



TOWN OF WARNER

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Select Board
Sam Bower, Chairman
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**Select Board -
DRAFT
Town Hall- Lower Meeting Room
Tuesday, March 29, 2022, 6:30 p.m.**

I. Open Meeting/Roll Call

Chairman Sam Bower opened the meeting at 6:33 p.m. and recognized the presence of fellow members Clyde Carson and Christine Frost.

Also in attendance: Merrimack County Sheriff David Croft; MainStreet Warner Board of Directors member and member of the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) Neil Nevins; Town Clerk Michele Courser; Emergency Management Director Ed Mical; Library Director Nancy Ladd; Tax Collector Marianne Howlett; Board of Selectmen Administrative Assistant Judy Newman-Rogers; and Recording Secretary Ray Carbone.

II. Appointments

a. Merrimack County Sheriff David Croft

Sheriff Croft came to tonight's meeting to introduce himself. He referenced his 40 years of experience in New Hampshire law enforcement, and outlined the Office's general responsibilities, noting its ongoing commitment to support the work of local police departments like Warner's.

b. Electric Car Charging Stations

- Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) Chairman Charlie Albano; President of the Kearsarge Area Chamber of Commerce Dan Watts; MainStreet Warner Board of Directors member and EDAC member Neil Nevins.

Neil Nevins came before the Board to review how EDAC is moving forward to exploring the idea of installing charging stations in the downtown area. He said he's connected with Clean

Energy NH, a nonprofit organization that works with various communities and businesses around the state.

The original idea was to install some ‘fast’ energy chargers, which are what’s primarily found at service stations and other areas around the state, but additional research has led EDAC to consider utilizing Level 2 chargers, which use a 240v power source and charge many electric vehicles in 1-3 hours. Estimated costs per unit is \$2,500-\$3,000.

Nevins said there are options with these units, including ones that can provide service to different types of vehicles and even “dual” chargers. He indicated that he wants to continue to research the concept.

Some of the local research has focused on identifying places in the village area where the charges could be utilized. Library Director Nancy Ladd has told EDAC that the parking areas adjacent to the Pillsbury Free Library would be acceptable. The New Hampshire Telephone Museum has also expressed interest in participating in the program, and MainStreet Warner is open to having some charging stations located in the parking lot in front of its Jim Mitchell Park. The parking lot adjacent to the vacant Warner Power building might be a good match, Nevins said, depending on what happens to that building.

The installing company should be able to do all that’s necessary to set the chargers up, and the owner – if on Town property, then the Town of Warner – would benefit from the charging fees. Nevins said that by the end of April or the beginning of May, EDAC should have a more definite proposal ready for the Board of Selectmen to review.

Selectman Bower noted that there are financial benefits for the Town if the charges are located on Town-owned property; three places that have been mentioned recently is the parking lot adjacent to the former Warner Power building; the area adjacent to the library; and the Police Department property.

Bower asked his fellow Board members whether they wanted to indicate to EDAC that the group supports giving those three Town-owned properties significant consideration. Selectman Carson said that it might be more beneficial to not narrow down the scope too much right now; parking spaces along Main Street may also be good, and even if a recommendation was to put a charger on private property, the Town could utilize some options (such as a right-of-way or easements), Carson said. Carson also suggested that EDAC look at some ideas that the Kearsarge Area Chamber of Commerce is considering for chargers.

Nevins said that there is still time to work on this issue because the NH Department of Transportation (DOT) has apparently not yet received the federal guidelines for the program.

Selectmen Frost asked Nevins to explain how the revenue generation process would work for the Town.

Nevins said it would be based on a percentage of the usage charge although he doesn’t know all the details at this time. However, the current New Hampshire system allows 100% of the

revenue generated on a charger located on municipality-owned property to go to that municipality; 80% of the revenue derived from charges on other properties would go to the owner.

