



**Town of Warner**

**Board of Selectmen**

**DRAFT – Meeting Minutes**

**August 25, 2020, 7:00 PM,**

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

#### **MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT/ROLL CALL**

At 7:04 p.m., Chairman Clyde Carson called the meeting to order and made this announcement: “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.

“At this time, I also welcome members of the public accessing this meeting remotely, either on Zoom on by phone, with the number available on the town website. Please note that all votes at this meeting will be done by a roll call vote.” In addition, a roll call vote will be taken of board members who are present, with each member stating whether there are other people in the room at the time of the meeting, as required by the state’s Right-To-Know laws.

ROLL CALL: Clyde Carson, Chairman, no one else present; Judy Newman-Rogers, no one else present; Jonathan Lord, no one else present.

Also present: Tim Allen, Director of Public Works; Apryl Blood, president of Warner Parks & Recreation; Michele Courser, Town Clerk; Diane Ricciardelli, Town Administrator; Lynn Clark, executive director of the Warner Historical Society; Elizabeth Labbe of Gear Up Homeschoolers; Beth Hennessey of Headstart program; Shelly G Gould; Richard Bixby; Darryl Peasley; Dan Watts; Martha Mical; Kelly Henley;“

Hastings”; and Ray Carbone, Recording Secretary. (After the meeting, the Town Administrator said that 20 people were connected to the meeting.) [NOTE: Some people listed here were identified only by phone/internet ID.]

## **I. Appointments/New Business**

Tim Allen, Director of Department of Public Works (DPW)

- Aquatic Resource Mitigation (ARM) grant

Tim Allen, DPW director, said that the town is seeking the grant to pay for the construction of three structures crossing Ballard Brook and flowing into the Warner River, close to Rte. 103: two on Red Chimney Road and one on West Joppa Road. He said a preliminary application is in the works and he’s begun work on a full application, with the support of the Conservation Commission, Tim Moser of Moser Engineering, NH Fish & Game Department and others. The application is due on this coming Monday, Sept. 1; the hope is that Tim Moser, the local engineer, can complete the application on time with a proposal to build a single alternate structure for one of the Red Chimney Road sites. All three sites have importance to the town because they are tied into the town’s hazardous mitigation plan.

The matching grant requires an “in-kind” investment from the town, and the director proposed that the town meet its requirement by having most of the work done by the DPW. A total projected cost for all three structures would be about \$1 million, so the town’s obligation would be half of that. Right now, the director is projecting the town’s contribution to be between \$45,000-\$48,000.

At this time, the plan is for a single preliminary design for one property, estimated to cost \$13,000-\$15,000, explained Tim Alen, the DPW director. But timing is a problem because it would be difficult to complete all three structures within the two-year time limit required by the grant. As a result, he’s suggesting a \$147,000 initial proposal (with the “in-kind” provision) to do a single structure on one of the Red Chimney Road sites; but the application will also include the plans to do the other two structures. To move forward, the director would like to use money currently in the department’s capital reserve fund to pay for the first design plans before the end of this year.

Judy Newman-Rogers asked if he had a timeline in mind for completing the whole package, and the Director replied that he hoped it would be within the two years but, even if it’s not, it would be completed in the future.

- Sidewalk Project/New Hire

Tim Allen, Director of DPW, said that he's been holding off on hiring another staff person for as long as possible, as a way of saving the town money, even though the hire has been approved. But he's growing increasingly concerned about the need for that extra help. As discussed previously, he said the department's plan was to hire someone at a lower pay grade with the idea of "training up" the person, allowing the person to make career advancements while working for the town.

Hiring the new person will ensure that the town has the help it needs in the fall/winter and will allow the department to move forward on the previously discussed sidewalk project. The plan is to redo a section of the downtown sidewalk near the Pillsbury Memorial Library; the project would allow the town to see if the DPW staff could do such work, which would save money in the future.

Jonathan Lord suggested that the DPW director move forward on the hire and the other two selectmen agreed.

- Budget Update/Sprinkler System

Tim Allen, Director of DPW, said that he is still waiting on a final figure on the new Town Hall sprinkler system. He said he hopes to pass on that information to the selectmen as soon as possible.

**Michele Courser, Town Clerk**

- Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act

Michel Courser, town clerk, reported that the state has received a federal grant of \$3 million to help with the additional costs of the September primary and November general elections, which is anticipated because of challenges related to the coronavirus pandemic. She said the town would be eligible for some money based on a formula related to the number of absentee ballots cast in previous elections and the projected number for this year's votes. But the timeline for applying is tight so to be eligible, the clerk requested that the selectmen appoint her to be the town's representative in the grant process.

