



TOWN OF WARNER

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Select Board Meeting DRAFT Minutes

Tuesday, 6:30 pm December 6, 2022
Lower Meeting Room Warner Town Hall 5 E Main St

I. 6:30 pm Open the Meeting/Roll Call

Chair Sam Bower opened the meeting at 6:32 p.m. and recognized the presence of Board members Christine Frost and Lois Shea.

Also present: Rebecca Courser of the Warner Historical Society; Clyde Carson as a member of the 250th Warner Anniversary group; Assessing Clerk Elizabeth Labbe; Ken Cogwell; Town Administrator Diane Ricciardelli; Select Board Administrative Assistant Judith Newman-Rogers; Recording Secretary Ray Carbone.

II. Appointments

a. Rebecca Courser, 250th Town of Warner Anniversary

Rebecca Courser of the Warner Historical Society spoke with the Board about the upcoming (2024) anniversary of the Town's founding, known as its semiquincentennial. She said the Society and others in the community talked about gearing up for the celebration back in 2018, but it was too far off. An informal committee that is now working on the project includes representatives from the Warner Fall Foliage Festival (WFFF), the Pillsbury Memorial Library's Board of Trustees, the United Church of Warner; the local 4-H Club; Sugar River Bank; the New Hampshire Telephone Museum; the Mount Kearsarge Indian Museum, and others (as well as several "at-large" members).

Courser presented the Board with a draft of tentative activities planned and an estimated budget for the celebration. Rather than use the uncommon word "semiquincentennial," the group is using a theme of a "Birthday". Designer Terry Hathaway designed a logo; it features a three-tier birthday cake illustration that can be used in a variety of ways, e.g., a Town sign announcing upcoming events, smaller yard signs that residents can decorate, etc.

The Committee decided the anniversary could be marked with participation at numerous events that take place annually: the Warner Fall Foliage Festival, Maple Weekend, Spring into Warner, etc. The group has a decorated Christmas tree in the Festival of Trees in Town Hall, which includes a copy of the Town's original grant, dated Sept. 3, 1774.

Courser suggested having two large banners in front of the Town Hall building, similar to what's used for the Tory Hill Authors Series announcing the celebration. There are tentative plans for signs at both ends of the Town's two covered bridges, similar to what's used on Bradford's Bement Covered Bridge; Jim McLaughlin has been asked to work up a design for the signs, estimated to cost roughly \$1,000 per bridge; the Committee is planning to approach the Kearsarge Area Chamber of Commerce for financial support.)

The Committee is looking at a variety of sources for funding the yearlong celebration, including selling logoed T-shirts and mugs - the group has discussed using images from the Town's mural - as well as seeking donations from residents, Courser said.

Other events could include a Town Picnic, a military band concert in Jim Mitchell Park, and a play about the Town's history written by one of the writers who participated in last year's Tory Hill event. (The Committee is hoping to get a grant from the NH Council on the Arts to fund the play.)

The Committee currently estimates costs to be \$15,900, but that will likely increase as things progress. Obvious needs for funds include a Townwide announcement mailing, a brochure, copy paper, ink, etc. Announcements should also appear in the *InterTown Record*, the *Concord Monitor*, and on social media.

Courser asked the Board for the Town to consider providing financial support. For instance, is it possible for money to come from the federal disbursement made under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)? That would be more convenient than having to go to the next two annual Town Meetings to request funds for the project, Courser explained. (Although the Committee is not an organized nonprofit tax organization, the Warner Historical Society has agreed to hold its funds under the Society's account.

Chair Bower said he wasn't sure about the ARPA funds but the Select Board has been discussing holding a Work Session to update and evaluate the status of the Town's ARPA funds. (Later in the meeting, the ARPA fund review was added to the agenda for the Dec. 20 meeting.)

Selectperson Frost said she was "very excited" about plans for the 250th anniversary but suggested there may be some aspects, e.g., advertising, etc., that could be funded from places within the overall Town budget. She asked Courser if the Committee has other fundraising options, with the idea that the Town's best role would be filling in costs after other avenues have been exhausted. Courser said one of the goals of the initial Townwide mailing would be to solicit donations from the community. The overall costs would likely exceed the current projection of \$15,900.

The Board discussed the idea of preparing a Warrant Article for the upcoming annual Town Meeting in March to fund some of the anniversary celebration. Clyde Carson pointed out that the Budget Committee plans to look at capital expenditures for 2023 next week. Courser said given that timing, the Committee and the Board needs to work out a plan quickly.

