



TOWN OF WARNER

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**Tuesday, 6:00 pm
February 15, 2022**

BOARD OF SELECTMEN DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

**Town Hall
Lower Meeting Room**

I. Open Meeting/Roll Call

Chairman Clyde Carson opened the meeting at approximately 6 p.m. and recognized the presence of the full board: Clyde Carson, Sam Bower, and Christine Frost.

Also in attendance: Neil Nevins; Tim Blagden; Charlie Albano; Dan Watts; Patty Anderson; Lori Garet; Ray Martin; Martha Mical; Tim Allen (Director of Department of Public Works, DPW); Varick Proper (Foreman of the Transfer Station, under the DPW.) Town Administrator Diane Ricciardelli; Administrative Assistant Judy Newman-Rogers; Recording Secretary Ray Carbone.)

II. Non-Public Session

A. Motion to go into Non-Public Session

Under: RSA 91-A:3 II (c) - matters if discussed in public would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person.

B. Motion to return to Public Session

C. Motion on Minutes

The Non-Public Session ended at approximately 7 p.m. There were some technical difficulties regarding the remote feed that had to be resolved before the meeting was able to be reconvened in public session.

III. Appointments

A. Charlie Albano

Charlie is the chairman of the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC), but Clyde opened the public portion of the meeting by introducing Neil Nevins, who is also an EDAC member as well as a board member of MainStreet Warner, Inc. (local nonprofit organization). The conversation focused on a proposal to bring Electric Vehicle Charging Stations (EVCSs) to Warner.

Neil said the EDAC has been studying the issue for some time and wants to move forward with the idea, but there are still some issues to be resolved. The most significant may be exactly where to

locate the EVCSs. Having them as close as possible to exit 9 off Interstate 89 may seem most logical but Neil said he would like to see them placed on (or close to) Main Street, where the downtown businesses could benefit from drivers who would have time to stroll the area while their vehicles charged.

Another issue is related to the newer fast-charging stations, he explained. These call for a larger, quick charge of energy and Eversource can levy an additional Demand Charge for that pull on its electrical supply. However, the NH Public Utility Commission (PUC) is currently looking at some proposals that would make any additional cost more affordable.

A third issue would be federal grant money in the new infrastructure bill that Congress is considering; some funds may be available to help pay for the EVCSs, Neil explained. If the EVCSs are located on Town-owned land, the federal money could pay for the whole costs. In addition, there is a New Hampshire-based company that has been doing some EVCS installation work, most recently at the Pease International Tradeport; Harmony Energy Works of Hampton, installer, also happens to be the company that installed the Town's two solar array systems.

An alternative that may be considered could be connecting the EVCSs with the Town's current metering system, which would provide additional energy costs savings for Warner, Neil said.

Tim Blagden, president of the Friends of the Concord-Lake Sunapee Rail Trail's Board of Directors, also spoke in support of bringing EVCSs to Town. He noted that Harmony Energy could install the charging units but there still needs to be software to manage the devices. There are two companies that do that, he said: the most prominent is Clipper Creek, which is based in California; he didn't have the name of the other one.

Tim explained that there are several steps involved in both installing and using EVCSs. "You can go on YouTube," he said, "there's lots of videos (that explain how they work)." Tim also said that the NH Department of Environmental Services (DES) has some grant money that could be used for EVCS project. The agency has recently had to extend the application deadline out to February 25, so there may be time for the Town to submit an application.

Regarding location, Tim offered the idea that the new EV stations could be placed to entice visitors to use the Rail Trail. He said that he and his wife have recently spoken about installing some EVCSs on their property that would be adjacent to the trail. EVCSs might be suited for solar power and could also be used for their own vehicles. The couple is still looking into the idea.

In response to a question from Clyde, Tim said that he understands that the DES grants would cover 100% of the costs for installing EVs on municipal land, but only a lower percent for those installed on private land.

Clyde said he didn't think the Town would be able to apply for the grant, given the brief period of time left. Tim acknowledged that there's still "a lot of work to be done" regarding the Town project. Neil offered that there could still be some DES grant money available after the February deadline, so there might be another opportunity to apply. He also noted that the federal grant money application might be a "little less convoluted" than the DES.

