



TOWN OF WARNER

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Select Board DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

Town Hall- Lower Meeting Room
Tuesday, March 1, 2022, 6 p.m.

I. Roll Call/Attendance

Chairman Clyde Carson opened the meeting at 6:08 p.m. and recognized the Board member Christine Frost. Board member Sam Bower was absent. A quorum of the Board was present, Carson said.

Also present: Librarian for the Pillsbury Free Library Nancy Ladd; Moderator Ray Martin; Director of the Department of Public Works (DPW) Tim Allen; Tax Collector Marianne Howlett; Chairman of the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) Charlie Albano; CEO of the Concord Boys & Girls Club Christopher Emond; Adam Sandahl of CMA Engineering of Portsmouth; Kearsarge Regional School District Superintendent Winfried Feneberg; Jay St. Jean of St. Jean Auctioneers of Epping; Neil Nevins; Peter Flynn; Ken Cogswell; Martha Mical; Faith Minton; Town Administrator Diane Ricciardelli; Administrative Assistant Judy Newman-Rogers; and Recording Secretary Ray Carbone.

II. Appointments

- a. Nancy Ladd, Librarian, Flea Market at Town Hall

Ladd told the Select Board that she was asked to appear before the group to discuss using the Town Hall for the Library's Indoor Flea Market. The fund-raising event was annual in the past and is being revived this year. It typically draws a "fairly sizable crowd," Ladd said, and utilizes both floors of the building.

Vendors rent out one or more six-foot long tables where they can sell various items. (The Circle of Friends of the Library will also use a table for sales.) The targeted date is Saturday, April 16, the day before Easter Sunday. There are no other activities scheduled for the Town

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Hall that weekend. Ladd asked the Board what, if any, Covid-related protocols would be in place at that time so she can inform potential vendors.

Chairman Carson said he wasn't sure if the protocols that are currently in place would be standing when Flea Market is scheduled. Ladd said she would simply say what the current protocols are, and tell the applicants that there could be changes by the day of the event. Carson said that he and Frost approve of the event moving forward.

b. Moderator Ray Martin, Town Election Procedures

Martin told the Board that he wanted to review procedures for both the poll voting and meeting portion of the upcoming Town Meeting next week. Will the Town Hall keep its mask mandate in place? Should the Town plan on using an outdoor space during the meeting session on Wednesday, March 9?

After some discussion, the Board decided that, despite some recent changes in national Covid-related recommendations, the Town Hall protocols would remain as they are; there's simply not enough time to make alterations.

Martin said that for the poll voting session on Tuesday, March 8, he would use the same process that was used last year. According to the Town Hall protocols, everyone voting must wear a mask. For the meeting session the next evening, people on the main floor wear masks but Martin will rule that people who don't want to wear a mask sit in the balcony area. In addition, the lower floor meeting room will be equipped with a video monitor and microphone, connected to the meeting; this space could be utilized by anyone who might not be able to access the balcony or who simply desires a higher level of Covid-related safety. (During any vote at the Wednesday session, Martin will have an assistant go to the lower room to collect ballots or count hands, as needed.)

Carson raised the issue of who would be addressing the meeting regarding specific warrant articles. Martin said that as long as he had notes about who would be talking about each article as the Town moves through the meeting before the gathering on Wednesday, he'll be able to direct things from the podium.

c. St Jean Auctioneers, Contract - Review/Update for Town Property Auction

Chairman Carson introduced Jay St. Jean of St. Jean Auctioneers of Epping. The company will be auctioning off three pieces of Town-owned property and some details need to be resolved.

St. Jean said that one issue that's important was whether the Board wants to have the auction online or, live in public venue (such as the Town Hall). He recommended the latter because "everyone interested is in one place at the same time. The logistics just work better."

Another issue to discuss was whether the Town wants to sell the three properties with a reserved minimum price, or "absolute" – which means no minimum price/no reserves. St. Jean suggests the former, saying that the goal is to get the properties back on the Town's tax rolls. In addition, the company has seen a higher rate of participation at "no minimum" auctions in recent months, due to the overall tightness in the real estate market. "There are different

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investors” looking for properties, he said, which generally leads to “much more favorable results in the sales.”

Following the auction, St. Jean’s company charges the winning bidder a “buyer’s premium” to cover all charges related to the transaction. Leading up to the auction, the company does advertising in local newspapers, provides the Town with one-page promotional sheet (i.e., for posters, mailings, etc.), and promotes the auction on the company’s email list of investors and brokers throughout New Hampshire and northern Massachusetts.

