

TOWN OF WARNER

Board of Selectmen
Clyde Carson, Chairman
Jonathan Lord
Sam Bower



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April 13, 2021

Board of Selectmen

Tuesday, 7:00 PM,

DRAFT - Work Session Minutes

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

1. ROLL CALL/ATTENDANCE/PREAMBLE

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. I welcome members of the public accessing this meeting remotely. Please note that any votes taken at this meeting will be by roll call.”

ROLL CALL: Clyde Carson, Chairman, one other in residence; Jonathan Lord, alone; Sam Bower, one other in residence.

Also present: Elizabeth Labbe of the “Gear-Up” local homeschoolers group; Nancy Martin, Chairman of the Conservation Commission; Alice Chamberlain, another Conservation Commission member; Rebecca Courser, executive director of the Warner Historical Society; Martha Mical; Tax Collector Marianne Howelett; Administrative Assistant to the Board of Selectmen Judith Newman-Rogers; and Town Administrator Diane Ricciardelli

2. APPOINTMENT: Elizabeth Labbe, “Gear-Up,” (homeschoolers group) use of the Warner Community Center (WCC)/Old Grade School (OGS)/Community Action Program building (CAP)

Selectman Carson noted that Labbe had submitted some materials outlining the group’s newest plans for use of the WCC but said that the Board has not yet had the opportunity to review the materials. He suggested that Labbe speak to the Selectmen tonight generally about the plans, and that the Board will review and take up the matter again at its next meeting on April 27.

Labbe said that the board of Gear-Up has worked out some logistics to help prevent the spread of Covid-19 (i.e., wipes, tissues, etc.) as well as other illnesses. One change the group is working on is altering its schedule: previously, it used the WCC on Fridays in four one-hour blocks, so there would

be four groups divided by age that would meet for one hour. (Typically, the final hour could be used for Chorus/Theater.)

The proposed change would require a Gear-Up Board member be present at each gathering, with that person responsible for knowing and working within all relevant logistic limitations and rules. The person would also be responsible for the content of the classes, as well as its presentation (either by the member or by a facilitator). The meetings could happen any time during the week for a scheduled amount of time, e.g., Monday evenings between 7 – 9 p.m. Labbe said she's not sure yet exactly how the homeschoolers will make use of these additional options; right now, the plan is to continue with the Friday times that were used previously. In addition, there would be no more than 12 students in a group, with a total of 24 students in the building, including siblings, at any time.

Carson suggested that the Board take time to review the materials and, if the members had any questions, to submit them to Labbe previous to the next meeting. Then, at the next meeting the Board can make a decision about whether to allow the Gear-Up group to resume meeting in the WCC, in May or in September. (Labbe said she would not move forward in May if the pandemic appeared to be holding on at that time.)

3. NEW BUSINESS

a. Tax Collector's Form for NH Board of Tax and Land Appeals

Tax Collector Marianne Howlett said that this is a standard form that is sent to the State every year with the date of local property tax bills. That information is needed if a local property owner wishes to file for an abatement with the State Board of Tax and Land Appeals. Howlett said the Select Board will get a copy of her signed submission form.

b. Town Clerk's Request for Resident Refund 1- Action: Motion to Approve/Disapprove

Selectman Lord made a motion to refund to a citizen, \$58 from the OHRV-01-3220-01-104 for a voided registration. **Carson seconded.**

ROLL CALL: Carson, yes; Lord, yes; Bower, yes. **Motion passed unanimously.**

4. OTHER BUSINESS: OLD/CONTINUED

a. Alternate Phone Service Provider 1- Status.

Town Administrator Diane Ricciardelli said that Town Webmaster Dan Watts has submitted a list of every Town department with information about its needs, including whether there is a request for a fax line and/or an alarm line. She will review the information with the department heads in the next week and check in with Librarian Nancy Ladd to learn if the Pillsbury Free Library wants to be part of the new phone provider program. Ricciardelli praised Watts for his work on the project.

