



**Warner Board of Selectmen  
Work Session Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, August 2, 2016  
APPROVED**

Selectman Carson opened the meeting at 9:06 am.

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

Others present: Marianne Howlett, Peter Wyman, Anthony Mento, Howard Kirchner, Kimberley Edlmann, Ed Raymond, David Hartman, Ed Mical

**1. Fire Station Building Review Committee Update**

- A. Allan, who Chairs the FSBRC said the square footage for the office complex have been agreed upon. The Committee is still discussing the size of the apparatus bays. The building is up to about 10,000 square feet, with a small cellar under the offices, the exact size has not been determined yet.
- B. Chairman Carson asked if the committee used a benchmark to come up with 10,000 square feet. Anthony said the Committee looked at a number of fire stations in towns with like population and similar amount of calls, which helped the discussion on various room sizes. Anthony said he doesn't think there was any discussion on honing in on a particular size of the overall complex. What was done is, address what are the needs, and how big the individual spaces will be and then tallied it up.
- C. FSBRC member, Kimberley Edlmann, said by visiting other fire stations, the committee was able to ask questions like what do you wish you could have done that you forgot to do. She said the visits were very valuable to the committee. John asked for an example. Kimberley said looking at configurations of where they put different rooms, the room sizes, locations of kitchens, the bathroom configurations, a lot of little details you don't think about until your living and using the building. Allan said the committee visited 4 as a committee and he himself visited 7 fire stations. The stations visited were Contoocook, Sunapee, Henniker and Meredith.
- D. Chairman Carson said he is assuming there is software available, how do you take all those room sizes and end up with a building footprint. Anthony said there is no software that does that. That's why the committee is recommending putting out an RFP to hire an architect to do the conceptual design, that is were the committee is. Allan said the committee has been very frugal on the room sizes, they need to line up to each other so the rooms compliment each other. Chairman Carson asked if more work is needed to be done before going to an architect. Anthony said a survey of the site is needed first. Allan said and a geotechnical survey is also needed. Chairman Carson said the other factor about whether there will be an entrance from Split Rock needs to be ironed out as well. Ed Raymond said the intent is to not use the access from Split Rock as a major driveway in or out. Those 3 items need to be in place before going to an architect.
- E. John confirmed the RFP would be for a conceptual design and not a final design. Anthony said correct. Allan said under construction management you have the most control, also it's not going to cost you all the up front money. This way we can educate the public with pictures and information long before the building is designed. Chairman Carson said so under this construction management conceptual design does the town get to specify what we would like the building to look like architecturally? Anthony said yes, more so than any other delivery method. Anthony said the committee is meeting this Wednesday to hash out the RFP to what we wish the firms to submit on, and clarify our goal of what we want. Anthony said he feels the conceptual design ought to include the design firm provide a couple of community meetings, one visioning session, and then later a presentation to show what the concept is. This first phase is to get renderings on what it will look like, how it will be sited, with a very rough conceptual estimate. That information could be presented to the 2017 Town Meeting to approve monies for going forward with the project and additional money to pay for the real architect and engineering and final estimating with our construction manager. Then come back to the 2018 Town Meeting with the full project and price. Anthony said this approach builds awareness.

