Town of Freedom
Regular Board Meeting Minutes
Monday, July 20, 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, Dog Control Officer Jeremy Lavery, Planning Board Members Lyle Morgan and Mike Kaufman.

Others: 5

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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:

Town Board Meeting Minutes from June 15, 2026

A motion was made by Josh Cutler to accept the Meeting minutes of June 15, 2026, as submitted. Motion seconded by Denise Willard.

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

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III. TOWN OF FREEDOM

RESOLUTION #7-2026 July 20, 2026

A Resolution Approving a Social Media Policy

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Social Media Policy is to establish clear guidelines for the creation, management, and use of official social media accounts for the Town of Freedom ("Municipality"). This policy is intended to:

A. Enhance communication with residents and the public;

B. Ensure consistent, accurate, and timely dissemination of information;

C. Maintain compliance with applicable laws, including New York State public records and open meetings laws; and

D. Protect the Municipality from legal, reputational, and cybersecurity risks.

11. SCOPE

This policy applies to all officials, officers, employees, volunteers, and any individual authorized to create, post, or manage content on behalf of the Municipality on social media platforms.

111. DEFINITIONS

A. **Administrator:** The individual(s) authorized to manage and post content to official accounts.

B. **Official Account:** Any social media account created or maintained on behalf of the Municipality or any of its departments, boards, or committees.

C. **Social Media:** Any online platform that allows users to create and share content or participate in social networking (e.g., Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube).

D. **Strong Password:** A **strong password** is a unique, hard-to-guess password that meets all of the following requirements:

i. Contains **at least 12 characters**
ii. Includes a mix of **uppercase letters, lowercase letters, numbers, and special characters**
iii. **Does not** contain personal information (such as names, birthdays, addresses, or common words associated with the user)
iv. **Is not** reused across multiple accounts or platforms
v. Avoids predictable patterns (e.g., "Password123," keyboard sequences, or repeated characters)

IV. ADMINISTRATION AND ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT

A. Designation of Administrator

The Municipality shall designate one primary Administrator (e.g., a Board Member or staff member) responsible for managing official social media accounts. A secondary Administrator is recommended for continuity.

B. Account Ownership

All official accounts on a social media platform are the property of the Municipality, not the individual Administrator. Login credentials must be maintained in a secure, accessible location controlled by the Municipality.

C. Account Creation

i. No official social media account may be created without approval from the governing board or designated official. Accounts must use official municipality contact information for setup and access (e.g., municipal email addresses).

ii. No person subject to this policy may create a social media account that purports to represent the Municipality without approval from the Municipality's governing board or designated official.

D. Account Credentials

A registry of all social media accounts, including login credentials, shall be maintained by the designated Records Management Officer.

E. Security

i. Strong Passwords must be used.

ii. Credentials must not be shared outside authorized personnel.

iii. Two-factor authentication should be enabled where possible to protect account access.

iv. Personal identifying information, such as email addresses or social media usernames collected from residents, must not be disclosed without consent.

iv. Access must be revoked immediately upon a change in personnel.

V. CONTENT GUIDELINES

A. Appropriate Content

Official accounts should be used to share:

i. Public notices and meeting information;

ii. Emergency alerts and public safety information;

iii. Updates on municipal services, projects, and events;

iv. General community information of public interest.

B. Prohibited Content

The following shall not be posted:

i. Political endorsements or campaign-related material;

ii. Confidential or privileged information;

iii. Content that violates any law or regulation;

iv. Personal opinions presented as official positions.

v. offensive, harassing, defamatory, or obscene material.

C. Tone and Accuracy

Content must be professional, factual, and respectful. Posts should be reviewed for accuracy prior to publication.

D. Consistency

The Administrator should aim for regular posting and consistent messaging across platforms.

VI. PUBLIC INTERACTION AND COMMENT POLICY

A. Limited Public Forum

Official social media accounts are intended to serve as limited public forums.

B. Comment Moderation

The Municipality reserves the right to remove comments that:

i. Contain obscenity, profanity, or hate speech;

ii. Promote or oppose political campaigns;

iii. Encourage illegal activity;

iv. Contain personal attacks or harassment;

v. Include spam or commercial solicitations;

vi. Are off-topic, threatening, discriminatory, obscene, or otherwise violate the terms of use;

vii. Disclose confidential or private information.

C. Viewpoint Neutrality

Comments shall not be removed solely because they express criticism or unfavorable views of the Municipality.

D. Response to Comments

The Municipality may, but is not required to, respond to comments. Responses should be factual and non-argumentative.

E. Right to Disable Commenting

The Municipality reserves the right to disable commenting on all Official Accounts.