Ricciardelli said she's connected with Crexendo, the new phone system company, and that it originally wanted to initiate the new system on April 1, but that once the Town gives the go-ahead, it will take only a few weeks to get all the company's equipment in place. Following that, she said she understands that it will only take a few days of training when there are two phone lines operating – i.e., two phones on each desk, the current ones and Crexendo's – to be completely on the new system.

b. Town-Owned Property

1- Data/Potential Properties to Auction

2- Discuss Review by Planning Board and/or Conservation Commission

a) Action

Selectman Lord said that there is a spreadsheet that lists three properties the Town can consider selling at auction. (Map 18/Lot 16, which may also be on the list, should be removed because it's part of the Town Forest.)

Lord said that this project should be put on hold because research is revealing that several other properties that had been on lists for possible auction sale need to be analyzed further. For instance, three lots on Kearsarge Mountain Road that were seasonal camps were also found to be in the Town Forest. Several other lots were found to be either already merged into, or about to be merged into, the Chandler Reservation. In addition, 14 of the lots are old Town cemeteries.

Lord also apologized for recent problems related to previous plans to auction off the Wiggins Trace property. He said that property has also been removed from the auction list for the time being.

Carson pointed out that there are two state RSAs related to the issue of selling off Town-owned land. One is related to properties acquired due to unpaid taxes, and the other is related to Town-owned lands acquired as gifts or other means. He noted that the one related to unpaid taxes does not obligate the Select Board to submit the lands to the Planning Board and the Conservation Commission for review before a sale, while the other RSA does. Those Boards could point out that properties may have other value to the Town, e.g., as conservation lands or for other uses outlined in the Master Plan. Carson suggested that the Board of Selectmen put in place a procedure that insures that the two other Town Boards review all the properties before the lands are sold, regardless of how the Town happened to come into ownership.

Lord said that there are still some properties that need to be reviewed. He noted that, working with Judy Newman-Rogers, he submitted 17 lots to the Conservation Commission recently that had been considered not-salable. Two of those lots were found to already have easements, he said.

Bower said that, in his opinion, it would best serve the Town for as many people as possible to have the opportunity to review lands that the Town might sell off. Carson noted that the Planning Board and the Conservation Commission, in these circumstances, will serve only as advisory groups. The Select Board retains the final decision about selling properties.

But Carson suggested that the Town might benefit from having a listing of criteria that could be used by the Select Board to determine if it is suitable to retain properties, either for conservation or other uses defined in the Master Plan. Lord agreed that would be a good idea.

Newman-Rogers sent the three Selectmen the list of three properties that Lord referenced earlier in the meeting. She said she thought those three lands would probably be the best options for an auction sale at this time. The two larger ones have already generated some interest and the one on Horne Street has liability concerns for the Town and should be sold.

Carson suggested that the Board move ahead with passing the three properties onto the Planning Board and Conservation Commission for review, with an eye towards auctioning the lands off. Lord said there are still more than 90 other Town-owned lots on the list that he would like to review (with Newman-Rogers) in the coming weeks, to see if there could be more properties added to the auction list. After some discussion, the Board decided to move ahead with Carson's suggestion, adding that the two other Boards should also consider producing a set of criteria that could be used in the future to determine if a piece of Town-owned land should be considered to have some value to Warner and not

be sold. Lord said he would submit the three properties to the Conservation Commission for that board's review before its next meeting on May 5.

Carson also recommended that the Select Board establish a policy of having all Town-owned land that may be sold, sent to the Planning Board and the Conservation Commission for consideration, based on each group's established criteria.

Carson asked Nancy Martin, who is a member of the Conservation Commission, for some feedback on the Select Board's plans and Martin said the Warner Conservation Commission has begun looking at criteria that is used in other towns. She asked Carson if the Select Board would need to see the guidelines that the Commission develops. Bower suggested that the Commission use the three properties that the Select Board is now considering as a springboard for developing the Commission's guidelines, and as a way of getting feedback from the Selectmen regarding the criteria. Carson said he would support the Conservation Commission developing its own checklist and reviewing it with the Selectmen, but he doesn't believe it would be necessary for the Select Board to approve it. "I'm not a conservation person," he said.

