



TOWN OF WARNER

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SELECT BOARD BUDGET WORK SESSION DRAFT MINUTES

Monday, 7:00 am
November 23, 2021

Warner Town Hall
Lower Meeting Room

I. Roll Call/Attendance

Chairman Clyde Carson opened the meeting at 7:10 p.m. and recognized the presence of the full board: Carson, Sam Bower, and Christine Frost.

Also present: Ray Martin, Administrator, Warner Village Water District; Ed Mical; and other members of the public; Town Administrator Diane Ricciardelli; Administrative Assistant Judy Newman-Rogers. (Recording Secretary Ray Carbone compiled minutes from a recording.)

Chairman Carson noted this is the Board's first meeting using the Town's new equipment: cameras will allow people to see the meeting from remote locations. The eventual goal of the new process is to allow people who are at remote locations to fully participate in the meetings.

II. PUBLIC HEARING Acceptance of Unanticipated Funds , Warner's TOTAL Distribution of ARPA funds, \$305,694 (The America Rescue Plan Act)

Chairman Carson said the Board would be addressing funds that the Town is receiving from the Federal Government's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). He said the Board had voted to accept the 2021 funds at an earlier meeting, but it recently received advice to accept the funds from 2021 and 2022 together.

1. Open Public Hearing

a. Select Board

Carson said that some of the \$305,694 has already been allocated: the cost of the new meeting equipment; the cost of upgrading the Internet at the Warner Community Center ("Old Graded School"); and the cost to do a storm water project on Church Street.

b. Public Comment

Ray Martin, Administrator, Warner Village Water District, asked the Board to consider a request for \$75,000 to help the District as it works to find alternative sources of underground water. He said the money would help identify new water sources; he also mentioned the District is very close to getting its Well #1 back to an operational level.

Martin noted the District receives no money from the Town, yet it provides water and sewer service to more than 200 locations in the village area, including roughly 90% of the businesses in Warner. It has an annual budget of roughly \$475,000 and its sole income is from meters utilized by its users (plus a small district property tax)

Martin said there are \$1.7 million in ARPA funds coming to the District to help deal with groundwater discharge, i.e., to fund a process that will improve what is discharged into the Warner River. (He added that Warner's

project was judged to be New Hampshire's fourth most significant, behind three in the City of Manchester.) "That (money) will help us tremendously on that project," he concluded.

2. Close Public Comment

Carson answered several questions from the public and then closed this portion of the hearing.

3. Select Board Discussion

None.

4. Motion – Accept / Deny / Delay

Chairman Carson made a motion that the Town accept \$305,694 in ARPA funds distributed by the State of New Hampshire. Board member Frost seconded the motion. On a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

III. Appointment

Chairman Carson said there were no appointments listed on the agenda but he thought it was important to meet with Charlie Albano, who is Chairman of the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC).

Albano said EDAC's mission is to stimulate economic activity in the Town and, to that end it has become aware that there are residents and businesses that see a need for childcare services in Warner. Having access to economic childcare services has an economic impact for both companies and residents, he said. To quantify the situation, EDAC worked with the Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission (NHRPC) to create a survey, which was distributed both in print and online (via Survey Monkey).

More than 140 respondents indicated there is a need for a quality, economical preschool childcare program for the Town.

Albano provided two documents to the Board:

The first is a report on the survey, including a summary authored by NHRPC. It indicates both a strong response from the Town's adult population as well as a high percentage of respondents who either currently have or see a need for high-quality, affordable childcare for preschool children. A significant factor in those responses was related to how such a program will impact employment options and, therefore, economic activity.

The second document outlined three action steps: (1) Develop a program for the Warner Community Center (WCC); (2) Secure a space in the WCC for the childcare program; and, (3) Find a provider. (The latter can be done by distributing a Request For Proposal (RFP) to service providers in the area.)

Albano noted that for some time now, the EDAC has been considering ways to best utilize the WCC; there is some grant money available that could help fund structural changes to the building that could be required. Albano said that it's the EDAC's opinion that the organizations currently operating in the building (Community Action Program's office, Head Start, etc.) should continue, but that other functions could be added, e.g., adult learning, a community lounge, etc.

Chairman Carson said he appreciated EDAC's work on behalf of the childcare option as well as its interest in how to best use the WCC; however, the organizations currently in the building are using all available space. He also suggested that it would be a good idea to reach out to the early childcare provider that is currently operating in Bradford to see if a similar program could be situated in Warner.

The Board members held a general conversation with Albano about how the WCC could best be utilized in the future, what (if any) building renovations could be considered, and how the uses could be a factor in

consideration of grant funds. Carson said the Board should set aside time to have a more complete conversation about these issues, inviting the EDAC to participate. Albano agreed.

IV. Old Business

- a. **Citizen Petition to Require Site Plan Review for Pumpkin Blossom Farm**
 - i. **Pumpkin Blossom Farm Response**

Chairman Carson said there was a conversation at the Board’s last meeting about the Citizens Petition regarding Pumpkin Blossom Farm. Since that time, the Owners have submitted a letter of response, and the Board submitted the petition and the correspondence to the Town’s legal counsel. Both the letter and the legal response are on file at the Board of Selectmen’s office.

At this time, the Board is not taking any further action regarding the matter.

V. New Business

- a. **Health Trust** - Approval to Amend Town Group Plan to be in Compliance with Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA) & Dependent Care Assistance Plans Accts (DCAPA).