- F. Jim asked are we looking to hire an architect for the conceptual with the assumption that they will be the firm doing the actual design working with the construction manager, or back out to bid. Anthony said usually when you find the right fit, you stay on that course. Jim asked if the committee is looking at an RFP for the construction firm at this point or strictly lining up the architect for the conceptual. Anthony said the committee has not decided that.
- G. Jim said he will have an RFP ready for review at the next FSBRC meeting. Chairman Carson would like the bidders to provide a presentation as well. David talked about the process the town went through for picking an engineer for the roundabout. He said there was a free for all for the RFP's, a committee looked at those proposals and brought forward their recommendation to the Board, he believes it was the top 3. There was a great deal of discussion on who would be the best. The difference here is the town is completely in charge of selecting and running the project. The roundabout had the state mixed in to a huge degree of how the project went.
- H. Clyde said from the Board's perspective the FSBRC will present their final recommendation for a conceptual architect. Allan said the committee will talk about this further at their next meeting.
- I. The Board will need to start working on the process to have the house removed. To demolish the house would cost about \$20K. The preference is to sell the house and the new owner would move it from the property to another location. Advertising and hearings need to be researched. Jim will like to also touch base with legal. If the house can't be sold this year the house will need to be winterized. The Board talked about the possibility of holding off till next year to sell it as well. Clyde said why don't we assume this process falls under RSA41:14, if it is required the town is covered, if the town is not required, then the town did over kill. Everyone was in agreement.
- J. Allan asked Ed Mical if he could help out with the time line on the fire station. Allan said we want to apply for grants for the Emergency Operation Center and for the training room. He said both Hopkinton and Henniker received grants from Emergency Management. Ed said the grant needs to be applied for before the actual work is started. Allan is concerned because the property has to be researched by historical preservation as part of the grant process and it is usually done before anything is disturbed so Ed needs to be on top of this with the FSBRC so we can get a grant. Chairman Carson said it looks like this information needs to be included in the RFP as well. Ed said he will contact the EMPG Coordinator and ask the question about the historical process in the grant application, he's also going to check if the kitchen can be included in the grant application. Allan asked Ed to attend the FSBRC tomorrow night. Allan also recommended wording in the RFP referencing historical preservation. Jim said the time line for Ed to file for the grant would be during the year that you have the architect and the engineer working on the actual design.

## **2. Meeting Minutes**

Jim talked to the Board about hiring someone on a temporary basis to help with the meeting minutes, basically through budget time. At this time the secretary is compiling minutes for 4 entities, the Selectmen, the Fire Station Building Review Committee, the Economic Development Advisory Committee and the Budget Committee.

## **3. Wages**

- A. Jim created a wage scale that has 14 steps with a 2.5% increase between each step. He designed the scale so it can be used for a number of years, and he minimized the chance of people maxing out in their particular grade. Clyde noted with this wage scale there are still employees one step from maxing out. Jim said that is the issue, he put together an excel sheet showing all the employees, their years of service and where they would land on the new wage scale, the excel sheet shows that some long term employees fall around step 13, there are 6 employees in all. Those employees are in the high teens and twenty's for years of service.
- B. Jim said what the Board needs to be looking at is, we could take those employees that are at step 13 and move them to a higher grade, and therefore they would line up at a lower step for that new grade which would give them room to grow or we could look at their length of service and discuss the possibility of a longevity stipend. Clyde asked what is done at the state level. Allan said longevity is reached after 10 years, and after you get a longevity check, he thinks it goes from 10-15 years \$300 etc., he is not sure of the amounts. John said this brings him to his question, what are we trying to accomplish here, there are employees maxing out and that's part of the job, so are you trying to not have them be max'd out as quickly? Increase what they are going to get? John doesn't understand what the Board is trying to

accomplish and he said he is still missing the piece that this is based on, the job, what's required of the job, and what grade you put people in. Clyde said at the first meeting we said that's important, but, maybe we won't be able to get to that in this phase. John asked then how do we figure how or where to put people on the scale? Jim said if we only match up people on the new scale, they would all have some sort of wage increase, some as high as 2% and some as low as .2%. Jim said going back to John's question, number one is, what does the Board want to do with respect to a philosophy of compensation and then, what is the mechanism that initiates a step increase for an employee. These are the two key questions the Board needs to discuss moving forward. If we are moving employees to a new grade so that we address the employees that are max'd out in their grade, that's one way to look at it. He feels the new wage scale would address that. Jim said how do we evaluate a job to place it in a grade and how do we evaluate a person's ability to go to the next step, what will it be based on, performance, longevity?