Chair Bower said one advantage to using ARPA funds, if that's legally permissible, is that there wouldn't be a need for a Warrant Article. Board Administrative Assistant Judith Newman-Rogers said another way could be for the Committee to submit a petition Warrant Article for the funding directly to Town Meeting voters.

Chair Bower suggested the Committee begin preparing a citizens petition warrant article in the event that the APRA funds are not available for the project. Newman-Rogers told Courser that the deadline for petition articles is Feb. 9; 25 signatures of Town voters is required.

The Board thanked Courser and others for undertaking the Town anniversary celebration.

b. Elizabeth Labbe, Abatement

Assessing Clerk Elizabeth Labbe appeared before the Select Board to request an abatement in property taxes for a residence that experienced a total loss as the result of a house fire in August. The property owner filed a probation application with the Town, which would allow the assessed property value to be lowered. In addition, because the application was submitted after the property tax bills had been sent out, he's submitted an application asking that the current property tax be abated.

Chair Bower made a motion to approve the probation for the building located at 66 Hartshorn Lane, due to fire damages, from \$99,580 to an adjusted value \$37,870 Frost seconded. In a voice vote, the Board unanimously approved the motion.

Selectperson Frost then made a motion to abate the amount of \$1,753.80 in property taxes at 66 Hartshorn Lane. Shea seconded. In a voice vote, the Board unanimously approved the motion.

III. Old Business

a. Abatement Requests, Marianne Howlett, Tax Collector, Motion to Approve or Deny

Tax Collector Marianne Howlett said one of the abatements concerns property located at Map 7, Lot 13. The Board previously granted the original request for an elderly exemption, but it was granted “between issues,” so the first seasonal tax bill was overcharged. The bill amount needs to be corrected to \$247.42.

The second abatement concerns three recreational vehicles/campers at the Pleasant Lake Campground. The Board previously granted abatements on two of the three in the first issue; it needs to issue a second abatement. One of the three sites is currently vacant and the other two are occupied by registered motor vehicles, so property taxes are invalid.

The next abatement request concerns four properties that are now owned by the Town, Howlett said. (She said she was working with Labbe to catch these problems when properties are merged with Town-owned lands, in the future.)

Selectperson Shea made a motion to Approve abatements for: Map 07, Lot 013, \$247.43; Map 0-3024-5CC, \$53.88; Map 0246-PLE, \$42.74; Map 0330249-CC, \$103.31; Map 06, lot 031, \$10.13; Map 06, Lot 035, \$21.05; Map 07, Lot 46, \$48.,31; and Map 07, Lot 52, \$6.25. Frost seconded. In a voice vote, the Board unanimously approved the motion.

b. Map 10, Lots 002-03, 002-04, 002-05, Waldron Hill, (July 19, 2022, Motion to Deed) a. Motion needed to move forward to register deeded properties and document the motion to justify change to the 2nd Tax Warrant for 2022.

Town staff explained these properties were turned over to the Town for nonpayment of taxes but because the owner said he would resolve the delinquent tax issue deeds were not registered with the County Registry of Deeds. It was realized recently the deeds were not registered and there was no owner resolution. Newman-Rogers said she reached out to the former owner about the issue, but still no payment has been made.

Howlett added there is an IRS lien on the properties. She suggested the Board reach out to the Town Attorney for advice on exactly how to proceed.

Selectperson Frost asked why this issue was before the Board again if members previously voted to move forward with the lien action. Newman- Rogers said Town wanted to give the owner time to resolve the issue, but now records show that has not happened. The former owner is showing in the Tax Warrant as owner. A motion is required to make a change in the Tax Warrant.

Chair Bower made a motion to move forward with registering the deeded properties at Map 10, Lots 002-03, 002-04 and 002-05 on Waldron Hill, pending review of the action by the Town Counsel and reflect the changes needed in the Tax Warrant. Selectperson Shea seconded. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

c. Perambulation from Salisbury

Selectperson Shea informed Board members the previously schedule perambulation of the line between Warner and Salisbury, did not occur this past Sunday. After the scheduled event with Salisbury Selectperson John Herbert, it was learned the walk would take about two days. (Selectperson Shea also learned a Select Board member is not required to do the perambulation; it can be done by a designated representative.)

