

Town of Freedom
Regular Board Meeting Minutes
March 16, 2026

Board Members Present: S. R. Cory Higgins, R. Nick Morgan, Denise Willard,
& Supervisor Josh Cutler
Absent: Josh Aarum

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

Others: 1

Meeting called to order at 7:00 pm by Supervisor Josh Cutler

I. PLEDGE TO THE FLAG: Led by Supervisor Josh Cutler

II. REVIEW OF MINUTES:

A) Town Board Meeting – Monday, February 16, 2026

A motion was made by Josh Cutler to accept the Meeting Minutes as submitted.
Seconded by Denise Willard.

Roll Call: Here-1 S. R. Cory Higgins

Aye-3 R. Nick Morgan, Denise Willard, & Supervisor Josh Cutler

**III. Town of Freedom
Local Law #1 of 2026**

**ADOPTING A MORATORIUM ON CERTAIN BATTERY
ENERGY SOLAR SYSTEM (BESS) UTILITY SIZED USES**

SECTION 1. PURPOSE AND INTENT

The purpose of this Local Law is to protect the public health, safety, and welfare of the residents of the Town of Freedom and to maintain the status quo as to certain BESS uses, as the preset laws and ordinances regulations on the Town do not adequately address this type of use. The moratorium will stop the processing of applications for, and the issuing of any permits, certifications of occupancy and approvals of certain land uses relating to BESS, including, but not limited to solar farms. The moratorium is for a period of six (6) months, allowing the Town Board to analyze and determine potential appropriate revisions and amendments to the Town of Freedom laws and ordinances concerning this use.

SECTION 2. LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS

The Town of Freedom Town Board does hereby find that without a temporary halt on the processing, permitting and approvals for certain solar land uses there is the potential that such uses could be located in unsuitable areas within the town and/ or on particular lots without adequate dimensional regulations in place. The potential for

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unsuitable location of, and lack of proper dimensional regulations for, such uses would have materially adverse and irreversible impacts on the Town.

The Town Board also finds that it is in need of time to perform the necessary analysis if the potential types of BESS facilities that could be located in the Town. By maintaining the status quo regarding such uses, the Town Board can provide for the planned orderly growth and development of the Town.

SECTION 3. MORATORIUM IMPOSED, APPLICABILITY

For the period of time of six (6) months following the effective date of the adoption of this Local Law, no application may be processed and no permits, certificates of occupancy, approvals, denials, determinations or interpretations may be issued or granted for any land uses relating to BESS, including, but not limited to solar farms.

The term "land uses relating to BESS" shall be broadly construed to include any facility designated to generate electric power to be marketed, sold or used for other than the power demands of the improvements on the property on which such facility is located. Not included within the scope of this moratorium are BESS facilities designed to generate electric power solely for the use of the improvements located on the same property.

The term "solar farm" shall mean "a collection of solar panels covering one-quarter (1/4) acres or more of land that are designed to capture sunlight and transform it into electricity. This definition includes freestanding and ground pole-mounted photovoltaic panels that are mounted on or affixed to residential dwellings for their use, or municipal buildings, or existing panels mounted on commercial or industrial buildings.

This Local Law shall be binding on the Town Board, Building Inspector, Code Enforcement Officer, all Town officials and employees, and any applicant or real property owner in the Town desiring to apply for or receive a permit, certificate of occupancy or approval in the Town of Freedom.

During the period of moratorium, the Town Board shall endeavor to complete all reasonable and necessary review, study, analysis and if warranted, revisions to the Town of Freedom laws and ordinances. During the period of moratorium, no applications will be accepted, nor permits, certificates of occupancy or approvals issues, which would authorize development within the Town for land uses relating to BESS as described above.

SECTION 4. TERM

This moratorium shall be in effect for a period of six (6) consecutive months from its effective date. This local law shall be subject to renewal for a cumulative period of up to an additional six (6) months, if necessary, by Resolution of the Town Board.

SECTION 5. EFFECT ON OTHER LAWS

To the extent that any law, ordinance, rule or regulation, or parts thereof, are in conflict with the provision of this Local Law, including all provisions of Article 16 of the New York State Town Law concerning special use permit, site plan, building permit and certificate of occupancy, procedure and requirements, this Local Law shall control and supersede such law ordinance, rule or regulation.

SECTION 6. WAIVER

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Owing to the limited scope and duration of this moratorium, there is no provision being made in this Local Law for any waivers of applicability. However, the Town Board may, but is not obligated to, promulgate regulations by a Resolution of the Board authorizing a hardship waiver process to this moratorium.