- C. Clyde said at the first meeting we had a discussion about how we may need to have some outside help, but we would have to budget for that in a future year. He said initially what we were going to try to do is see if we can get the structure so it's more manageable and realistic in terms of the grades and steps, and maybe use the wage study data to see if everyone is being paid comparable to their peers in other towns. Then look at the next piece which is to come out and say we have our positions correctly defined and graded, but he thinks they will need outside help to do that. John said that feels backwards to him, your deciding on wages without having that piece. John said again, what are you trying to accomplish here, is the issue compensating employees that are max'd out? Jim said we have about 45% of our staff that has no room to grow. There no place for them to make more money unless they move to another position or leave to go to another town. Jim said his understanding when you max out in your grade level for the state that's were you are, the only other options available a cost of living adjustment and under longevity, a bonus for years of service. Jim said that's the first question he's hearing John ask, what are we trying to accomplish, particularly employees that are max'd out on the current wage scale. Jim said some employees feel it's unfair because they have no chance of increased wages. Clyde said that's not true because the Selectmen over the years have provided cost of living increases which increases the steps.
- D. Clyde said the issue we've been fighting over the years is that we've had a step and grade system that we haven't been able to utilize because each year we say we can't justify it. Chairman Carson said his understanding was we were going to try to make this grade and step a little bit more realistic.
- E. Clyde thinks we should use the new wage scale as a starting point, and then look at the wage study data, using the new scale, there could be some adjustments for some based on the wage study, and that could be the goal for the upcoming budget process. Jim said when we completed our wage study last year we looked at a job title and compared it to several towns the Board selected. Based on that information, our starting wages were lower than other towns, and the high end was slightly lower, but for the most part we were in the same range as other towns.
- F. Clyde asked if it would be a logical step to take the wage study and overlay it on to the new wage scale and see how we come out? Jim said he doesn't know if it makes much sense to do that other than saying we changed the grade range and look at it all over again. Clyde asked if there was anyone who pops out needing a wage adjustment by using the wage study and new wage scale, if not, then we have something we can go forward and talk about this budget season about doing a pay evaluation.
- G. Jim said up to this point we have been dealing with job titles and in a couple of circumstances we've had to pull job descriptions from other towns if there was a pay disparity. Jim thinks it goes back to John's question, what is the criteria we are using to place the job in a particular grade range. Clyde said the question is do we deal with that this budget season or next year. No one felt there was enough time for this year. Chairman Carson is trying to focus the discussion to what do we want to take away from this with in regards to getting ready for this year's budget discussion. John said if we find we have people who are not comparably paid, is the goal you want to retain them because your afraid they will go somewhere else? Jim said that's one of the motivators for doing the wage study and comparing with other towns. He said it's been documented over and over again that it's more costly for any organization to deal with frequent turn over than it is to keep employees and pay them competitively, that's what we are trying to avoid.

- H. Chairman Carson said our compensation goals are:
1. Competitive wages
  2. Placing positions in the correct grade and having good grade ranges
  3. Using the step system so employees see job growth
  4. The goal of the compensation system is to attract and maintain qualified employees
- I. John asked how did the town pay people before this? Allan said we stayed with the state pay scale for many years, then a Wage Committee was formed, in Allan's opinion the committee was biased, they were looking to see how cheap they could do it. Allan feels a professional company should be handling this, we should find a way to make it work this year and then we should budget for a professional company. Allan said if you have dedicated people that have worked for year's for the town, which we have, you still need to show your appreciation as an employer. John asked Allan if he is leaning towards longevity pay? Allan said most definitely. Jim said that would be one solution for this budget cycle. Chairman Carson asked if that would be in place of a cost of living increase? Allan said that's one question, you still can't forget the other employees and will the longevity people be excluded from a cost of living increase. Chairman Carson said he goes back to the years of trying to justify a step increase that's 5%. Allan also feels the Board can't balance the budget on the backs of the employees, we have to make a decision and the budget will fall where ever it falls.
- J. Clyde presumes the question is status quo for this year? Jim said some towns look at a cost of living increase separately from a step increase, and they look at a step increase on the anniversary of each employees tenure based on a performance evaluation. Jim said for this year the Board could be looking at a separate longevity schedule at certain increments, which is separate, and then go back and look at a cost of living increase. And then look at hiring a professional company to address the step increase process. Clyde said the implication there is we may not be able to give full step increases. Jim said that's right. Jim said what's more complicated is how do we convert the staff over with no increases at this point, and how some will have a significant increase to meet their next step and some will have a minimum increase, how do you make that fair across the board? At this time the increases range from .2% to 2% on the new wage scale.
- K. Marianne Howlett feels there is something else the Board should look at when placing someone on the wage scale. It has been her observation in the last year when the Board elevated the DPW, he received a significant increase over the prior DPW, when the Board hired the foreman at the Highway Department, he was hired at a higher rate. Recently another Highway Department staff member also received an increase. She suggested looking at the employees recent salary history, it should figure into where you are placing them on the scale.
- L. Clyde suggested the Board identify where we want to take this for the next go, and keep in mind if we want to propose a new thing, we are going to have to have meetings with the employees and receive some input. Allan said we can't wait till the last minute, the Department Heads need this information for creating their budgets. Jim suggested for their next meeting the Board should really look at what the Board has on the table going into the next 4 months and decide if the Board wants to take this on this budget season or next year. Clyde said that's what we did last year. Jim said next year the roundabout will be completed, decisions on the Odd Fellows Building will be made, Fire Station will move forward to the next step, solar array will be built and then the Board will have some breathing room. Jim said he would create some transition scenarios for the Board to look at based on what Marianne had mentioned and trying to make it equitable for everyone. Marianne recommended the Board meet with the employees to let them know what the Board is doing, even if the Board chooses not to do anything. She thinks it would build good rapport. Marianne said all the Department Heads, and the Town Administrator of that time, were involved in the development of what's in place now, she said the Police Chief has a good memory on how it was put together.
- M. The Board talked about when to meet again about wages, the upcoming agenda on August 9<sup>th</sup> is full. Marianne said she thought she was meeting with the Board on August 9 or at some point to discuss the deposit delegation policy. Clyde said that was the original intent, but it was decided that all involved with the policy would meet because we weren't sure we would be ready on August 9. Clyde said there will be a meeting with the Board when the policy is worked out between those involved in the process and are in agreement, then the Board will go through it. Marianne asked is it going to be a meeting or is it going to be conducted by email. Jim said he sent out an email asking for feedback on the current deposit policy.

