



Town of Warner

Board of Selectmen

APPROVED - Meeting Minutes

October 13, 2020, 7:00 PM,

No physical location for this meeting; it was conducted via Zoom.

PREAMBLE/WELCOME/ROLL CALL

At 7:03 p.m., Chairman Clyde Carson called the meeting to order and read this preamble:

“As Chair of the Board of Selectmen, I find that due to the state of emergency declared by the governor as a result of COVID-19 pandemic, and in accordance with the governor’s emergency order number No. 12 pursuant to Executive Order #2020-04, I’m invoking the provisions of RSA 91-A: 2,III (b). I also find that this meeting is imperative to the continued operation of the Town of Warner government and services which are vital to public safety and confidence during this emergency. As such, this public body is authorized to meet electronically, and this meeting will be conducted electronically via Zoom without a quorum of this body physically present in the same location.”

ROLL CALL: Clyde Carson, Chairman, alone; Jonathan Lord, alone; and Judy Newman-Rogers, alone.

Also present: Ken Cogswell; Nancy Ladd, Librarian; Diane Ricciardelli, Town Administrator; Deb Moody, Assessing Clerk/Land Use Administrator; Marianne Howlett, Tax Collector; Kelly Henley, Bookkeeper; and Ray Carbone, Recording Secretary.

I. Appointments/New Business

Tax Collector Marianne Howlett came to address a problem that has arisen regarding local property owners that have been more than two years in arrears of their property taxes. Howlett said she would normally send out a message to these people about the danger of losing their homes to the Town in May, but things have been pushed back by the governor’s emergency orders related to the coronavirus pandemic.

Now, the particular order that exempted property from seizure is no longer in effect and municipalities around the state are taking different approaches with these cases.

Some have waived the deeding process, allowing the owner to have another year (to the spring of 2021) before their properties would be in danger of seizure, Others have proceeded with the deeding process.

Howlett said she's sent letters to several property owners who were in arrears on their taxes and most have responded and resolved their debts, but there are seven particular people have not; nor have they reached out to the Town in any way to try to resolve their financial obligations.

Selectman Lord suggested that the Town send the seven owners separate letters, stating that the deeding process is being waived for this year but it may be reconsidered next year. Howlett said that would be her idea but she added that the letters could also indicate the need for the creation of a repayment plan. "The problem is there's no way to enforce it," she said.

Chairman Carson asked about having the property owners meet with the Select Board in a nonpublic session. Howlett said that was a good proposal because "some of these amounts (owned) are pretty significant." Carson said that a nonpublic meeting might be a good way to get the owners to discuss their situations and a suitable payment plan.

At Howlett's request, Newman-Rogers made a motion to notify the seven property owners that the town was waiving the deeding process on the 2017 property taxes owed this year but that the owners should follow-up by contacting and meeting with the Board of Selectman with the aim of establishing a repayment plan; Lord seconded. ROLL CALL: Carson, yes; Lord, yes; Newman-Rogers, yes. Passed unanimously.

b. Kimberley Brown-Edelmann – Trustees of the Trust Funds

Brown Edelmann, who is one of the three current Trustees of the Trust Funds, said that one of their members is not planning to seek reelection to the group when her term ends in March. As a result, Brown Edelmann said the members have come up with a plan that they hope the Select Board will support.

Because there is a fairly steep learning curve to work as a Trustee, the group would like to find one or two residents who may be interested in joining the group. Then, they would ask the Selectmen to appoint those individuals as Board Alternates, which will give them the chance to get involved with how the committee works. If one of the Alternates likes the work, they can run for election to the Trustees board in March.

After a brief discussion, Brown Edelmann noted that the action is permissible under state statutes, RSA 31:22. Carson made a motion to approve the proposal; Newman-Rogers seconded it. ROLL CALL: Carson, yes; Lord, yes; Newman-Rogers, yes. Passed unanimously.

Brown Edelmann said she would begin working on an advertisement announcement soon with plans to post it on the Town's website and on several public bulletin boards.

c. Dave Marazoff, M & N Assessing – Abatement

Marazoff was not present.

II. Old Business/Projects

None.

III. Select Board Other Business/Committee Reports

Chairman Carson addressed some complaints that the board has received recently about what may be unpermitted activity at Pumpkin Blossom Farm. He said that he's recently spoken with Missy Biagio, who owns the farm with her husband. She learned that the farm is now closed for the season, so sending a cease-and-desist order may not be reasonable at this time. Carson said the couple had planned to come to tonight's meeting but decided against it because they were unable to bring an attorney and had some difficult discussions at meetings of the Zoning Board of Adjustment several years ago. The Chairman said the owners want to move forward in an organized and legal manner and plan to meet with the Planning Board. The Select Board can look at the issue again in the spring, he added.