VII. LEGAL COMPLIANCE

A. Public Records (FOIL)

Content posted on official social media accounts may constitute public records and must be retained in accordance with applicable records retention requirements.

B. Open Meetings Law

Social media shall not be used by a quorum of a public body to discuss or deliberate municipal business outside a properly noticed public meeting.

C. Accessibility

Efforts should be made to ensure content is accessible to individuals with disabilities, including use of alt text and captioning where feasible.

D. First Amendment Considerations

Administration of social media accounts must comply with constitutional free speech protections.

E. Incident Response

Any suspected or known incidents involving unauthorized access, use, or disclosure of information must be reported immediately to the Records Management Officer and addressed in collaboration with legal counsel.

VIII. RECORD RETENTION

A. The Municipality shall retain social media content, including posts, comments, and messages, in accordance with 8 NYCRR Part 185, as may be amended from time to time.

B. Metadata and original content must be preserved.

C. Appropriate archiving tools or manual retention methods should be used.

D. The Records Management Officer shall oversee the retention and disposition of social media records.

IX. USE OF PERSONAL ACCOUNTS

A. Separation of Roles

Individuals managing official accounts must clearly distinguish between personal and official communications.

B. Disclaimer

If municipal officials reference municipal matters on personal accounts, they should include a disclaimer that the views expressed are their own.

X. TRAINING

The designated Administrator should receive basic training regarding:

A. This policy;

B. Applicable legal requirements (FOIL, Open Meetings Law, First Amendment);

C. Cybersecurity best practices.

XI. POLICY REVIEW AND UPDATES

This policy shall be reviewed periodically by the governing board and updated as necessary to reflect changes in law, technology, or municipal needs.

XII. VIOLATIONS

Failure to comply with this policy may result in revocation of access to social media accounts and other appropriate action.

XIII. Acknowledgment

All authorized users must sign an acknowledgment form confirming they have read, understood, and agree to comply with this policy.

Adopted by Resolution of the Town of Freedom Town Board on

July 20, 2026

Motion by: Josh Cutler, Seconded by S. R. Cory Higgins

Roll call:

Aarum: Absent

Higgins: Aye

Morgan: Aye

Willard: Aye

Cutler: Aye

Clerk: _____ Date:07/20/2026

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IV. Old Business:

A. **Reminder of August Board Meeting will be on Monday, August 24, 2026, at 7:00pm.**

B. **Defibrillator update:** Councilman S. R. Cory Higgins said that Cattaraugus County would be able to help the town out for training. The town needs to come up with a number of attendees and possible dates that would work. Highway Superintendent said he can get as many people as they want. Cory will ask what class size they would like.

V. New Business:

A. **Fall Trash Dates:**

A motion was made by Josh Cutler to have Fall Junk Day on Saturday, September 26, 2026, from 7:00am-3:00pm. Seconded by R. Nick Morgan.

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

B. **Expenditure on the funds in the bank:** Highway Superintendent Jim Haggerty stated that he would take any extra funds that they could give him. Jim would like to pave East County Line Road this year. Councilwoman Denise Willard asked about the fountains at the park being fixed. Josh said they have to get a quote. Josh asked the board to think about this and come back with ideas for the next meeting. Denise suggested a place for Historical Records.

C. **Cheeseman Hill Rd:** Supervisor Josh Cutler asked Highway Superintendent Jim Haggerty about the destruction in front of driveways. Jim said he will do something about the particle spot on the road that has been broken up.

D. **Improving Shelter:** Supervisor Josh Cutler said that he would like to get the shelter insulated and heat the shelter so that the residence would be able to use the shelter year-round. Randy Lester told the board about the old piano that is sitting down in the men's room of the shelter. The piano can from the Grange building that is where Freedom Park is on Freedom Road. The piano is missing keys and has rodent residue on it. Josh asked the board if they should consider getting rid of the piano. Councilman R. Nick Morgan said no because the Grange put the piano there after the town burnt the Grange building down. Councilman S. R. Cory Higgins would like to look at the piano and decide if it has historical value.

E. **Letter from County needing Town Board approval to get a grant through the NYS Department of State Smart Growth Community Planning and Zoning Program to complete a County Wide Comprehensive Plan Update and Housing Study:** Supervisor Josh Cutler asked if they would be willing to write this letter. Councilwoman Denise Willard said she does not have a problem with this if they need to update their County Wide Comprehensive Plan. The board decided to support the County.