Once the feedback is submitted he will schedule a meeting with those involved for a group discussion. He said at this time for the record, he sees zero concerns. Marianne believes she sent an email to the Selectmen last evening where she said she listed her concerns, she said she would be happy to read them into the record at this meeting. Jim said he didn't think that was necessary at this point, because he hasn't seen anything, he said he hoped Marianne copied him on the email. Marianne said it's the Selectmen that are approving this policy Jim, she said she didn't see Jim reach out to her when he was proposing the policy to the Board. Jim said no he didn't, the policy came from the Treasurer who passed it by him and then Jim said let's pass it by the Selectmen to see what their thoughts are. Their thoughts are saying ok....Marianne interjected and said why don't I read what I wrote yesterday, so we are all on the same page. Jim said why don't you just email me a copy of it. Jim said he is upset at the fact that there are things that go directly to the Selectmen and he is not included, the problem with that is that know one is on the same page and the Board is counting on him to set up a meeting and he doesn't have that information, that doesn't make much sense. Marianne said but your....Jim said your hamstringing my arms.....Marianne said excuse me, you just interrupted me sir. You were saying for the policy that involves my department and others without any input to me and you forwarded it....Jim said there are stages of doing that. Marianne said there is a policy currently in place and is in place until it's rescinded by the Town of Warner, historically the research wasn't done even before this was proposed. May I please read....Chairman Carson said we have a request to read something and the policy of the Board is to allow people to read things into the minutes.

Marianne said this was sent to the Board of Selectmen last night by email.

*I am attaching a copy of the delegation of deposit authority from 2009. Please take note of the final paragraph, and the proposed new delegation of deposit authority. Look at them side by side to observe the differences. I would like to make a few brief observations.*

*1. I left last Tuesday's meeting with the understanding that we were to have a meeting to discuss this proposed policy/procedure. On Wednesday Jim sent an e-mail asking for our responses to the new policy, what happened to having a meeting?*

*2. There is certainly more detail in the new policy, however, it does not detail what we, Tax Collector, Town Clerk and Bookkeeper may expect from the Treasurer during the reconciliation process.*

*3. The paragraph regarding checks returned for non-sufficient fund is not acceptable to me as it is written. Sugar River Bank sends notification on non-sufficient funds checks to the Treasurer/Board of Selectmen. That documentation needs to be forwarded to either myself or the Town Clerk in a timely manner.*

*4. I would like an explanation of the line which deals with changes to the remit to Treasurer Report.*

*Lastly why was it possible for the Bookkeeper to have seen this policy before it was presented to the Board of Selectmen for approval, but not the two departments who deposit the most revenue.*