St. Jean pointed out that some time has passed since he first proposed a contract for the Town to sign that would allow the company to move ahead with the auction. He suggested that the Select Board review the proposed contract and get back to him with its decisions regarding the sale, timing, etc., and the specific properties the Town wants to sell. The company will need about five weeks after the agreement is struck to do its work for the auction, so after reviewing the Board’s input, St. Jean will get in touch with the Town with a suggested auction date.

St. Jean asked about viewing the properties that would be auctioned. One is undeveloped so potential buyers can do a drive-by evaluation, Chairman Carson said. Another is land-locked and the third, on Horne Road, is the only “improved” property because it has a structure; however, the building might not be considered habitable. St. Jean wondered if the Fire Department would allow the company to bring people into the building to see it at a specific time before the auction, e.g., the morning of the sale.

Carson thanked St. Jean for connecting to the meeting. St. Jean verified that his contact person would be Select Board Secretary Judy Newman-Rogers.

d. CMA Engineers, Transfer Station Proposal

Chairman Carson introduced Adam Sandahl of CMA Engineering who connected to talk about a proposal to make improvements to the Transfer Station.

Sandahl said his company is a civil engineering firm based out of Portsmouth with offices in Manchester and Maine. It focuses on landfill projects but it does work on structures and other sites. In addition, CMA worked with Warner some years back when the Town was part of the Concord Regional Waste Cooperative.

Sandahl said CMA responded to the Town’s Request For Proposals in October. He understands that there are problems with traffic flow at the facility as well as an ongoing challenge dealing with recyclable trash that’s thrown into the only large compactor. (The latter is related to the fact that the Town doesn’t have a way to empty out the compactor in an efficient, timely manner.)

After touring the facility with Foreman Varick Proper, Sandahl has presented a proposal. One suggestion was to make the small building currently on the site more efficient, and relocating the central compactor. A more complex approach would be to redo the facility into a larger one that could serve Warner and some surrounding areas.

Chairman Carson said that one of the Town’s goals is to look into reducing the amount of trash that goes into the compactor. Sandahl said that would involve other processes, such as

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composting; CMA has done this kind of work but it usually subcontracts it out to another company. “It’s not 100% in our wheelhouse,” Sandahl said, adding that he could offer recommendations.

After some further discussion, Chairman Carson asked if Sandahl could supplement his report with some of the other recycling options, and then return to give the Board a thorough presentation. Frost suggested that the proposal also be available for residents to review. Sandahl agreed.

e. Charlie Albano, Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC)

Albano mentioned the Board’s recent public meeting, where representatives of some of the social service organizations that are in the Warner Community Center (WCC, aka “the old graded school”), spoke about how they do – and could, in the future – use the building. Following that, Albano said he did additional research regarding the idea of having affordable childcare available in the WCC; he recalled that about 150 residents that responded to a EDAC survey, indicated that affordable childcare was a significant need in Warner. So, about two weeks ago, the EDAC met with Chris Emond, the CEO of the Concord Boys & Girls Club. Emond submitted a draft report with recommendations for the Select Board’s consideration and came to tonight’s meeting with the idea of opening up a dialogue.

Emond admitted that childcare is not what people usually think about when considering the Boys & Girls Clubs. Traditionally, the clubs serve primarily as after-school recreational facilities for school age children. But five years ago, Lakes Region Child Care Services in Laconia reached out to the Concord Boys & Girls Club looking for help.

Emond said that the way that the business of childcare has developed, it’s very difficult to economically operate a facility unless the business also owns the building. Otherwise, there’s a need to have several facilities in several different locations so that staff salaries and other related costs could be spread out to make operations sustainable.

As way of introduction, Emond stressed that the major challenge for any childcare operations is staffing. As with many businesses during and subsequent to the outbreak of COVID, finding good employees is difficult; in addition, childcare workers have to pass background checks and be able to work with both children and parents/guardians. “Then, it’s only a matter of enrollment,” Emond told the Board. The facility doesn’t always have to be at full capacity but it has to be sustainable – and be able to pay employees decent wages. “We’re not trying to make money,” he said, noting that the Boys & Girls Club is a nonprofit organization, “but we obviously can’t lose money.” Therefore, the Club would hope to rent space in the WCC at a cost that would provide some “wiggle room,” until it is established.