F. **Data Center on the November Ballot as a Permissive Referendum:** Supervisor Josh Cutler said he still has not heard back from the Town Attorney for a Resolution that the board would have to pass and submit to the Board of Elections by August 3rd to be on this year's ballot. The reason for this to be on the ballot is to give the voters in Freedom the opportunity to tell New York State yes or no. There is not one projected at this time. Planning Board Member Mike Kauffman said he has done some research, he stated that the town board could pass a law stating no data centers in the Town of Freedom, but if a company who want to put a data center here in Freedom were to come into Freedom and they would tear the law apart and this town does not have the resources to fight them. Mike said it's a lot harder for a company from a data center to fight a voter's referendum. Mike has pitched the idea to the Town of Rushford, he will also be going to the Towns of Centerville, and Farmersville. The ideal spot would be at the corner of Osmun and Route 243 where the sub station is going, or anywhere along the substation line that goes west. The Governor signed a moratorium for a year on data centers. The board may have to wait till next election year.

G. **$1.00 an hour more for Matt Haggerty to get as a stipend:** Highway Superintendent Jim Haggerty stated that Matt has taken his excavator trainer, he has ran the excavator, the tactor with the brush hog, and he used the roller. Matt has also been here 6 months.

Josh Cutler made a motion to give Matt Haggerty $1.00 an hour more. Seconded by Denise Willard.

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

H. **Paid Family Leave:** Supervisor Josh Cutler said that they discussed this in executive session at last meeting and would like a vote on this. According to the Town Attorney the governing body does not have to provide paid family leave. Highway Superintendent Jim Haggerty said if the board approves of this there should be a limited amount of time, because 12 weeks could be a problem

especially during the winter months for the highway department. Josh said he has been told that the town has a history of making special arrangements for certain events that pop up for highway employees. He would rather keep with that tradition.

A motion was made Josh Cutler not to implement paid family leave. Seconded by R. Nick Morgan.

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

VI. Public Comment :

Gary Chamberlian: He said that nothing is being done with the speeds in this town. Gary said he brought this up at the last board meeting. He has not seen one cop in town, via Route 98 or Eagle Street. Gary said that the town board does have responsibility of the safty of people in this town. This speeding problem is getting worse. He wants the town board to get going and do something about the speed. Councilman S. R. Cory Higgins said that this falls under the authority of the NYS police and Sheriff's office. Cory asked Gary if he had voiced his concerns to the Sheriff of Cattaraugus County. Gary said he has many times and it's not doing much good. Cory said generally there are only 4 officers working in the county per shift. The cops are around but busy with other complaints. Cory said that we will revisit this and see what happens.

Dan Knight: He stated that he sees the same speeding issue on Marble Springs Rd. The cops are around. Dan also wanted to let the town know that the "no parking" signs on Marble Springs from Fisher Blake Road to the racetrack driveway are missing. At the race on June 14 cars were parked on both sides of the road causing an issue. He would like the signs replaced.

VII. REPORTS & COMMUNICATIONS:

A) Assessors – Report Submitted
B) Building Committee –
C) Building Inspector – Report Submitted
D) Highway Superintendent –Report Submitted.
E) Clerk/Collector – Report Submitted. Annual Settlement from Catt Co.
F) Constable –
G) DCO – Report Submitted at Board Meeting
H) Highway Committee –
I) Insurance Committee-
J) Justices –
K) Planning Board-

L) Parks & Recreation-
M) Supervisor – Report Submitted.
N) Other Town Officials – **Wendel Group Reports from 06/10/2026-07/08/2026**

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 **#158** ***to # 186, Amt. $14,828.68, Yrly Amt. $185,439.05.***

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 ***# 66 to #78, Amt. $40,210.01, Yrly Amt. $600,816.08.***

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

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

Lighting District ***#7 to #7, Amt.$364.10, Yrly Amt.$2,792.08.***

Motion made by Denise Willard to accept the Lighting District vouchers as written. Seconded by R. Nick Morgan.

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

IX. Executive Session on an employee matter:

A motion was made by Josh Cutler to close the regular board meeting and open executive session at 7:54 pm. Seconded by S. R. Cory Higgins.

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

A motion was made by Josh Cutler to close the executive session and open the regular session at 8:18 pm. Seconded by Denise Willard.

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

X. Grace Armison from Invenergy: Grace asked Supervisor Josh Culter if he had time to read over the Bond paperwork. The paperwork states that they are moving from one Bond company to another. The initial bond company is making changes to how many wind, solar bonds that they do. She would also like them to get the estimate on the fountains for the park to be sent to her.

XI. ADJOURNMENT: Josh Cutler made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:21 pm. Seconded by Denise Willard.

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

Respectfully Submitted by

Freedom Town Clerk
07/24/2026