



**Warner Board of Selectmen
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, May 5, 2016
APPROVED**

Selectman Carson opened the meeting at 1:06 pm.

In attendance: Selectman Clyde Carson - Chairman, Selectman Allan N. Brown, Selectman John Dabuliewicz, Jim Bingham – Town Administrator

Others present: Judy Newman-Rogers, Martha Mical, Ed Mical, Gene McCarthy

1. Uniform Contract for Highway Department

A. The Town Administrator presented a new uniform contract from a different vendor. The weekly cost for the current contract is \$157 per week. The new vendor contract will cost \$62 per week. One reason for the huge decrease is the current vendor is supplying apparel the crew doesn't use. The current vendor will also meet with the Town Administrator with new figures to consider.

2. Wage Study Discussion

- A. The Town Administrator explained the wage comparison. A dozen towns were selected by the Selectmen and then all available wage information was obtained by contacting each town. What was looked at is our grades and grade range for each position competitive with similar positions in other towns. The first concern everyone had was if our employees aren't being paid on the same level as neighboring towns then their more likely to change jobs. The study shows the towns that Warner was compared with. For each position the towns equalized assessed value was listed as well as populations. The data was also presented on a graph on an hourly wage basis rather than salary because of the varied hours worked. This information was presented to the Selectmen in March 2015.
- B. Chairman Carson asked what are the issues we want to address with this wage study. The Town Administrator said we could update the study, the current study is a snapshot in time of Warner against competitive towns to see where Warner stands with those competitive towns in each position. He said if we update the study it will take some time to do and he is not sure if it will provide a clearer picture of where we are with the other towns. The Board may want to determine from what was compiled last year what the Board wants to do with that information moving forward.
- C. Selectman Dabuliewicz said the overall purpose of what we are trying to do here is how are we going to treat our employees with regard to what we request in the budget for compensation. He asked how will we set up a system that we are going to use, he understands the past system has been suspended, which he is confused by the use of the term suspended. Do we want to have a logical system that provides growth by steps? The Town Administrator explained the suspended system that hasn't been used for the past three years, what was provided by the Board was cost of living increases instead. The wage scale was also updated with each cost of living increase. Chairman Carson also noted the town has a number of employees at the top of their wage scale, the question is are the wage brackets adequate? His question is, is the right model in place? What's our goal with regards to compensation strategy, once the strategy is figured then we look at the jobs and if they are correctly graded, are the grade ranges correct.
- D. Chairman Carson laid out 3 things to work on:
- What's the strategy
 - What's the compensation strategy
 - How does the current structure fit into the new strategy
- E. Selectman Dabuliewicz would like to see a step system that includes a performance evaluation, no step increase would be approved without a satisfactory performance evaluation. Selectman Brown said the town went by the state system for years without any problems. He is in favor of a professional company to complete a wage study, keeps it on neutral ground.

- F. Selectman Brown said one problem when we hire is we are hiring at a higher rate than people who have been with the town for 10 years. He said it was difficult to staff the Highway Department, if you can't hire on your wage scale then something is wrong.
- G. Chairman Carson asked Selectman Dabuliewicz the objective of having a step system. He said so that people taking a job will see there is room for growth in their wages, which is consistent with someone with experience being worth more. John asked what were the failures that caused the current system not to work, all he keeps hearing is it got too expensive. Chairman Carson said right, you had employees getting a 5% increase and people sitting at Town Meeting saying I didn't get an increase this year. Selectman Dabuliewicz said my answer to that is work for a place that has a step system. John said maybe we should be talking to the past Selectmen to learn what was their philosophy back then as well as the past Town Administrator. The Town Administrator said the other component is what is the criteria for an employee to get a step increase.
- H. In terms of compensation goals:
- Competitive wages
 - Placing positions in correct grade and having good grade ranges
 - Using the step system so employees see job growth
 - The goal of a compensation system is to attract and maintain qualified employees
- For discussion:
- How will we use a c.o.l.a
 - Merit increase and bonuses

3. Roundabout Bid Opening

- A. Gene McCarthy from McFarland Engineering presented 2 bids for the roundabout:
- Weaver Brothers Construction \$927,970.75
 - F. L. Merrill Construction \$765,507.00

Both bids came in higher than what was estimated for Phase III. Gene said his firm will be going back and comparing the pricing against their estimate to see what's the best course of action. Chairman Carson asked what are the options available. Gene said to re-bid. The Town Administrator confirmed the budgeted amount for construction and engineering was \$735,000. The bids received need to have construction and engineering costs added as well, the towns estimation is significantly off by \$165,000 shy from the lowest bid. The timing for bid solicitation may have been off, most construction companies are booked at this time, D.O.T was a factor in not meeting the bidding goal, bids should have been solicited in February.

- B. The Board will meet on May 18 at 3:00 pm. for further discussion about the roundabout.

4. Adjournment

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn at 2:15 pm.

Board of Selectmen
Clyde Carson
Allan N. Brown
John Dabuliewicz

Recorder of the minutes: Mary Whalen