Another aspect of contemporary childcare is that it is typically managed by educators, rather than the recreational staff that would manage many Boys & Girls Clubs, Emond noted. The reason for that is that educators today believe that every year that a child is not being educated becomes a challenge for the youngster to “catch up” after they go into a public school. A childcare facility that would operate simply as a “babysitting” or custodial

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organization is not what the Club does at its other sites, nor would it be interested in doing in Warner.

Emond discussed more issues related generally to operating a workable childcare facility, including the range of ages and care levels of children (some infants, along with the toddlers.) Frost stressed that if the Club operates in the WCC, she wants to be sure that the staff is paid a reasonable wage, and Emond agreed. Chairman Carson asked Emond if his group gets funding from private businesses; Emond responded that it does.

Regarding the specifics of operating in the WCC, one resident pointed out that the space in the building that's been discussed by the EDAC for prospective childcare facility is not on the first floor of the building; that's required, to ensure that infants can be easily vacated in an emergency.

Emond asked what was the status of the Head Start program, which has been operating in the WCC for some years now by the Community Action Program (CAP) of Belknap-Merrimack Counties. Chairman Carson said CAP is currently undergoing a review of its local services and will not be able to tell the Town of its plans until May or June.

Frost asked Emond if some Warner residents weren't getting too excited about the Boys & Girls Club opening a local childcare facility in the near future; she estimated that it may take two years to get it going. Emond said that if CAP's Head Start program leaves the WCC space, it might be possible to get the program going sooner than that. "The issue really is staffing," he said, adding that he wondered if the Town might be able to get some inkling from CAP about its plans.

Martha Mical asked the Board how it would be possible to operate in a space that's already being used by another social service organization. Chairman Carson said it would be a challenge, but the Board is simply looking at options right now.

Frost said that she appreciates EDAC bringing the Concord Boys & Girls Club into the conversation but the Board learned at the recent public meeting that space in the WCC is a significant issue. "Maybe somewhere else in Warner," would be suitable for a childcare operation, she said, which would allow the Town to "keep our obligation to those already inside the building."

Albano referenced the architectural rendering of the interior of the WCC by resident and architect Anthony Mento, at the request of the EDAC, noting that it could help to redesign some of the building's space to make it more efficient for functions like the Food Pantry.

Kearsarge Regional School District Superintendent Winfried Feneberg said he was excited to hear about Warner's proposal to have a local childcare facility in the southern tier of the nine-town school district. He said he's willing to work with Albano and Emond to see if the project could become a reality. (The district would not be able to provide any transportation for children at this time, but Feneberg said the issue could be discussed further in the future.)

One resident, Faith Minton, recalled that about 37 years ago, the WCC was still being used as the "graded school." She also noted that CAP has been able to operate a licensed Head Start program in the building. In addition, she worked for a home schooling program that operated out of the building (with a fenced-in back area for parents to drop-off and pick-up their

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children.) Since the Town obviously needs the Food Pantry, could there perhaps be a preferable space for that operation (and/or for Warner Connects' Family Closet thrift shop) that would allow more space for the childcare operation in the WCC?

Nancy Martin offered the thought that the childcare center can be an "economic driver" for Warner because it would allow more residents to work at MadgeTech and other local businesses.

Chairman Carson said these ideas are worth considering but the next step the Board should make is probably allowing Edmond to get inside the WCC, so he can evaluate it regarding a childcare facility space. Carson also echoed the earlier suggestion that the Town reach out to CAP to see if that organization has any idea about whether it's likely to want to keep its local Head Start program next year. Edmond said he's already connected with the CAP staff and they are scheduled to meet tomorrow morning.

Albano reminded the Select Board of his willingness to apply for a large community grant that could be used to pay for retrofitting the WCC for a childcare facility, as well as for other functions including a community garden.

III. Old Business

a. Process and Use of American Rescue Funds Act (ARPA)

No action taken.

IV. New Business

a. Town Energy Policy Review

No action taken.

V. Administrator's Report

1. Town Administrator Diane Ricciardelli said that Town Hall has a new printer in the Select Board's office. The old printer is now in the hall and will be moved out soon, but she's not found anyone who wants to buy and/or take it. "It jams a lot," she noted.
2. Ricciardelli said she's spoken with George Pellettieri of Pellettieri Assoc., the local landscaping business, about removing the pine tree in front of Town Hall and replacing it with a better one that would be more suitable for holiday lights at Christmas time. Frost wondered why the Town was spending time and resources on the project, but Chairman Carson said the front of the historic building is important to the Town; in addition, a plan was created several years ago to improve the area and funds for the tree work are already in a fund. DPW Director Tim Allen said a single bucket truck from his department could be used to remove the old tree and to plant a new one.
3. Ricciardelli reported that the new panic alarms in the Town Hall appear to be repaired and will be tested soon. "We should be all set," she said.