Jim said he would like the Board to look at the situation at hand here, because this is not the first time it's happened. He said to the Board if you expect me to be on top of day to day issues and ask me to coordinate meetings and such, and I'm not getting all the emails, that presents a problem. Allan agreed as well as John. Allan said everything has to go through Jim, he doesn't want to see things if it hasn't come through Jim. John said Jim should at least be copied. Allan said we hired Jim to run this town, and we, as a Board, need to support him. Clyde agreed as well. John said one thing about this issue that keeps bothering him, this is a delegation of authority not a town policy. Marianne said that's what bothers her, the one in place is plain and simple. This is about depositing in the bank, if a policy wants to be in place about how it's done, that's fine, but she does think it is two different issues. Allan says he thinks the Treasurer has the authority to set that delegation of authority. John said that's what I'm saying, it's the Treasurer's delegation of authority. Clyde said if he thinks back this whole thing came up because there was a break down on how things were working. John said does that mean the policy Marianne is describing (which he has never seen) wasn't being followed? Clyde thinks it had to do with the details that aren't in the policy.

John said to Marianne about Jim's point, he feels Jim needs to be copied on emails, and when he gets an email from someone who hasn't copied Jim, he sends it on to Jim and he feels "you folks" need to do that because we do ask Jim what's going on. John said he understands the Board has to make the decisions, but we need everyone's input before we are able to do that, it goes two ways. Allan said he doesn't feel Jim

should send things out to people until the Board has seen it. When people send the Board something it should be sent through Jim. And when Jim works something up and he wants the Board to see it before anyone else, that's the way it's got to be. Clyde said he will be the first to admit, when he gets an email, he doesn't look to see who else it goes to.

Marianne said to the Board of Selectmen, if your looking at any policies, which Clyde said, I think all of us should be privy to that before you move to have an approval. She said the policy was put forward to the Selectmen for approval before we ever saw it. Jim said it was put forward to the Selectmen for discussion, leading to approval as indicated on the agenda. Jim said that is the first step and you need to understand that. Jim said he needs to get Board feedback first, especially when it comes from another elected official, and that was all that was meant to do.

#### **4. Manifest**

Selectman Dabuliewicz moved to authorize the Selectmen to sign manifests and order the Treasurer to sign Payroll check numbers 4279-4295 in the amount of \$32,055.72 (including 22 direct deposits) and Accounts Payable check numbers 52608-52614 in the amount of \$31,938.85. Selectman Brown seconded the motion, motion passed 3-0.

#### **5. Consent Agenda**

Selectman Brown moved to approve the Consent Agenda for August 2, 2016:

1. Building Permits for: Map 12 Lot 44-1 & Map 15 Lot 37-2
  2. Notice of Intent to Cut for: Map 8 Lot 15-3, Map 8 Lot 15, Map 8 Lot 15-2, Map 8 Lot 14 and Map 8 Lot 14
- Selectman Dabuliewicz seconded the motion, motion passed 3-0.

#### **6. Fuel Bid**

- A. Request for bids were sent to 6 companies and only 2 responded. The town combined bidding with the Town of Bradford. John asked are the bids good if Bradford doesn't go with it. Jim said he would check.

#### **Board Action**

Chairman Carson moved to accept the bid amount for heating oil supplied by Huckleberry Propane & Oil for September 2016 to June 2017 for \$1.65 per gallon provided the price holds with or without Bradford. If it doesn't, the Board will come back and revisit. Selectman Brown seconded the motion. Jim said the maintenance service is an option. The Board can choose Huckleberry or another source.

#### **7. Ducks Unlimited Fundraiser**

- A. John said he received an email from Mike Amaral about the Ducks Unlimited Fundraiser, the shooting will be all day for this fundraiser which is being held on this coming Saturday. The land the fundraiser is held on is in current-use and Mike wants to know if it's an acceptable use. Jim said we have dealt with this before and had the police look at how it was set up, he said he will check with the Police Department. Mike is asking the Board to come to his property on Saturday to hear what it's like. John's question is this an acceptable use of the property? Jim said it happened last year and he would need to go back and read the minutes as to what was finally concluded. Clyde would like the Ducks Unlimited information passed onto the Police Chief and asked him to look into what is being advertised. The Board learned there is a cost to attend this event.

#### **8. Adjournment**

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn at 11:30 am.