SECTION 7. SEVERABILITY

If any clause, sentence, paragraph, section or part of this Local Law shall be adjudged by any court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, such judgment shall be confined in its operation to the clause, paragraph, section or part thereof directly involved in the controversy in which such judgment shall have been rendered, and the remaining provision shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 8. EFFECTIVE DATE

This Local Law shall take effect immediately upon its filing with the Secretary of State in accordance with New York Municipal Home Rule.

A motion was made by Josh Cutler to set the Public Hearing on April 20, 2026, at 7:01 pm. Seconded by R. Nick Morgan.

Roll Call: Ayes-4 S. R. Cory Higgins, R. Nick Morgan, Denise Willard, & Supervisor Josh Cutler

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

1) New Pick-Up: Highway Superintendent Jim Haggerty said that we need a pickup because the one we have is 7 years old with 80,000 miles and started leaking power steering fluid inside the front gear box and it is hard to fix. The town does not have the right tools to fix it. Jim said this was discussed during the fall budget season. Highway funds have money to buy the truck, he will get bids on Chevy, Dodge and Ford. Jim asked the board if the General Fund wants to buy the pickup because then the board has more control over where the truck gets used. Jim said the truck we have now has been through a lot, he said it could be used as a plow truck and get beat more, but if highway funds buy it, he will trade this one for a new one. They also need a new plow for the truck. Jim will get quotes for 350 with a plow, so they can discussed more.

2.) Lawn Mowing: Highway Superintendent Jim Haggerty said that Matt Haggerty has been mowing for years at night, and he can't do it because he works full time for the town now. Jim said the highway crew would like to try to keep up with the mowing this year and not hire it out. There are days when they get back early from jobs and they could spend a few hours working on mowing. With the new zero turn being delivered soon there will be two available. If they fall behind with the mowing Jim said he will be asking the board to hire someone. The board agreed that they are willing to try it if the highway crew is willing to. Jim said the only thing that might happen is there might be an hour of overtime here and there, he said that they will have to watch and make sure it does not get abused. Councilman S. R. Cory Higgins asked what the budged in past years for

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mowing. Jim said when it was hired for an individual to mow it was \$13,000. Matt mowing as part time summer help was about \$4,000. Councilman R. Nick Morgan stated that Bookkeeper Jessica Dart keeps about \$15,000 for the mowing. Town Clerk Mindy Holland said that the funds come out of parks and cemeteries. Cory said he feels this makes sense if it stays in the proposed budget, this will benefit in a lot of different ways. Supervisor Josh Cutler asked Jim if he was planning on taking the zero turn to the Town Green. Jim asked if the issue had been solved with the neighbors because his crew is not going to mow the Green and have to deal with hypodermic needles and dog feces. Josh asked if there should be a fence. The board discussed the property lines and how the town owns where the camper sits and the driveway of the neighboring property according to a survey done in 2022. Cory suggested making sure the survey was correct to prevent any dispute.

3.) Asbestos removal: A while back there was a test done on tiles in from the men's bathroom. When the report came back the former Supervisor told everyone that there was no asbestos found. The report was uncovered and it states that there are asbestos materials identified from the tile in the men's bathroom. Supervisor Josh Cutler will have to call and get quotes for the removal of the tile. The boardroom area will be shut down for a while. The public will be updated on this matter as it becomes available.

4.) New dumpster service: Supervisor Josh Cutler stated that Waste Management got the towns payment and then processed it after it was due, and they would not honor postmark. Then they billed town with interest. This is not the first time this has been done to the town. This year dumpster fee is now paid in full. Looking ahead to next year, the town needs to find another dumpster provider. Councilwomen Denise Willard what size dumpster does the town need. There was no further discussion.

5.) The Rec supplies: Due to the town not having any recreation since 2019, all the supplies and materials have been ruined by mice. Supervisor Josh Cutler asked Highway Superintendent Jim Haggerty if he could clean out the closet. Josh also asked if they could remove the sand box as well. Jim asked about the piano that is in the men's room, and what should be done with that. It was part of the grange. Nothing was discussed further with the piano. The Town Clerk Mindy Holland will meet the highway department early in the morning on Friday March 20, to clean the closet.

6.) Porta Potty: The baseball teams will be starting mid-April. The quotes from Zuech are \$135.00 per porta potty per month and a one-time \$25.00 delivery fee, also they will service them once a week. Blue Moon who the town has been using, is \$130.00 per porta potty per month and service once a week. The board would like them to be in place anytime from April 11th-13th. Town Clerk Mindy Holland will get them set up.