Tim said that the federal grant money appeared to be tied to proximity to the in-state highways, so having the EVCSs in the village could be a complication. But Neil said the village area is only a mile from exit 9 so that should meet the grants' requirements.

For now, the Town has time to do some more exploration about possible EVCS sites, Neil said. Charlie agreed, noting that one of the key issues among the EDAC members has been identifying the best locations. The group supported having the EVCSs in a place that would benefit Main Street businesses in the village, and it came up with three possible sites: the municipal parking space on Main Street; the old Fire Station site; and in front of the Warner Community Center (WCC, aka “The Old Graded School” building). Sam suggested that the EDAC members and other interested people might want to meet with the Select Board to brainstorm about possible locations.

Sam asked who on the Board would want to spearhead this effort, and Neil suggested that since EDAC has already been involved for some time, it would be the best group. The Board appeared to agree.

Town Administrator Diane Ricciardelli said that she had looked into an EVCS grant previously (i.e., the Volkswagen grant) and learned that working with the electric company requires a lead time of at least 10 weeks.

Dan Watts, Chairman of the Kearsarge Area Chamber of Commerce, said his group has pushed the idea of EVCSs for some time. He said that Flo, a Canadian company, “does everything” from building the hardware to installing the software; it even writes grants. In addition, the Chamber is working with a member company, Granite State Solar of Bow, on the idea of putting together a seminar to provide more information about EVCSs to interested people in the area. Dan wants to hold the event in the Warner Town Hall because its new remote system would allow for more participation.

Neil said the EDAC would be glad to work with the Chamber on the project.

Clyde suggested that the EDAC members, as well as others interested in EVCSs, attend the Board’s first meeting after the Town Meeting, on March 29. The interested attendees in attendance agreed.

B. Patty Anderson & Lori Garret

Patty represents the Family Closet thrift boutique and Lori represents the Warner Connects Food Pantry.

Patty opened by reviewing communications between the two organizations, which operate in the WCC, and the Town regarding signage. She said that the nonprofit operations have not had any signs that indicate exactly how the public can enter their establishments; most significantly, people have trouble finding the Food Pantry, which is now located at the rear of building. So the women recently put up two signs on the outside of the Town-owned building. At the time, they did not know that there was a sign ordinance in Town and an application should have been submitted. Patty said the signs could be considered temporary; they were created by Roberge Signs of Bradford.

Clyde said that since the WCC is a Town-owned historic structure, the groups were not acting within their authority when these signs were put up on the building.

Patty said that they were just trying to help people find their operations. She pointed out that the current signs by the side of the road are out-of-date and don’t include the current building occupants.

Christine said that the Town does have a sign ordinance and that all organizations need to comply with it. But she wondered aloud if the Board has the authority to issue a waiver to the ordinance. “We need to work with you to determine something that fits,” she told the women.

Clyde said that the Board has full authority over the WCC.

Sam said that the Board supports the work the Food Pantry and the Family Closet is doing and appreciates its need for good signage. He pointed out that the Town (through the EDAC) is looking at the possibility of adding other organizations and/or businesses to the WCC, so there’s good reason to improve the building’s signage.

Sam suggested that signs could be placed on a post closer to the building, rather than on the outside of the structure. Clyde agreed, and asked Tim Allen, the Director of the Department of Public Works (DPW) if a post could be erected. After some discussion, Allen said he thought he could have a post erected for the signs in the next few days.

As an aside, Town Administrator Diane asked Patty and Lori if they currently had insurance for visitors to their operations. They said they were still covered under the MainStreet Warner’s policy, but Clyde said he spoke with someone at that organization recently and was told that the Food Pantry and the Family Closet had split off as of January 1, 2022. The women said they were currently covered under the MainStreet Warner plan and would provide a copy of the current policy to Diane immediately.

Another issue Patty and Lori asked the Board about was the federal American Rescue Plan (ARPA) funds, which are to help communities bounce back from the coronavirus pandemic. Christine said that the Board is still waiting to get feedback from various Town departments before it begins evaluating how those government funds could best be used in Warner. “There’s been no determination and there’s not any timeline yet,” for when those issues will be addressed, she said. But she added that the Food Pantry and the Family Closet would need to be 501(c)(3) (nonprofit) organizations in order to be eligible, so it would be important for the organizations to clarify their status.

Sam said the Board is still brainstorming to identify “good projects” to fund with the ARPA money.

