

**Warner Groundwater Protection Committee
Warner, NH
Draft Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, August 4, 2022, 5: 00 pm
Lower Meeting Room Warner Town Hall 5 East Main St

I. Alice Chamberlin opened the meeting at 5:00pm.

The Committee members introduced themselves.

Alice Chamberlin, Groundwater Committee Chair, Michael Tardiff, Executive Director, Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission, Stephanie Alexander, Senior Planner, Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission, Matt Monahan CNHRPC, Andy Bodnarik, representing the Warner Planning Board, Ray Martin, Administrator, Warner Village Water District, Ed Mical, Warner Emergency Management Director, Diane Moulton, Madgetech Quality Control Manager, Laura Russell, Warner River Local Advisory Committee and Diane Ricciardelli, Warner Town Administrator.

Chamberlin thanked the Committee Members for their time and expertise.

II. Chamberlin explained the impetus for applying for the NH DES Source Water Protection Grant. The land between exit 7 and 9 on the interstate corridor is our most important resource for economic development. The area also has the Warner River and an important aquifer beneath it. Our public drinking wells are located in this corridor and other wells between exit 7 and 9 are served by the aquifer.

The Conservation Commission looked at the recommendations in the Warner Masterplan and noted that in 2011 the Masterplan recommended that the Warner Conservation Commission and the Warner Planning Board work together to see suggested improvements to our groundwater protection ordinances. The grant would not have been approved without the support of our Planning Board.

It was noted that the CNHRPC has worked on revisions to Warner's Masterplan in the past.

III. The Committee discussed the various tasks of the grant including, public meeting and information, review of threat assessment and mapping and looking at the existing protective ordinances and regulations both at the local and state level.

A. CNRPC noted that tomorrow morning, they were going to be doing a windshield survey of the known PSC (Potential Sources of Contamination).

The Warner Hazard Mitigation Plan was approved in 2019 and shows different data than the state, so hopefully the windshield survey will start to reconcile the two sets of data.

The data set the state has is not current and shows only one contamination site at exit 9 (Evans Gas) and one up on Pumpkin Hill Road which does not seem germane to the discussion. The goal of the windshield survey is to improve the data set, but there is data available for public distribution and data that is not.

A challenge for the committee is making this data understandable to the public.

- B. Another component of the grant work is reviewing the existing ordinances at the town and state level to see if there are gaps that can reasonably be filled by new regulations in Warner. That effort should be balanced by the recognition that there is some concern about adding regulation in a town like Warner and that many voters do not have concerns about their groundwater.

Ten years ago, a comprehensive groundwater ordinance was proposed to the Planning Board and failed to make it to Town Meeting because people felt it was too broad and hard to understand the impacts.

CNHRPC will lead in undertaking the “gap analysis” to understand if and where Warner’s ordinances can be improved.

People are much more aware of the importance of groundwater and more aware of potential problems. This change from a decade ago should help with the task of educating people and considering changes to Warner’s ordinances if needed.

CNHRPC, working with the Groundwater Committee will take the lead on reviewing the ordinances. A big part of the process is reviewing and referencing our existing ordinances that deal with groundwater protection.

- C. Another component of the grant is public education. CNHRPC has identified some materials that could be modified for use in Warner. The Groundwater Committee agreed materials had to be easy to read, accessible and available online and key locations in town.

CNHRPC will be providing materials for the GWPC to review.

- D. Ray Martin reviewed the Warner Village Water District which is a separate political entity from the town. It has its own Board of Commissioners and annual meeting and budget. It operates and maintains the water delivery and sewer treatment systems.

The Town owns the fire hydrants, but the Water District provides the water for them and tests the pressure on the system.

The Village Water District has two gravel packed wells off of Chemical Road and has the capacity to pump 220,000 gallons a day and currently pumps 50,000 to 60,000 gallons a day. The wells are approximately 40 feet deep and draw from the aquifer.

Warner has a backup well site near the existing wells, but it does not own the land and has not done studies that would be necessary to bring it to operation. Drilling a test well could cost as much as \$500,000.00.

Also, if we want to bring a third well online, it would be good to move it further from existing wells in case there is a contamination issue in the future.

On the flip side, The Water District (Precinct) provides sewage treatment for about 40,000 to 50,000 gallons a day with a capacity of 110,000 gallons a day. So, Warner is at about 50% capacity.

Currently, Warner is in a good place in terms of supply when you compare it with other communities in our region.

Warner does have a “wellhead” protection area that is identified with signage on Main Street.

The Interstate “89” highway is a source of concern regarding pollution from salt and other pollutants. How to address that issue is a challenge as those pollutants go right into the river.

IV. The Committee continued the discussion of the best way to reach out to the public:

Keeping it simple!

Multiple venues including online on our town website and the library newsletter, hardcopy information at the library, town hall and town bulletin boards.

Also outreach to the Agricultural Committee and other town committees like the Economic Development Committee and locations like the transfer station.

4H and the school district were also mentioned as potential educational opportunities.

V. Chamberlin brought up the issue of the grant requirement that included education about climate change. Concerns were raised that focusing on climate change might be divisive and it was suggested that it might be better to stick to concrete conditions like flooding, drought and water quality. Also, there are already a lot of resources on climate change online that we can reference.

The meeting ended at 6:30pm.