



**Town of Warner**

**Budget Committee – Public Hearing**

**DRAFT - Meeting Minutes**

**December 8, 2022 7:00 PM**

At 7:03 p.m., Chairman Michael Cutting called the meeting to order and took the roll.

**1 – Roll Call**

Mike Cutting (Chairman); Diane Ricciardelli (Town Administrator), Dave Minton, Christine Frost (Select Board Representative), Ray Martin, Robert Blake, Richard Bixby, Harold Blanchette, Janice Loz (Land Use Coordinator), Jonathan \_\_\_\_\_, Judy Newman-Rogers

Absent: Michelle Kendrick,

**2 – Review of Minutes**

**December 1, 2022**

Chair Cutting said the minutes from the last meeting just arrived on his desk shortly before the meeting so he would have them distributed to everyone else later that night. The minutes of December 1, 2022 would be reviewed at the next Budget Committee meeting.

**3 – Public Works Department Budget – Tim Allen**

Chair Cutting explained that the previous evening, the Selectmen voted on a 3% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) and a 2% merit raise for employees. The COLA will begin at the start of the year and the merit raises will go into effect half way through the year. This year, the Town will be paying 100% of the health and dental insurance for employees. Diane said there was also FSA which would match of up to \$750 per employee.

Tim said he has six full-time employees but also three part-time openings available. He would like to locate one more full-time employee to fill the part time vacancies at the highway and help out with parks and rec and wherever else needed. There is enough funding in his part-time line and the parks and recs budget to pay for a full-time position. The right person has to come along to make this work. He is in the process of interviewing drivers for one of the part-time positions.

Overtime: this is based on the fact that they are down in part-time help. They may need to spend a little more in overtime to get the work done. Tim said he increased this line by \$4,000 and added that overtime is generally just used in the winter season. He said that if he, himself, has to work overtime, he will generally take time off instead of getting paid overtime pay. Clyde

Carson said this is customarily how other Public Works Directors operate in the State. Tim said he only takes overtime pay if he feels he needs to be compensated for the work he has done.

Labor Part-Time: \$28,000. This is a place-holder dependent upon what they may be able to find for help.

Fire Hydrant Maintenance: \$3,000. Tim said he dropped this back from \$6,000. This is for replacement for one hydrant instead of two. He has a prioritized list of the hydrants that will need to be replaced. Ray said there are 45 hydrants in the town. Ideally, they should replace two each year.

Outside Professional Services: \$7,500. Tim said this line allows him to track any outside labor costs, for instance, when he has service done on a piece of machinery. By having this line, he can track the labor aside from the parts. He tries to keep it between \$2,500 and \$5,000. Tree removals are the largest reason for an increase in cost. They are \$800 each to take down. Eversource is consulted prior to the Town paying an outside company to take a tree down.

Paving: \$200,000. Tim said he would like to finish up some projects from this year, which will also cross over into next year's budget. For this year, he has spent \$92,000 of his \$200,000 paving budget. There were two projects he wanted to get done this year which he didn't end up doing. He would like to encumber the money left over this year until next year to complete those projects in the spring. It was thought that money could only be encumbered if there were invoices for the work to be done.

Chair Cutting asked Christine if the Selectmen had thought about encumbering this money. She said that they had discussed it but no decision was made as they had not had a formal presentation about it from Tim.

Contract Snow Removal: \$1,750. This is Henniker's fee to take care of Warner Road on the Henniker end. They plow this for the Town of Warner each year.

Outside Rentals: \$25,000. This is for rental equipment for the Red Chimney project. It also includes equipment used at the screening plant to screen sand, and equipment for the gravel pit to prep for the crushing process. Additionally, there are three days of an excavator rental planned for the North Road project if it goes forward next year. It was asked about the grant for the Red Chimney project. Tim said he thought they had that for four years.

Bridge Maintenance: \$2,000. This is for materials needed to make minor repair guardrails and planks on bridges.

Mileage: \$350. This is a placeholder for anyone who uses their own car to pick up parts or go to a training.

Line Striping: \$7,000. This represents all the striping downtown, crosswalks, school crossings, anything within the precinct, stop bars, building parking areas, and any of the town buildings. He uses "Lines Unlimited" from Bedford and the person does a wonderful job. He costs more but he is quick and does a better job than the last company they used.

Gravel: \$50,000. Right now with what they crushed this past year, there is 7,500-8,000 yards of  $\frac{3}{4}$  minus processed gravel material in the pit. There is about 1,500-1,800 yards of bank run gravel. If they move forward with the road projects for next year and accomplish two of them, they will use up most of the  $\frac{3}{4}$  minus material and they will need to process more bank run gravel. He's been trying to get to a point where they have at least 3,000 yards on hand. They haven't gotten to that point yet. The \$50,000 represents 5,000 yards of 5" minus and another 3,000-4,000 yards of  $\frac{3}{4}$  minus.

Robert wondered about the volatility of the price of the materials. Tim explained the extents to which he has gone to use up materials in the pit, create more, and take advantage of their own resources to limit what they have to buy elsewhere. Robert asked what happens if Tim finds that

he has to overspend a line in his budget. Diane said as long as Tim's bottom line isn't being overspent, that is fine.