Finally, Patty asked the Select Board members if they had discussed the idea of a lease for the Family Closet. She appreciated being able to operate rent-free in the WCC while the charitable project was launched, but she felt it was important now to “start supporting” the Town’s operation, even if the rent is a relatively modest amount. Clyde said that the Town had just signed a new lease with Community Action Program, which also has an office in the WCC; he said it was for only a few months, until the end of June because of the plans the Town is evaluating for the building. Patty said that a similar end date would be acceptable to her group. Clyde said the issue would be discussed at tonight’s meeting.

C. Moderator Ray Martin

Ray came to review operational procedures regarding the Town’s upcoming annual Town Meeting (Wednesday, March 9) and the voting portion of the meeting (Tuesday, March 8). Martin said he would like to keep any Covid-related restrictions as simple as possible. He recommended that voters coming to the polls on Tuesday be required to wear a mask. At the Town Meeting, he asked that those who did not want to wear masks be required to sit in the balcony of the Town Hall meeting space. Ray didn’t favor a Zoom (remote) meeting format for the general Wednesday meeting.

The Board appeared to support Ray's suggestions.

IV. Old Business

A. Process and Use of American Rescue Funds (ARPA)

No report.

B. Town Properties for Auction

Clyde pointed out that the three properties currently under consideration have been chosen after a thorough evaluation process. Sam said he would like to move forward to give the auction company permission to put the properties up for auction.

Christine noted that she had not been on the Board during most of the selection and evaluation process, and was not familiar with all the lots. Diane volunteered to take Christine for a drive to see two of the properties. (One is not accessible by car.) Clyde suggested asking the auction company to come to the Board's next meeting on March 1 to review once more the process. The members agreed.

V. New Business

A. Town Energy Policies Review

Clyde suggested putting this aside to another meeting due to time constraints.

VI. Administrator's Report

Diane said she had nothing to report but asked the Board members to sign the official warrant before they left tonight.

VII. Select Board Other Business

A Clyde said that there is an auto repair business on Chemical Lane that is looking to receive permission from the State so that it can issue vehicle inspection stickers. To do that, the business needs permission from the Town.

Sam made a motion to approve the request; Clyde seconded. The motion passed unanimously in a voice vote.

B Christine said she is still concerned that the Board does not read aloud at its meeting correspondence it receives from citizens about Town.

C Martha Mical said she's concerned about an ash tree that appears to be "shedding" its bark on Kearsarge Mountain Road and Kirkland Street. Clyde said the Town would look into the issue.

D Sam reported that the new Agricultural Commission met last night and is beginning the process of gathering information of any farm-related businesses in Town. Clyde recommended that he reach out to the Warner Historical Society because that organization documented the number of barns in Town some years ago.

Sam said the Commission members have also discussed the idea of having a page on the Town website but understands that there are some concerns about too much "clutter" developing on the site. As a result, the group is now considering using a simple Facebook page.

VIII. Consent Agenda

None.

IX. Manifest

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

- Payroll check numbers 7057-7073 with a net check and direct deposits totaling \$43,148.79.
- EFTPS ACH in the amount of \$12,006.62 for taxes.
- NHRS ACH in the amount of \$20,052.47 for January retirement contributions.
- Accounts Payable check numbers 59584-59631 in the amount of \$139,359.62.

Sam seconded. The motion passed unanimously in a voice vote.

X. Meeting Minutes

None.

XI. Public Comment

Varick Proper, Foreman of the Transfer Station, spoke about the Board's previously stated desire to have an engineering study done regarding a possible redesign to the Town's facility. Varick said that he's only identified two companies that could do the study.

Sam suggested moving forward with the plan. Clyde asked that Varick come to the Board's next regularly scheduled meeting in two weeks, on Wednesday, March 1, to "get the ball rolling." Varick said he would be at the meeting.

Non-Public Session – Under RSA 91-A: (if needed)

Clyde made a motion to end the public portion of the meeting and adjourn to a Non-Public Session under State RSA 91-A:3 (b) (*The hiring of any person as a public employee.--??*)

Sam seconded. Roll call: Clyde, yes; Sam, yes; Christine, yes.

Clyde said there would be no further public business conducted when the Board ended the Non-Public session.

The public session adjourned at 8:41 p.m.

XII. Adjourn