A motion was made by R. Nick Morgan to use Blue Moon for \$130.00 a month for two toilets, one for each field. Seconded by Josh Cutler.

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**Roll Call: Ayes-4 S. R. Cory Higgins, R. Nick Morgan, Denise Willard,
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V. OLD BUSINESS:

1.) Agreement for the Expenditure of Highway Monies: (Signed by Board Members)

This was not available at the January 5, 2026, Reorganization meeting and the board did not approve this item under Assignments. All Board members must sign this before leaving this evening.

A motion was made by Josh Cutler to approve expenditure of Highway Moneys. Seconded by Denise Willard.

**Roll Call: Ayes-4 S. R. Cory Higgins, R. Nick Morgan, Denise Willard,
& Supervisor Josh Cutler**

2.) Reminder Spring Clean up days will be May 15, & May 16 from 7:00 am - 3:00 pm at Previty's Auto Wrecking.

3.) Town of Freedom Signs price list: Councilman Josh Aarum sent the price sheet for the new Town of Freedom Signs and the bigger Trash Day signs. Trash Days signs are 24 x 36, two sided and have two heavy duty step stakes to mount in the ground. The price is \$25.50 for a double-sided sign, and the heavy-duty stakes are \$5.00 a piece, for regular stakes they are \$2.50 a piece. The board agreed to go with 6 trash days signs to be ordered and placed in heavy traffic locations for the taxpayers to be reminded when trash days are.

The Town of Freedom signs would be \$67.00 for the reflective die cut signs, from saftysigns.com. Councilman S. R. Cory Higgins thought the County would make them. Highway Superintendent Jim Haggerty said that he can get them through the County at \$46.00-\$47.00 but they are not cut fancy like the ones Josh A got a price for. The board also agreed to go with the nicer welcome to the Town of Freedom signs. Jim thinks there should be about 12 needed.

A motion was made by Josh Cutler to order the 6 signs for Trash days and to order the 12 nicer looking welcoming signs. Seconded by Denise Willard.

**Roll Call: Ayes-4 S. R. Cory Higgins, R. Nick Morgan, Denise Willard,
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VI. Public Comment: NONE

VII. REPORTS & COMMUNICATIONS:

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- 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 –
- H) Highway Committee –
- I) Insurance Committee-
- J) Justices –
- K) Parks & Recreation –
- L) Planning Board – Report Submitted from February Meeting & March Meeting
- M) Supervisor – Report Submitted
- N) Other Town Officials –

A motion to accept the reports & communications as submitted was made by Josh Cutler. Seconded by Denise Willard.

Roll call: Ayes-4 S. R. Cory Higgins, R. Nick Morgan, Denise Willard, & Supervisor Josh Cutler

VIII. APPROVAL OF VOUCHERS:

General #53 to #79, Amt. \$16,784.08 Yrly Amt. \$87,421.62.

Motion made by Josh Cutler to accept the General vouchers as written. Seconded by Denise Willard.

Roll call: Ayes-4 S. R. Cory Higgins, R. Nick Morgan, Denise Willard, & Supervisor Josh Cutler

Highway #27 to #32, Amt. \$25,215.92, Yrly Amt. \$ 206,070.42.

Motion made by Josh Cutler to accept the Highway vouchers as written. Seconded by R. Nick Morgan.

Roll call: Ayes-4 S. R. Cory Higgins, R. Nick Morgan, Denise Willard, & Supervisor Josh Cutler

Lighting District #3 to #3, Amt.\$426.12, Yrly Amt.\$1,309.45.

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Motion made by Josh Cutler to accept the Lighting District vouchers as submitted. Seconded by Denise Willard.

Roll Call: Ayes-4 S. R. Cory Higgins, R. Nick Morgan, Denise Willard, & Supervisor Josh Cutler

IX. Executive Session: to discuss legal matters.

A motion was made by Josh Cutler to close the regular board meeting and open the executive session at 7:35pm. Seconded by R. Nick Morgan.

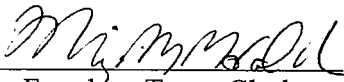
Roll Call: Ayes-4 S. R. Cory Higgins, R. Nick Morgan, Denise Willard, & Supervisor Josh Cutler

X. ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made by Josh Cutler to close the executive session and adjourn the regular board meeting at 8:08 pm. Seconded by R. Nick Morgan.

Roll Call: Ayes-4 S. R. Cory Higgins, R. Nick Morgan, Denise Willard, & Supervisor Josh Cutler

Respectfully Submitted By,



Freedom Town Clerk
3/20/2026