Frost also asked how many units might be installed in Town. Nevins said it would likely be a number balancing anticipating future use and not “overloading” the community with the chargers. Right now, he’s considering 3 or 4 “dual-use” units (i.e., six or eight connections). “We’ve got time to figure that out,” he said, “time to work out the details.”

Select Board Administrative Assistant Judith Newman-Rogers asked about the Town’s parking area adjacent to the Simonds School, i.e., whether that might be considered a good place for a charger area. Chairman Bower asked if there would be enough space for the chargers. Carson noted that the Town would have to improve the staircase linking the area to the area behind Town Hall for that option to work.

Carson questioned Nevins about the Town joining Clean Energy NH, asking if the organization might be able to help put together applications for the charging operations. Nevins said an annual municipal membership cost \$250, and that the group might also provide support for the Town’s ongoing Energy Committee.

Chairman Bower asked that the Energy Committee be requested to look into the membership.

**c. Michele Courser, Town Clerk
- Certified Letter of Transfer of Town Meeting Funds**

Town Clerk Courser asked the Board members if they had received her submitted certified letter listing the transfer of funds authorized by Town Meeting voters into the appropriate Capital Reserve Funds.

The Board acknowledged the receipt of this information from the Town Clerk.

d. Simonds School Request for Bartlett Funds

The Board considered a request from the Simonds School to use \$1,850 in the Town-managed Bartlett Funds to pay for the appearance of an ensemble to play at the school’s annual Culture Day. Chairman Bower said that there is approximately \$78,000 in the fund. He requested that the Board look into the origins and intended use of the fund.

Frost made a motion to approve the request; Carson seconded. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

III. Old Business

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

Frost reported that the Town has, so far, only received half of the approximately \$355,000 it is slated to get in APRA fund from the federal government. The only related expenditures have been: \$7,906 to resolve flooding issues on Church Street (related to the old Odd Fellows building); and approximately \$3,800 to purchase and engage the Meeting Owl system that allows for remote meeting participation.

Another \$36,200 has been earmarked to pay for the new accounting software, Frost said.

Other estimated cost for items that the Board has had before it for the APRA money:

- \$10,000 to redesign the Town website;
- \$75,000 for a new Water District well;
- \$10,000 to the United Church of Warner to provide wifi service to those in need;
- \$2,600 to purchase an aerator for the Silver Lake beach area;
- \$3,000 to add fiber connections to the Warner Community Center (WCC);
- \$7,500 for a conceptual proposal regarding improvements to the WCC;
- \$75,000 to accommodate, retrofit and renovate the WCC;
- \$210,000 to provide energy efficiency (LED lights, etc.)/“alternative hookups” in the WCC,

The estimates total is \$288,000, Frost said.

Frost also reviewed some of the background about two items originally requested by the Parks and Recreation Department. She said that the items – a lawn mower and several aerators for Silver Lake – were discussed in Budget Committee meetings before the annual Town Meeting. (The 2008 lawn mower is failing and barely operational, and the aerators would allow the Department to resume swimming lessons at the Silver Lake beach.) At that time, the Department representatives were told that if they would remove the items from their budget requests, the Town would find another way to fund the projects.

In recent weeks, the Conservation Commission has indicated that it is willing to purchase one of the aerators.

Frost suggested that the Board approve the purchases of the new lawn mower and the other aerator, so that those items are available for the start of the summer recreational season. A modest estimate for a comparable mower would be \$13,000 - \$14,000, but with the trade-in value, approximately \$11,600, she said.

However, Frost also noted that Department of Public Works (DPW) Director Tim Allen has been using a small tractor to plow sidewalks in Town that needs to be replaced. There is some money in a DPW Capital Reserve Fund for the purchase, but costs have increased significantly in recent months; as a result, he's prepared to use some of his funds to help purchase a combination machine that could plow sidewalks in the winter and mow the Parks & Rec's fields during the summer. The new vehicle would cost \$33,523.

The other Board members asked Frost to send them information about this new possible arraignment so they can review it before making a decision.