Selectperson Shea met with Rebecca Courser, Salisbury Selectperson Herbert and Gary Young (who had done Warner's perambulation for about 40 years). The group decided to undertake the project in October 2023. Herbert suggested both Towns seek younger people who may be willing to take over the task in the future.

After a brief discussion, Selectperson Frost made a motion to send a letter to Gary Young, thanking him for his work over the years on the Town's behalf and appointing him as the Board's representative on perambulations; Selectperson Shea seconded. In a voice vote, the Board approved the motion.

d. Warner Community Center (WCC) and SMP Architecture, Inc.

Chair Bower said to update since the Board's last conversation about renovation/ restoration work in the WCC, resident Anthony Mento of SMP is working on a list of questions for current tenants to review about their uses and future thoughts about how to best utilize the building space. Chair Bower and Mento are planning to go to the WCC and visit each tenant to review the questionnaire. The proposed tenants' meetings.

e. Employee Review Process Survey

The Board held a brief conversation about the survey, which will be done using Survey Monkey.

f. 2023 Proposed Budget Review

Town Administrator Ricciardelli said she made changes recently to the budget the Board will be presenting to the Budget Committee next week.

The Board did a quick review of its own Select Board budget. After some discussion, the Board agreed to alter its process and present the Budget Committee with the largest department budgets first, then move on to the smallest.

The Board also discussed the Employee Health Insurance budget, annual employee wage increases, NH Retirement costs and the Land Use, Elections, Town Clerk, and Assessing budgets, as well as various computer-related costs in these budgets.

IV. New Business – None

V. Administrator's Report

Town Administrator Diane Ricciardelli made her report to the Board:

1. Phone system in place and working in PD, Town hall, Transfer and Highway. It is a great system. Thank you to Dan Watts for making sure that everyone knows how to use the new phones!
2. Budgets are ready for review by the select board.
3. Benefit meeting with Health Trust took place on Thursday Dec 1, questions answers, paperwork distributed.
4. Planning Board has met regarding CIP. Ben Frost will have the report ready following the Planning Board's Dec 19th meeting. Board could meet on the 20th for CIP, then Budget Committee on the 22th, if the Budget Committee is open to that.
5. Property deeded to the Conservation Commission. Nancy Martin and I working with attorney to complete the paperwork.
6. Openings at PD (one) and Highway (one). Three openings at Fire Department are filled.
7. Meeting with CMA regarding transfer station either next Monday or the following Monday. Will confirm on Wednesday, Dec 7.

8. Encumbered funds need to happen by end of year. At December 20th meeting is the last change to accept the invoice or contract. Department can encumber funds that were previously budgeted. You cannot encumber funds from someone else's budget.
9. Submissions for Town Report are due back to us by first week of January. Anyone not making the deadline (except for finance) will have their report written for them, for editing. We will not delay the production schedule this year.
10. Working with the Health Officer, Christopher Lopez, on three reports, getting his license, and ordering business cards.
11. Attended Emergency Management practice session on November 30. Went well. New Health Officer was in attendance. Important that the Finance Director is invited to these as we make decisions about how money is accessed.

VI. Select Board Other Business – None

VII. Public Comment – None

VIII. Consent Agenda

Chair Bower made a motion to approve as signed by the Warner Select Board:

1. Notice of Intent to Cut, Map 3, Lots 95-1, 95-2, 95-3, 95-4, 12 acres, Poverty Plains Rd.
2. Building Permit: Map 31, Lot 042, Kearsarge Mtn. Rd.
Map 31, Lot 042, Kearsarge Mtn. Rd. (second permit)
Map 19, Lot 016-1, Pumpkin Hill Rd.

Selectperson Shea seconded. In a voice vote, the Board unanimously approved the motion.

IX. Manifest

Chair Bower made a motion to authorize the Select Board to approve manifests and order the Treasurer to sign:

- Payroll paper check numbers 3137 through 3150, and direct deposit check numbers E00505 through E00533, dated 12/1/2022, with a net check and direct deposits totaling \$41,097.60.
- Accounts Payable check numbers 6634 through 6635, dated 12/1/2022, in the amount of \$52,848.22

Selectperson Shea seconded. In a voice vote, the Board unanimously approved the motion.

X. Meeting Minutes

XI. Non-Public Session - Under RSA 91-A:3 II--- (If needed)

XII. Adjourn