Chair Cutting wondered if the more abrasive material Tim had created to use on the icy gravel roads worked the way he wanted last winter. Tim said it did work well and they would like to repeat it this year. It is kind of a pain to load it during a storm, however. Right now some of that material is in the sand shed. The shed will have to be filled again probably three or four more times this winter. He has also created a 50/50 blend of salt and sand for the pavement. This will hopefully conserve the salt usage in the town, although he doesn't like to add more sand to the roads as they have to pick it up later.

Health and Dental and retirement are all calculated by the payroll. The FSA line of \$3,500 is also based on the salaries.

Telephone: \$1,100. This accounts for about \$90/month but the new phone system is supposed to cost less per month. Diane added that the new system provides two free months of service. Tim thought the \$1,100 would cover the telephone costs for the year. Diane said the new system is a better deal for the town and by January they would have a better handle on exactly what the costs would be.

Outside Repairs: \$20,000. This is for repairs for something that they cannot handle in-house. This is mostly for electronic things.

Electricity: \$6,160. Tim said they haven't been in the building as much so have not used as much electricity as in years past.

Heating: \$8,400. Tim said this is for 5,000 gallons of propane. He thought they used 4,800 gallons last year and next year's cost is \$1.67 per gallon, which is just \$.01 higher than for 2022.

Silver Lake Dam: \$600. This is for the permit costs and repair costs for the dam. The permit is \$400.

Long Term Lease: \$42,750. This is for the lease on the grader which has just one year left on it. When asked about future thoughts about the grader, Tim said that the company doesn't make the same machine any more. They could get the next size up machine for the same lease price per month that they are paying now. It would be another seven-year lease.

Fire and Intrusion Alarm: \$1,500. This is for alarms at the highway garage. They had to do some work recently on the internet portion of this. The internet access wasn't strong enough to send a signal to the transfer station. He's spent \$1,700 so far this year on this.

Uniforms: \$7,800.

Supplies: \$35,000. This is anything from toilet paper to a truck tire. It is one line that he would like to break down to separate a bit. His expenditure report for this line is three pages long. Tim said he has spent \$36,000 this year and the line was \$31,000. He looked at the expenditures and sees that things have gone up (cutting edges especially), so the \$4,000 increase is to cover these increases.

Building Maintenance: \$5,000. This is for the overhead doors that need to be adjusted. The office and locker room he would like to upgrade as they did with the lunch room last winter.

Diesel/Gas: \$100,000. This is the average between 17,800-20,000 gallons. He thinks it is up to the crew to be as conservative as possible with their fuel consumption. They do their best.

Parts: \$38,000. This is just about the amount he has spent in 2022. Certain things he likes to have at the shop so they can get their hands on them when they need them. Lately, ordering parts can be a lengthy process to wait for them to arrive.

Guardrails: \$1,000. This is for blocks, pieces of rail, bolts, etc. This is for repairing the guardrails that may be damaged due to car accidents.

Calcium Chloride: \$6,000. The price of this has increased about 35-40% over last year. It is for a little over 4,000 gallons and is a diluted mixture (38% calcium, the rest is water). This is used on dirt roads that will be affected by the public. They don't treat everything with this material.

Culverts: \$6,880. This is to have a stock of various sizes of pipe on hand. This represents about 120' of each diameter: 15", 18" and 24".

New Equipment: \$5,000. This is to keep progressing on the tools and equipment needed in the shop that haven't been replaced in years.

Signs: \$2,500. Tim said he just made an order last week for signs and it was \$1,100. There are 317 signs in the Town of Warner not counting the new precinct signs. He has the inventory done and is trying to prioritize which signs need replacement. These are generally stop signs and "no outlet" signs.

Meetings: \$900.

Safety Programs: \$2,000. This is for drug testing, boots, steel-toed shoes, mutual aid equipment, and memberships.

Sand: \$18,750. This is to purchase 5,000 yards of sand.

Salt: \$71,000. Tim said sand is up to \$75/ton and that is for the "cheaper" stuff. This works well with the 50/50 mix and works well in the precinct. This amount represents 900 tons.

The total of this budget is almost an 18% increase over last year and represents 31% of the total town budget.

Chair Cutting said if the townspeople want the services, they have to pay for them. The Budget Committee has to determine if the services being proposed are the ones the citizens want and need. Tim said some towns don't plow between 11pm and 4am to save money. He thought this should be a variable decision based on the weather. Chair Cutting said the town has turned into a 24/hour town; people are out on the road at all hours. Ray thought the PWD was doing a great job and he hasn't heard complaints from people.

Robert asked how many projects have been done from the \$2.6 million bond that was passed last year. Tim offered that about \$615,000 has been used. They have done work on Plains Road where drainage has been replaced, the road has been reclaimed and paved. There is still a little clean-up to do there. Schoodac Road has been cleaned up, drainage replaced, and paved as far as the beehives. Pumpkin Hill/Mason Hill is still in the works. They are working on drainage. He didn't think he would spend the entire amount this year that was allotted for 2022.

Next year, Tim said he would like to do Pumpkin Hill through the North Village. North Village would be completed the following year. He thought it would take three more years to finish the road plan, not counting 2022.

Chair Cutting said they would start to go over the operating budget at the next meeting.

**It was moved by Ray Martin and seconded by Harold Blanchette to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved unanimously.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:25pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary  
Town of Warner