Alice Chamberlain, a member of the Commission, said the group is already working on a list of criteria and she expects it will be approved soon. She agreed with Carson that the criteria should be one that can be reliably used on a consistent basis, and she added that the Commission also wants it to be simple to understand. Chamberlain said she would email the draft of the Commission's checklist to all three Selectmen. Martin said the Commission should be able to complete its work on the three properties, including its recommendation, but the middle of May. Lord said that would work out well with his goal of holding a timely auction.

Chamberlain also said that she would send the checklist to Rebecca Courser, executive director of the Warner Historical Society, because historical significance is one of the issues that the Commission considers.

Carson said the Select Board should begin having a similar conversation to this one with the Planning Board.

c. Warner Connects, LLC (formerly Warner Food Pantry) 1 – Thrift Shop Proposal

The Board of Selectmen toured the Town-owned Warner Community Center (AKA Old Graded School/Community Action Program Building) on April 8. They were joined by Warner Connects representatives Peter Anderson, Patti Anderson and Lori Garrett; Garrett manages the former Warner Food Pantry. Carson said the group would like to continue to use a portion of the basement floor of the building for the Food Pantry, but they would also like to use the area directly above that (on the main floor) for collecting and distributing clothing. The group has already started accepting donations and giving out clothing, responding to a growing need in the community.

In addition, Patti Anderson had told the touring group that she wants to open the clothing space up to operate as a Thrift Shop two days every week, to raise funds for the Food Pantry. Right now, that is impossible because the public is not allowed in the building due to the Corona virus.

Carson said that there is a need for some upgrades to the building (such as repair work on the front steps) before it can open. Bower said and it may be suitable for the Town to begin that work soon. Carson said that Garrett is working on a list of building issues for the Board to consider.

(a) **Action**

Bower said he would be willing to take the lead on the project and asked how the repair work could move forward. Carson said that the Town is responsible for the work, but it doesn't have any funds set aside for it right now. However, he suggested that the federal government's recent American Recovery Plan and Investment Act could have funds that would perfectly suit the project, and the Town may have that money within the next 60-90 days. The next step would be to get bids on the work, he told Bower.

2 – Lease or Memo of Understanding

Bower asked what the Town needs to move forward with a lease. Town Administrator Ricciardelli said she has a lease prepared, but she needs to have the applicable square-footage and the name in the lease. After some discussion, the Board decided to prepare a one-year lease that would identify the lessee as MainStreet Warner, the local nonprofit organization that's currently serving as fiduciary agent for Warner Connects; the latter has not yet been granted a 501c3 nonprofit status.

d. May 1, 2021 Town Meeting

1- Discussion of Location.

Carson reported on a Selectmen's work session held on Tuesday, April 6, with Town Election Officials. The decision was made to hold the meeting on Saturday, May 1, at 9 a.m. at the Town Hall, with additional seating in the balcony and as well as outside, adjacent to the building. The Board needs to approve the official meeting post by tomorrow. Carson said he would like to have a video monitor and speakers for the outside area to accommodate those who prefer seating there out of safety concerns. Ricciardelli said she recently spoke with Moderator Ray Martin and that he is looking into getting the monitor that will be needed for the outdoor area; the Town owns the other necessary equipment. Carson asked that Ray Martin be invited to the next Board meeting to insure that all issues are addressed.

2- Assignment of each warrant to the person who will speak about it.

Chairman Carson explained that warrant articles that are the focus on departments, e.g., police, fire, public works, etc., would be addressed by those departments' heads at the meeting.

Three other articles will be discussed in this manner: Selectman Bower will address Article 6, re: property revaluation; Chairman Carson will address Article 7, re: expandable health trust fund; Selectman Lord will address Article 8, re: contingency funds.

