconded by R. Nick Morgan.**

**Roll Call: Ayes-4 Josh Aarum, Geoff Milks, John Hill, & R. Nick Morgan  
Supervisor Dustin Bliss was absent for this motion.**

**The board ended discussion on the grant, Dustin was asked to join the meeting again.**

- B. Porta potty at Sandusky Park: Zeuches would be \$125.00 a month and Blue Moon is \$90.00 a month, both give service once a week:**

**Dustin Bliss made a motion to use Blue Moon for a porta potty at Sandusky Park. Seconded by Geoff Milks.**

**Roll Call: Ayes-5 Josh Aarum, Geoff Milks, John Hill, R. Nick Morgan,  
& Supervisor Dustin Bliss**

- C. New Truck, Highway Superintendent Jim Haggerty is asking because it is a 3 year wait: Jim stated that the town will be lucky if they get the truck they already have ordered by November. It's the truck holding them up not the body company. Supervisor Dustin Bliss asked if they would hold pricing. Jim said he could call to get details for the next meeting.**

- D. Jim asked about the employee handbook, he said they talked about waiting till the 1<sup>st</sup> of the year because of the budget. Bookkeeper Jessica Dart asked what happened**

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with the handbook. She stated as far as Insurance goes the money is there. Jim said that they all agreed that it has not been fair for a number of years because if you're single, you're not getting the same benefit as a married guy. He would like to get the Insurance done really soon. Dustin said that they can move to adopt the employee handbook at the next meeting.

- E. Ruth Morgan would like to use the Town Hall or the park building on June 1<sup>st</sup> for a County Grange Meeting:** The Seniors will be using the park building on June 1<sup>st</sup> and The Grange will be able to use the Town hall.

#### **V. Public Comment:**

**Leslie Lange:** She stated with regards to executive sessions, she has noticed more than she has seen before. She handed the board a copy of information regarding executive sessions.

#### **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.**

Town Clerk Mindy Holland told the board that she reconciled with the County to the penny with taxes. She also thanked her deputies Jessica, Sherry and Lisa for all their hard work. Mindy also told the board that all the data that is on the tax bills is inputted by the Assessor's office, the County prints the bill and she just mails out the bills. If there is any misinformation on tax bills the tax payer can contact the Assessors.

- F. Constable –**
- G. DCO –**
- H. Highway Committee –**
- I. Insurance Committee-**
- J. Justices –**
- K. Parks & Recreation –**
- L. Planning Board –**
- M. Supervisor – Report Submitted**
- N. Other Town Officials –**

Supervisor Dustin Bliss gave kudos to Jim and his crew for being out early Easter Sunday taking care of the roads.

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

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**Roll call: Ayes-5 Josh Aarum, Geoff Milks, John Hill, R. Nick Morgan,  
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**VII. APPROVAL OF VOUCHERS:**

General #75 to # 95, Amt. \$9,793.01, Yrly Amt. \$111,821.54.

**Motion made by Dustin Bliss to accept the General vouchers as written. Seconded by John Hill.**

**Roll call: Ayes-5 Josh Aarum, Geoff Milks, John Hill, R. Nick Morgan,  
& Supervisor Dustin Bliss**

Highway #28 to #37, Amt. \$10,218.05, Yrly Amt. \$81,112.32.

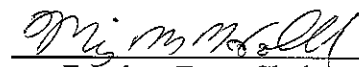
**Motion made by Dustin Bliss to accept the Highway vouchers as written. Seconded by Geoff Milks.**

**Roll call: Ayes-5 Josh Aarum, Geoff Milks, John Hill, R. Nick Morgan,  
& Supervisor Dustin Bliss**

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT: Dustin Bliss made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:47pm.  
Seconded by Geoff Milks.**

**Roll call: Ayes-5 Josh Aarum, Geoff Milks, John Hill, R. Nick Morgan,  
& Supervisor Dustin Bliss**

Respectfully Submitted By,

  
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Freedom Town Clerk  
4/19/2022