Chairman Carson said the Board should review documentation related to the Group (Insurance) Plan. He noted there have been some recent changes but does not believe they will impact the Town. After some discussion, the Board agreed to set up a Work Session to address the issues next Tuesday, November 30, at 7:30 a.m. Carson said the Board could also begin addressing the tentative 2022 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) at that meeting.

VI. Administrator’s Report

Town Administrator Diane Ricciardelli said the Town’s tentative 2022 budget is close to completion; all departments (save one) have had their proposed budgets submitted to the Budget Committee. (The outstanding one will be considered at the Committee’s December 2 meeting.)

With the Select Board’s pending work on the CIP, the complete budget should be ready for the Board’s presentation at the Budget Committee’s December 16 meeting.

Ricciardelli also mentioned two vacant Town Hall positions: one in the Finance Department and one in the Assessing Department. Several other employees, as well as others, have stepped up to keep Town functioning efficiently during the staff shortage; the change is also allowing the staff to document exactly what tasks are involved with each position, which will help during the hiring process.

VII. Select Board Other Business

- a. **Festival of Trees**

Frost said some residents are hoping to reinstitute the Town’s annual Festival of Lights in the Town Hall. The group is planning to set up the trees beginning this Saturday, November 27, at 9 a.m. At least seven groups are interested, she said, and ongoing outreach could double that number.

There was some discussion about setting up the trees this weekend because the Warner Connects NH Food Pantry and Resource Center is presenting a Fashion Show Fundraiser in the Town Hall on Saturday, December 4. Bower said he’s spoken with Patty Anderson, who is organizing the Fashion Show, and that the program would probably be able to move forward if the trees were sufficiently set back to allow for space, both on the floor and on the stage. (Ricciardelli suggested that the trees be decorated some time after the Fashion Show.)

b. New Hire

Chairman Carson made a motion to approve the hiring of a new officer for the Warner Police Department. Jonathan Adinolfo will be Detective Corporal when he begins employment on Tuesday, November 30. Bower seconded the motion. In a voice vote, it passed unanimously.

c. Community Power

Chairman Carson said the Town’s new Community Power group is planning to set up a page on the Town’s website to educate people about its functions, goals, etc. Sometime after January 1, the Committee is tentatively planning to distribute a community survey that will gather information about how Warner residents and business owners/managers view their electrical use, and what they may want to get from their electrical service company in the future.

Carson reminded the Board that as a founding member of the 13-municipalities’ Power Coalition of New Hampshire, the Warner group could receive aid in the future about how to move forward with a plan that could result in significant savings for electrical users in Warner. (The plan would likely not be ready until the annual Town Meeting in 2023.)

VIII. Public Comment

One resident, John Leavitt, offered some thoughts:

1. Re: Pumpkin Blossom Petition: he asked why the Board didn’t have a public vote on accepting the legal opinion, particularly with several people in attendance interested in the issue.
2. Re: The EDAC proposal for the WCC: he noted that EDAC Chairman Albano addressed having “affordable childcare” in Town, but there was no precise definition what “affordable” may be in Warner. In addition, he said that Albano appeared to “dismiss” the portion of the population that is made up of senior citizens.

Frost said that Albano’s remarks about seniors simply appeared to reflect that participation among that group was comparatively low, which should be expected when residents no longer have the responsibility of raising children. In addition, Frost said she understood and supported the observation about “affordability,” and noted the Town needs to be careful not to give the impression that it can set the rates for a childcare provider.

Bower said that while the Board doesn’t have a direct role in the rates, it will have a significant role, because the service provider will be using the Town-owned WCC; Carson agreed.

3. Finally, the resident said: the Budget Committee is trying to make sense of the Town’s proposed 2022 budget without any wage and compensation figures. “It’s kind of hard to do a budget without wages being addressed,” he said.

Chairman Carson said those figures are typically not available until December, and Bower said the Board just had its first meeting about wages and compensation.

IX. Consent Agendas

Bower made a motion that the Board approve the following:

Building permits for:	Map 15, Lot 0141-1	Map 31, Lot 046-1	Map 15, Lot 0148-1
	Map 10, Lot 030	Map 7, Lot 020-4	Map 10, Lot 019-4
	Map 9, Lot 014-1	Map 26, Lot 12	Map 37, Lot 0-17.
Map & Lot ON- 03-058	Carson seconded. On a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.		

X. Manifest

Carson made a motion to authorize the Selectmen to sign the manifest, and order the Treasurer to sign: checks #59272 to #59318 in the amount of \$56,342.98; checks #6944 to #6954 in the amount of \$34,178.93; payroll tax transfer in the amount of \$21,675.93; and a separate check #003 in the amount of \$12,051. Bower seconded. On a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

XI. New Business (2)

Frost noted that the Board had not acted on an item listed on agenda:
- Request to set up a Table on the Town Hall Lawn on Saturday, December 4, for the Warner Democrats.

Chairman Carson noted that this was a request related to the Warner Area Farmers Market’s event. Typically, these requests are handled directly by the Market organizers and is dependent on issues related to available space and management. Bower said that this request came before the Board because it is from a political group and the Market organizers don’t want to appear to favor one political organization over another.

The sense of the Board was to approve the request, if the Farmers Market organizers give their approval.

XII. Meeting Minutes:

Frost made a motion to approve the Board’s minutes from the meetings on:

October 6, October 12, October 13, October 26, November 1, and November 16.
Bower seconded. On a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

XI. Adjourn

Chair Carson thanked the public for its participation and, without objection, adjourned the meeting 8:25 p.m.