**Clyde Carson made a motion that Michele Courser, the town clerk, represent the town in the process of applying for money in the state-administered CARES grant. Jonathan Lord seconded the motion. ROLL CALL: Clyde Carson, yes; Jonathan Lord, yes; Judy Newman-Rogers, yes. Motion passes unanimously.**

Apryl Blood, President/Treasurer of the Warner Parks & Recreation Department

- Fall Sports at Public Parks

Apryl Blood of the Parks & Recreation Department said that the New Hampshire Interscholastic Athletic Association (NHIAA) and the federal government's Center for Disease Control (CDC) have published guidelines for youth sports and local supporters have decided not to move forward with soccer this year. However, they do want to move forward with football, which is played on town fields.

The department president however has concerns about how the managers oversee and comply with requirements about masks and social distancing, for players as well as for spectators. There may not be enough time between games to allow for the required sterilization of the bathroom facilities; in the past, the department has had challenges with the group's failure to comply with even the town's more simple bathroom requirements regarding the safe and clean use, to the point where the facilities had to be locked and the managers forced to hire portable toilets.

Apryl Blood said that the athletic group has indicated that each team will now have a "team mom" who will make sure that the everyone on the team is following the coronavirus precautions, but there's apparently no one who's responsible monitoring other players or spectators. There are new rules, she pointed out, including wearing masks at all time and the elimination of a bench where players could congregate when not on the field, but she is still concerned about out-of-area teams that would be coming to town. Who will monitor their players and fans?

Jonathan Lord said that if the rules were made clear and then not observed, he was certain that the town would find out from others at the park. If that happens, he said, the bathrooms could be shut down or the teams banned from using the field.

The selectmen said that someone involved with the sports organization should sign an agreement specifically outlining the new safety requirements, with a clear understanding of the possible outcomes to follow if they're in violation. Apryl Blood said that she would put together an additional page to the usual Field Agreement form for this year, outlining the new public safety guidelines, for the league president to sign. The board members agreed it was a good idea, but asked her to submit a copy of the new document to them for approval,

Sherry Gould

- Abanaki Trail Project

Resident Sherry Gould was appearing before the board with the support of Darryl Peasley of Contoocook and Lynn Clark, executive director of the Warner Historical Society. She said that the trio was there to talk about a new project that was the brainchild of Darryl Peasley, which will allow both residents and visitors to learn

more about the native Abenakis that were once the largest people group on the local lands.

The Hopkinton Historical Society had focused on the tribe's history and its current local residents in a special program last summer. Now the local tribe and supporters want to enlarge that effort by instituting a "trail" that will identify local sites of historical and social interest in Hopkinton, Henniker, Warner and Bradford; an online tour program that can be downloaded on a cell phone will serve as a tour guide, leading listeners to each site and telling them about its significance.

Sherry Gould said that local Abanakis just want to help others in the community learn about their culture. Along those lines, the group is also hoping to reach out to local schools and to become more involved with the local New Hampshire Indian Museum.

#### **Elizabeth Labbe**

- Gear Up Homeschoolers – Startup and Safety Measures

Elizabeth Labbe of the local, long-running homeschooling enrichment community and cooperative said that she does not yet have a firm idea of how the group will begin meeting again in the old graded school building. She said that the organization is a diverse group and members have widely varying views on how to proceed under the current recommended restrictions.

She said that its insurance company has provided some guidelines about taking temperatures of children as they enter the building, etc., but she admitted that the board of directors has not yet made the needed decisions about moving forward.

The board noted that the town has some rules for use of the building, and Elizabeth Labbe said she would bring that information to the board. In addition, the CDC has guidelines that should be followed, Judy Newman-Rogers said.

Elizabeth Labbe of the homeschoolers group thanked the board for its help.

#### **Beth Hennessey, Headstart Program**

- Starting in September

Beth Hennessey said that the local Headstart program has been in town for more than 30 years, and has been working all summer in other regional communities, a total for 21 classrooms in places like Concord and Laconia. The organization, which serves needy

children for one-to-two years before beginning school, complies with all CDC and New Hampshire licensing requirements.

The group's current plan is to restart the Warner program in September, making it one of the last in the region to begin again. Formerly, there were about 17 local participants but now the plans to cap that number at 12. In other locations, Headstart has found that about one-third of its families are uncomfortable with in-person involvement yet so that would mean that only about eight (8) children would be at the facility and, given the relatively large size of the room, there should be no problem accommodating social distancing, etc.

There will be two teachers, but no substitutes or volunteers will be allowed to participate. Dropoff/pickup will be moved to the rear entrance and there will no longer be a congregating near the front entrance foyer. As the children (and staff) start their day, there will screening questions about activities, recent social contacts, etc.; temperatures taken with a contact thermometer and there will be frequent hand-washing. The staff will be required to wear masks but not the children; if parents want their child to wear masks, the teachers will comply.