Chairman Bower suggested that the Board continue moving forward with creating an assessment process that could be used on any projects that might be eligible to be funded with the Town's ARPA monies.

After further discussion, the Board agreed to hold a public work session on Thursday, March 31, at 6 p.m. to continue its discussion about ARPA funds.

b. CMA Engineers

- Transfer Station Proposal

Board members said they have not yet seen an updated proposal from CMA. Chairman Bower suggested that the Town Hall staff reach out to the business.

c. St. Jean Auctioneers

- Contract for Town Property Auction

The Board has signed its agreement with the St. Jean company, but Carson said they still need to decide about some of the details, i.e., the exact date of the auction, how the landlocked property can be reached for interested parties to view it, etc.

Tax Collector Marianne Howlett noted that one of the properties that the Board is hoping to sell by auction (on Chemical Road) was deeded last year, so the State's "right to repurchase" statute is applicable. (It can be repurchased by the current owner, if that person also agrees to pay all back taxes.)

Chairman Bower said the issues related to the auction should be resolved at the Board's next regular meeting on Tuesday, April 12.

IV. New Business

a. Abatement Request

Chairman Bower made note of the request and the recommendation of Town Assessor Dave Marzoff. **Frost made a motion to grant an abatement of \$1,876.52 on property Map 14/Lot 29-1, as per the Town's assessor and eminent assessing; Carson seconded. In a voice vote, the Board unanimously approved the abatement.**

b. Assessing Clerk Position

Town Administrator Diane Ricciardelli recently recommended that the Town hire Elizabeth Labbe to fill the vacant Assessing Clerk position. **Carson made a motion to hire Labbe for the 10-hour weekly position, at Step 6, Grade 4; Frost seconded. In a voice vote, the Board unanimously passed the motion.**

c. Request from Police Department – To change to Group 2 Retirement Structure.

Chairman Bower said the change would mean Police Officers will be contributing into the NH Retirement system with “Pre-tax” dollars. Most Police Departments in the State use this system, which was pointed out by a recently hired officer. Carson said the change will also save the Town money, and that the change has unanimous support from the Police Department staff. (Letter on file)

**Frost made a motion that the Town of Warner elect to meet Group 2 payroll deductions for NHRS with pre-tax wages in agreement with the New Hampshire Retirement System Group 2 and as supported by Group 2 Town employees,; Carson seconded.
In a voice vote, the Board unanimously approved the motion.**

V. Term Expirations – Committee & Board Appointments & and Reappointments

Frost made a motion to reappoint Ben Inman to a three-year term on the Planning Board; Carson seconded. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Bower made a motion to reappoint Elizabeth Labbe to a three-year term on the Zoning Board of Adjustment; Carson seconded. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Bower made a motion to reappoint Darcie Busky to a three-year term as Deputy Town Clerk; Carson seconded. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Frost said that DPW Director Tim Allen had raised concerns about the Road Committee, which is mentioned in the Road Construction Loan article that voters approved at the annual Town Meeting. The warrant article directs that the committee review all related “engineering plans, cost estimates, and contract bids” but the group hasn’t met in several years and has sunset.

To get the group reactivated, Allen suggested some people who had previously agreed to serve on the group: Director of Emergency Management Ed Mical; Budget Committee Chairman Mike Cutting; Ken Cogswell; Selectman Frost; and himself (Allen). Other members could be added later as needs arise.

Chairman Bower made a motion to continue the previously established Road Committee memberships as noted here; DPW Director Allen will serve as Chairman and convene the committee; Carson seconded. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

VI. Administrator’s Report

None.

VII. Selectmen's Other Business

Frost reported that the Mink Hills Committee has been meeting and is close to releasing a report regarding the capacity for different uses on Class VI roads and various trails. There should be some kind of update before the Select Board in April or May.

