

## Warner Community Center Tour

September 12, 2024 @6:30pm and ended at 7:45pm.

Hosted by Warner Economic Development Advisory Committee

Tour started with 12 in attendance but ended with almost 25 people. Attendance list was not taken.

267 households responded to the Warner Community Center survey in June 2024.

The Family Closet – Patty Anderson gave a short tour. Explained that all funds generated at the store are donated to Food Pantry. Space includes the store and storage closets. Store reduces solid waste by selling unwanted clothes, linens, accessories by keeping those items out of the landfill. All donations are collected when store is open so only good quality donations are accepted. They have around 20 volunteers. They do not pay rent. Patty handed out Warner Connects, NH Newsletter Summer 2024

Community Action Program – The CAP Director described agency services: Assist with fuel/electricity assistance but also provides referrals for Meals on Wheels, senior busing, weatherization of homes, etc. Most of the referrals are referred to the Concord office which services Merrimack/Belknap counties. This office mainly services residents of Warner, Contoocook, Hopkinton, Henniker and Wilmot. However, no one is turned away. Space is one room with partitions and not a lot of privacy. They do pay rent.

Gear Up – GU Director described their activities. Uses all the rooms on the 3rd floor. Homeschooling community that meets on Fridays during school year. Usually, 20-30 kids participate. Toddler room, teen room, and general working room. No bathrooms on this floor. They are not a charter or private school. They do not receive any funding from state, federal or grants. Members pay \$75/semester or \$150 for the year per family. Parents are volunteers and teachers. Fees can be waived for financial hardship. Fees pay for rent and insurance. Parents are volunteers and teachers. Attendance is down since COVID.

Concern about stairway handrails that are not not up to code, a danger especially for toddlers who could fall through handrails.

Warner Welfare Office – The welfare office shares Gear Up space in the teen room. Welfare is open on Thursdays and by appointment. The welfare office was recently moved to Community Center to provide privacy. This is the only official town service in this building.

Warner Food Panty – Space includes a store with shelves, refrigerators, and freezers where clients can make their own food choices. Additional storage room and closets on same floor. Around \$1500 of funding per month is received from The Family Closet. Market Basket has a donation box at the Warner store. There is a donation storage cabinet in the back of the building near the door to the food pantry. They purchase food from NH Food Bank. The food pantry does have some sponsors like the Kearsarge Community Hub, but does not have any business sponsorships. The pantry serves 60 households/week. 24 volunteers. 16 home deliveries, 6 of those are seniors. Patrons are allowed 7 meals/week.

Identification is requested at the front door to sign in. Pantry asks if the patron is on any subsidized program. Most of the patrons are Warner residents, but they will assist anyone in need. They also suggest visiting other food pantries in the area if anyone is in need. If the food pantry was closed, the patrons would use the Warner Welfare Office to request funding for food. Estimates for 2024 so far is \$102,000 of food distributed. They do not pay rent.

Boys and Girls Club Daycare Center – Two large rooms for different age groups and a large fenced in play area outside. Nine kids currently at the center because they have only 2 staff. The room will allow for 32 kids if fully staffed. Waiting list of 40 kids wanting to enroll but can't find certified staff in the area. Costs of attendance is \$320/week for infants and \$250/week for toddlers. State subsidies are available to parents, but not thru Boys and Girls Club. The Boys and Girls Club is a nationally known non-profit that does receive funding from federal and state grants, United Way, and fees. If center was to close, those Warner families would not have anywhere to take their children in the area since many day care centers are at capacity and have long waiting lists for enrollment. They pay \$1400/month for rent.

The Town of Warner does not provide janitorial services to clean bathrooms, hallways, rooms. All the programs take turns cleaning bathrooms and community spaces.

Attendees commented that the services at the Community Center are used by Warner residents. There is no space within the town to house these specialized services. Moving to space that has substantial rent increases would require some of the services to move to other towns including Concord.

An attendee noticed that the wheelchair ramp was dangerous and would not be safe for their loved one.