When classrooms in the area were closed to Headstart on March 16, all were disinfected, and that will be done 24 hours before the Sept. restart begins, the representative said. In addition, there will be regular cleanings by both the building's clearing staff and the teachers. Outdoor curriculum will be strengthened and the former toothbrushing ritual is suspended. Food will no longer be shared family style. The children will be kept a minimum of six feet apart from one another.

The local Headstart has received a CARES grant of \$15,000 so there's "plenty of funds for extra cleaning by staff," as well as additional PPEs and packages that will be sent home to every family with extra PPEs, etc., she said. Two registered nurses will be visiting regularly as part of the Headstart protocol.

Teachers are planning to return on Sept. 9 and, if the town approves, children will be accepted back on Sept. 22.

The Select Board thanked Beth Hennessey and complimented the thoroughness of Headstart proposal.

## **II. Old Business/Projects**

- Vietnam Memorial, front of Town Hall building – Add Alan Lawyer, update

Diane Ricciardelli, Town Administrator, said that Tim Hayes has researched the proposal, discussed at an earlier meeting, to add a name to the memorial plaque and that it can be done, without taking it down, for about \$150. Tim Hayes will do the work of changing the memorial. The selectmen directed her to move forward with the plan.

- Commercial Building Permit Process

Chairman Carson said that the idea, discussed at some previous meetings, of adding more support to the Town's building permit process, should be examined by a working group appointed by the selectmen. "We need to add a zoning compliance section to the permitting process (for commercial projects)," he said. "The question is, should the cost of that review of plans be part of the building permit fee?"

After some discussion, Judy Newman-Rogers agreed to be part of the working group, as did Diane Ricciardelli, Town Administrator. Fire Chief Sean Toomey should also be part of the group, the selectmen agreed.

- Horne Street – bidding process/update

Judy Newman-Rogers said that if the other selectmen agree, she is now ready to make a public posting initiating a bid process, starting at \$90,000 and with a deadline of Sept. 24, for the property. Following that, the board could open the bids at its next meeting.

Chairman Carson asked how the town could make the property available for inspection if a bidder requested. Diane Ricciardelli, Town Administrator, said that she would probably be free to take someone over if they requested, but for only one or two people. Chairman Carson said another option would be to announce in advance a day and time that the site would be available for inspection.

**The board approved the approach and requested Judy Newman-Rogers move ahead with the process.**

- 12 New Market

Diane Ricciardelli, Town Administrator, said that the board has received a written request from David Swords, who owns this property where a trailer (which looks like a train) is currently occupied by renters. Zoning regulations limit the time of occupancy to 90 days, which typically happens during the summer. Some neighbors have apparently expressed some concerns about the current tenants and the possibility of them staying beyond the 90 days.

Chairman Carson said that the structure is a travel trailer and all aspects of using it are safe and legal. The current tenants are Mr. Sword's elderly in-laws, he said, who are looking for a town in the area where they can move the trailer and use it as an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) under local allowable zoning regulations. Until that time happens, the owner is requesting some leeway.

The board agreed that, given the current pandemic and the age of the occupants involved, it would be reasonable to consider an extension. **Chairman Carson made a motion to extend the allowable residency for 30 additional days, with the stipulation**

that another extension would be considered if necessary. Judy Newman-Rogers seconded the motion. ROLL CALL: Clyde Carson, yes; Jonathan Lord, yes; Judy Newman-Rogers, yes. Motion passed unanimously.

- Recreation Plan for the Minks – committee

Chairman Carson said that he's begun reaching out to people who may be interested in serving on a committee to develop a recreation plan for the Minks, as was discussed at previous meetings. He said he hoped to have more information at a future meeting.

- Accessory Structure Building Permit for Map 6/Lot 54 – update

Jonathan Lord noted that he has some information about the property that the board might want to review; some issues may require input from legal counsel.

Diane Ricciardelli, Town Administrator, said that the board may want to review the information with Ben Frost, the chairman of the Planning Board, and the town's new contract "circuit rider" planning consultant. Chairman Carson agreed, and suggested setting up a meeting some time before the board's Sept. 15 meeting. Ricciardelli said she will send the information to Ben Frost and the "circuit rider" in advance of scheduling a meeting.

### **III. Select Board and other business/committee reports**

Judy Newman-Rogers said that the Oxbow 4-H Club of Warner would like to plant a tree or other planting in town to honor the late Katherine Skinner. The other board members agreed that was a good idea, and Chairman Carson asked if the club had a specific place in mind. Judy Newman-Rogers said that it does not and that the members were hoping for some guidance from the town. The chairman asked her if she'd go back to the group for some suggestions.