In addition, Carson will ask Town Clerk Michele Courser to discuss Article 15, preservation of Town records; the Trustees of the Pillsbury Free Library will address Article 16, regarding the library; Transfer Station Foreman Varick Proper will address Article 17, regarding the Transfer Station; Emergency Management Director Ed Mical will discuss Article 18, regarding work on the Kearsarge Mountain Road alternative route; Selectman Carson will address the Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) grant request, related to expanding the sidewalk from the downtown to the commercial area by Interstate 89's exit 9; Selectman Bower will discuss Article 20, regarding the establishment of an Agricultural Commission in Warner.

5. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

a. Potential Infrastructure Grant

Ricciardelli said this refers to the \$185,000 grant that would be used for repaving Poverty Plains Road. That application was submitted to U.S. Rep. Annie Kuster's office recently; those funds will come from pending federal transportation funds to the State, which should be a considerable amount, she said. But earlier today, Ricciardelli received a separate email from Kuster's office to see if the Town would want to apply for a separate federal appropriation in the \$1-\$3 million range regarding highway funds; she said she would reach out to Kuster's office tomorrow to see if the project and the previous appropriation could be combined.

b. American Relief Program Funds

Ricciardelli said that although there has been discussion of a pending grant to the Town in the approximate amount of \$290,000 in the next 60-90 days, nothing has been officially settled. But Carson said that the legislation has been signed and that the Town should get 50% of the requested funds within 90 days; the other 50% may not come until 2022. However, there has not been any information yet about what kinds of projects the money can fund in Town. It's likely that work on the Warner Community Center building would be suitable but repairing a road might not be. Ricciardelli said she understood from a program she attended that the money could go to nonprofit organizations that help residents who have been negatively impacted by the coronavirus pandemic (e.g., a food pantry).

c. The Solar Report

Ricciardelli said the reports have been completed and that changes that have been made should make the filing easier next year.

6. ABATEMENT REQUESTS

Selectman Bower said he had not had the opportunity to review the requests and Chairman Carson suggested the items be put on the agenda for the Board's next meeting. The deadline for the Town to let applicants know the status of the Board's decision is July 1.

7. SELECTMEN'S OTHER BUSINESS

Bower said that he's been in touch with the organizers of the Warner Farmer's Market. He said the group hopes to resume its downtown market operations on May 15, with plans to stay on the designated grass area.

8. CONSENT AGENDA

Chairman Carson made a motion to approve these items, previously signed by the Board of Selectmen:

- Building permits for these properties:
Map 16, Lot 49 Map 14, Lot 29-1-6 Map 10, Lot 19-3 Map 35, Lot 5 Map 15, Lot 23.
- Intent to Cuts: Map 14, Lot 5-1-1 Map 20, Lot 20.
- Petition and Pole License: 32/5S Pumpkin Hill Road, from Eversouce #12-0889
- Elderly Exemption: Map 3, Lot 99-2 Map 10, Lot 85-86

Lord seconded. ROLL CALL: Carson, yes; Lord, yes; Bower, yes. Motion passed unanimously.

9. **MANIFEST**

Selectman Lord made a motion to authorize the Selectmen to approve previously signed manifests and order the Treasurer to sign:

- Payroll check numbers 6703-6714 in the amount of \$37,044.05 (This includes 24 direct deposits).
- Accounts Payable check numbers 58600-58638 in the amount of \$527,050.88.
- Automatic withdrawal in the amount of \$10,189.71 for payroll taxes.
- Park & Rec Revolving Account check number 1018 in the amount of \$166.00

Bower seconded. ROLL CALL: Carson, yes; Lord, yes; Bower, yes. Motion passed unanimously.

10. **ADJOURMENT**

At 8:35 p.m., Chairman Carson suggested ending the meeting and, without objection, it was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Ray Carbone
Recording Secretary