Selectman Newman-Rogers said she was disappointed that the Biagios didn't come to the meeting but that it would be appropriate for the Select Board to create some kind of written record of what has transpired so far regarding the property and the complaints. In addition, the owners should be aware of how the Planning Board's process works and the amount of time they will need to make any necessary changes to their plans before next spring. Chairman Carson asked that Newman-Rogers work with Town Administrator Ricciardelli to create the letter to be sent to the farm owners in the next few weeks, reflecting those suggestions. Newman-Rogers and Ricciardelli agreed.

Selectman Lord raised concerns about the Horne Street property that the Town is hoping to sell. He indicated that, despite his recent efforts, there has not been much interest in the land, perhaps because it may be unbuildable. Newman-Rogers suggested that a home could be put on the land but it would have to be on the same footprint as the current structure. Carson said the challenge would be getting an approved septic system.

Newman-Rogers also mentioned a listing she'd seen recently about a municipally-owned property in Claremont, and noted how well it was presented. Lord asked if the other board members wanted him to try again to put the property out to auction, with a lower price and a listing approximating what was in the Claremont post. Newman-Rogers and Carson supported the proposal.

Chairman Carson addressed recent activity regarding Erin Reed and her co-worker, who were operating the regional Community Action Program (CAP) out of the Warner Community Center (“Old Graded School”) building until recently. Recently, the women appeared before the board and announced that they were resigning their posts but hoped to continue their work under the legal umbrella of the non-profit Main Street Warner organization. That has produced some confusion in Town so, in an attempt to clarify things, Carson said he met last week with Reed as well as Town Administrator Ricciardelli, Bret Ingold of the Warner Public Market (who is working with the two women on their new food pantry) and Neil D. Nevins of Main Street Warner (which recently purchased the old Masonic Hall building) as well as representatives of the main CAP office in Concord.

He said there were some diverse views expressed at the meeting but that all agreed that they hoped to be able to create a local system that serves Warner’s needy residents with food, as well as assistance with heat and other concerns. At this point, Carson reported that CAP wants to keep their food pantry going; how that moves forward, as well as that the space that CAP rents at the Town-owned Community Center is still unresolved. The Chairman said he’s hoping to hold another meeting this Thursday, with some CAP representatives who were unable to attend the first meeting. He added that the local CAP office serves about 14 local communities but many of their clients are Warner residents.

Carson said that the new Mink Hills Recreation Study Committee will hold its first organizational meeting, via Zoom, on Oct. 26. In addition, he said that he and other Town officials, including Ed Mical, Emergency Management Director, will meet on Thursday with representatives from Pine Rock Manor, the assisted living and memory care community in town, to get an update on the recent coronavirus outbreak in the facility.

IV. Town Administrator’s Report

Town Administrator Ricciardelli asked the board to review several items left unresolved from last week’s meeting about the creation of the selectmen’s annual Town budget.

First, was an adjustment to the Select Board’s Dues and Subscriptions. The board approved Ricciardelli’s suggestion on how to proceed with that item.

Second, there was some question about establishing a figure for the Assessing Department’s Outside Services budget line. With some brief discussion, the board and Deb Moody, the Assessing Administrative Assistant, agreed to a simple proposal to estimate the costs.

Finally, there was some question about the technical support budget line item in the Finance Department’s budget. The board agreed to a new suggested figure proposed by Ricciardelli.

With those issues clarified, Chairman Carson made a motion to approve the board's recommended annual budgets for the Selectmen's office, the Assessing Department and the Financial Department; Newman-Rogers seconded. ROLL CALL: Carson, yes; Lord, yes; Newman-Rogers, yes. Passed unanimously.

V. Public Comment

Martha Mical said that the town may not be complying with all the legal requirements during hiring. Carson said that the Town should look into the issue, Ricciardelli said she's posting a new job next week and would make sure that the proper measures are followed.

VI. Manifest & Consent Agenda

Carson made a motion to authorize the Selectmen to approve previously signed manifests and order the Treasure to sign:

- Payroll check numbers 6493-6503 in the amount of \$33,979.02 (this includes 24 direct deposits).
- Accounts Payable check numbers 57969-58020 in the amount of \$568,933.62 (this includes a KRSD payment of \$450,000).
- Automatic withdrawal in the amount of \$9,066.76 for payroll tax.

Lord seconded the motion: ROLL CALL: Carson, yes; Lord, yes; Newman-Rogers, yes. Motion passed unanimously.

VII. Adjournment

Without any other business to come before the board, Carson adjourned the meeting at 8:04 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: October 27.