Jonathan Lord said that he recently learned that the Kearsarge Regional School District buys its health insurance through an organization called SchoolCare Health Care Health Benefits of Manchester. He reached out to a representative and learned that the town could also utilize the program for its health insurance coverage. He suggested that the plan could result in a savings for the town.



Chairman Carson suggested that the time is now for moving forward with further investigation into the option.

Jonathan Lord also reported that he continues to look into the idea of the town working with the James R. St. Jean Auctioneer company of Epping when selling properties. The organization charges the equivalent of 10-percent of the sale, he said, and handles all advertising, promotion, etc. He hopes to have more information for the next meeting.

Chairman Carson reported on the work of the board's Energy Committee, which is scheduled to meet again in Sept. He said that the state has another round of TAP (Transportation Alternative Program) grants coming up, which is administered by the Department of Transportation (DOT). The Town tried to apply for a grant the last time, to begin funding work on the proposed sidewalk extension that would link the village to the commercial area adjacent to Interstate 89's exit 9, but its application was too late.

The chairman said it might be helpful to create a working group that could put out a RFQ (Request For Quotatoinl) to get some preliminary bids on the engineering work needed for the extension. That information could indicate the town's serious intentions for the project and increase its chances of winning the TAP grant.

#### **IV. Town Administrator's Report**

- Fire Department Report.  
Diane Ricciardelli, Town Administrator, noted that all three of the selectmen have received a copy of the report from Fire Chief Sean Toomey. Her only question, she said, concerned the lack of specifics about the department's calls for service information. She noted that the department's software crashed last year and made that difficult to track but said it might be helpful to clarify the reason for the call data.
- Administrative Assistant Position.  
Diane Ricciardelli, Town Administrator, said that she has advertised the position and is planning to do some initial interviews of candidates this week. She will send information to the Select Board and the members will then be able to take the next step in the hiring process.
- Sunapee-Kearsarge Intercommunity Theater (SKIT), Christopher Marteiello.  
Diane Ricciardelli, Town Administrator, said that Christopher Marteiillo of the local theatrical company, has requested permission to use the Town Hall theater for a special fundraising event on a Friday night in October. It will be a one-person show and involve only two or three SKIT people in the building. The show would

not have a live audience but would be streamed live. **The board members approved the idea.**

**V. Public Comments**

Martha Mical asked when the Board of Selectmen is going to reopen the town hall to the public. She said that according to a report on WMUR-TV, more than half of the state's towns have already reopened their offices, including Bradford.

Diane Ricciardelli, Town Administrator, said she doubted that the percentage is that high but she would check into the numbers with her colleagues at other towns through NHMA. She also said that if anyone on the Town Hall staff is found to be infected with COVID-19, the entire staff will have to quarantine for 14 days; that would be difficult for the Town since the staff is relatively small. The Administrator also said she's not aware of any town services that have been unavailable within the limits the Select Board has imposed, i.e., offices are "closed" but staff is working and available by phone, computer link or by appointment.

Commented [RC1]:

**VI. Minutes: July 21 (with non-public of July 21 & 23), Aug. 4 and Aug. 10**

**Chairman Carson made a motion to approve the public portion of the July 21 minutes. Jonathan Lord seconded the motion. ROLL CALL: Chairman Carson, yes; Jonathan Lord, yes; Judy Newman-Rogers, yes. Motion passed unanimously.**

**VII. Manifest & Consent Agenda**

**Chairman Carson made a motion to authorize the selectmen approve the previously signed manifests and order the treasurer to sign: payroll checks #6426 - #6434 in the amount of \$35,998.19; accounts payable checks #57782 - #57833 in the amount of \$747,557.71 – the biggest portion is \$610,00 to the Kearsarge Regional School District; an automatic withdrawal for payroll taxes of \$9,719.32; and a fire station construction account check #147 in the amount of \$29.69, not approved with the Aug. 4 manifest motion. Jonathan Lord seconded the motion. ROLL CALL: Chairman Carson, yes; Jonathan Lord, yes; Judy Newman-Rogers, yes. The motion passed unanimously.**

### **VIII. Nonpublic Session**

Chairman Carson made a motion to go into a nonpublic session according to RSA 91-A: 3 II (L) legal. Jonathan seconded. ROLL CALL: Chairman Carson, yes; Jonathan Lord, yes; Judy Newman-Rogers, yes. The motion passed unanimously.

The public portion of the meeting ended at 9:23 p.m.

**NOTE: Minutes should include when the board recessed the nonpublic session, when it reconvened the public session, whether any actions were taken in public session, and what time the reconvened public session concluded.**