In addition, Frost asked if the Board could move the Public Comment portion of its meetings further up in the regular agenda. She said it might not be fair to ask someone to sit through a two-hour meeting in order to address a single issue.

Chairman Bower said he had some reservations, because of the number of issues the Board has to discuss at each meeting, but he agreed with Frost that the Board could consider moving Public Comment up to perhaps follow the Appointments. Frost said the Public Comment could even be moved to after the New Business, but there are regular items that the Board addresses – e.g., abatements, manifests, consent agendas, etc. – that could be moved further down in the agenda.

Carson said that it is essential for the Board to address its most important items but moving the Public Comments before the Board's regular business activities could be an improvement. He also noted that any citizen can ask for an Appointment with the Board (and that usually is one of the first agenda items). Chairman Bower also noted the Board can schedule additional meetings as needed.

Frost mentioned some emails that's she's recently received from residents. Carson and Newman-Rogers said they did not get the messages, so Frost said she would forward them along.

One of the messages is related to regulations regarding Airbnb businesses in Town. Carson said the Town is working to gather additional information about the issue and that the Board should address it in the future.

Chairman Bower said he's spoken with resident Dan Watts, who is president of the Kearsarge Area Chamber of Commerce, about the Board's decision to allow the Chamber to manage the small roadside signs in the village area; the Chamber could lease out the directional signs as a fund-raising function.

Watts has reported that he's found a sign company in Henniker that can replicate the original signs. The Board agreed to allow Watts to move ahead with the project.

Carson said that the Community Power Committee that he serves on now has a page on the Town website; more information will be added in the future. In addition, the group has a handout flyer that it will begin distributing around Town. The hope is that the materials help

people understand what the Community Power Committee is working on and how they may benefit from its work.

Carson also announced that, while serving on the Planning Board recently, he proposed that the Select Board assemble a Housing Committee to evaluate housing issue in the Town, particularly the challenges related to Affordable Housing. The group will study the related concerns this year and consider making recommendations for new or revised amendments to the Town's zoning regulations in time for voters to consider them before the annual Town Meeting in 2023. Carson said he will be meeting with some residents to talk about the committee and expects to bring recommendations back to the Select Board soon.

Selectman Bower called on Library Director Nancy Ladd. Ladd reported that, in her role as Chairman of the Joint Loss Management Committee last year, she oversaw its biennial review of the Town Employee Safety Program. Primax, the Town's insurance company, subsequently told the Committee that the State is now requiring a new section regarding Workplace Violence. It forwarded a template for the section, which the Committee edited to make applicable.

Primax also noted that there was an error in the Program regarding the listing of relevant labor laws. The Committee agreed to the two changes and passed on its recommendations to the Select Board for approval. Ladd asked that the Board put the issue on a future agenda for consideration; all Town employees are required to see the changes and agree to them to formerly make them considered part of an updated safety policy.

Selectman Bower thanked Ladd for bringing the issue to the Board's attention.

VIII. Public Comment

John Levitt agreed with earlier comments about moving the Public Comment section of the meeting further up in the Board's regular agenda.

Ed Mical noted that one recent agenda only listed one item, but the Board discussed several. Chairman Bower said he was also caught off guard by the change, but he noted that the occurrence is a rare one.

IX. Consent Agenda

Frost made a motion to approve previously signed by the Warner Board of Selectmen

1. Notice of Intent to Excavate, Map 7 Lot 064
2. Certification of Yield Taxes Assessed, Map 10 Lot 29, adjusted total \$1,751.48.
3. Building Permit: Map 11 Lot 042-2 Map 03 Lot 095-1
 Map 03 Lot 094 Map 03 Lot 095-2
 Map 03 Lot 095-3 Map 03 Lot 095-4

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

X. Manifest

None.

XI. Meeting Minutes

Chairman Bower made a motion to approve the minutes of 2/18/22 and 2/24/22; Frost seconded. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

XI. Adjournment

Without objection, Chairman Bower adjourned meeting at 8:32 p.m.