4. Alice Chamberlain recently helped Ricciardelli complete a \$14,000 grant for water protection, the Town Administrator said.
5. Ricciardelli told the Select Board that the Warner Police Department is looking to apply for a grant to pay for officer body cameras. Chairman Carson pointed out that there is not much time left for the application and told Ricciardelli to speak with Police Chief Chandler about the project.
6. Ricciardelli also thanked Select Board Secretary Judy Newman-Rogers for working with R C Brayshaw Printing to get the annual Town Report completed; the reports should be available this weekend.
7. The Town is ready to hire a new full-time Finance Administrator, Ricciardelli told the Board. She sent the job description to Municipal Resources, Inc. (MRI), and that company will assist in the hiring process; MRI works with the Town on finance software, so the partnership is suitable in this instance.
8. Town department heads will soon have debit cards from Sugar River Bank, Ricciardelli said. Purchases will still need to be pre-approved but the cards can be used for certain vendors when billing or other financial recordings can be problematic. The cards will also make things easier for the DPW, when Director Allen finds something his department needs at a good price and wants to make the purchase immediately. Ricciardelli said she would send a proposed policy for the debit cards to Select Board members this week.
9. Resident and Town Webmaster Dan Watts of Dimentech has notified Ricciardelli that all Town emails will be changing to Microsoft soon. In addition, the Town's URL (website address) is changing but the old URL automatically links users to the new one.
10. Ricciardelli said she's comparing proposed prices regarding a new phone system for the Town.
11. Dave Marzoff, M&N Assessing, is coming in one day per week to help keep up with Assessing work as well as being available remotely.
12. The sale of the old Fire Station is moving forward, Ricciardelli said.
13. The process of securing rental agreements with the current nonprofit groups that are in the WCC is also moving forward, she said. The Town is working with Primax, its insurance company, to ensure that all groups are covered under current policies; the Warner Connects' Food Pantry and the Family Closet have binders under that organization; those are currently being reviewed by Primax. The only rental agreements are with nonprofit organizations, and they are at reduced rates that simply cover the

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Town's cost of operating the WCC. "Our heating bills have really started to go up," Ricciardelli noted.

Frost thanked Ricciardelli for her thorough report.

VI. Select Board Other Business

1. Frost noted that the Board has a one-page information sheet outlining the State's Right-To-Know law. "Make sure all the committees receive that," she told Ricciardelli.
2. Frost asked about a tree on Kearsarge Mountain Road that was discussed at an earlier Select Board meeting. Chairman Carson said the tree has already been "taken care of" by DPW Director Allen.
3. Frost also asked about the old Odd Fellows Building adjacent to the Town Hall, which was sold some years ago to a local contractor under an agreement that involved making improvements to the structure. Chairman Carson said the contractor needs to go to the Planning Board to discuss plans to stabilize the structure.
4. Frost asked about the plans to make improvements on Red Chimney Road. Chairman Carson said the Town is still looking to get an easement from one of the property owners in the area in order to move forward.

VII. Consent Agenda

None.

VIII. Manifest

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

- Payroll checks numbers 7074-7084, dated 02/24/2022, with a net check and direct deposits totaling \$36,102.32.
- EFTPS ACH in the amount of \$10,588.20 for taxes.
- Accounts Payable checks numbers 59632, dated 02/24/2022, in the amount of \$36,102.32 for the payroll transfer.
- Accounts Payable check numbers 59633-59672, dated 03/01/2022, in the amount of \$520,810.79.

Carson seconded. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

IX. Meeting Minutes

After some discussion about formatting and style, Chairman Carson made a motion to approve the Board's minutes as presented from the meetings on January 18, January 27, January 31, February 8 and February 15, 2022.

Frost seconded. On a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

X. Public Comment

Tax Collector Marianne Howlett asked the Board members to sign paperwork regarding the annual Town Meeting warrant, and the Current Use bill. Newman-Rogers said she would have that done by Thursday afternoon.

Martha Mical asked the Board to consider removing the mask mandate for Town Hall. Chairman Carson said the Board discussed the issue earlier in the meeting and that it's under consideration, but there will not be any change in the policy before the annual Town Meeting next week.

XI. Adjourn

With no further business to come before the Board, and without objection, Chairman Carson declared the meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.