



TOWN OF WARNER

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Select Board: Michael Smith, Chair
Faith Minton
Harry Seidel
Kathleen Frenette, Town Administrator

Selectboard Meeting Minutes December 10, 2024, at 4:00 PM

Lower Meeting Room Warner Town Hall 5 E Main St

I. Open the Meeting and Roll Call

Harry Seidel called the meeting to order at 4:03 PM.

Faith Minton made a motion seconded by Harry Seidel to allow Mike Smith to participate by Zoom. Motion passed unanimously.

Present: Harry Seidel, Faith Minton, Mike Smith (Chair) via Zoom, Kathy Frenette Town Administrator and Judy Newman Rogers Selectboard Administrative Assistant

II. Select Board Meeting Minutes: November 6th, November 12th and November 19th

a. November 6, 2024

Faith Minton made a motion seconded by Mike Smith to approve the November 6, 2024 Select Board meeting minutes as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

b. November 12, 2024

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Faith Minton made a motion seconded by Mike Smith to approve the November 12, 2024, Select Board meeting minutes as amended. Motion passed unanimously.

c. November 19, 2024

Faith Minton made a motion seconded by Mike Smith to approve the November 19, 2024, Select Board meeting minutes as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

The order of business was adjusted, item IV, to be heard next.

IV. Warner 2024 Hazardous Mitigation Plan, Adoption

Ed Mical presented the Warner 2024 Hazardous Mitigation Plan. He stated the plan has been reviewed by the State and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Faith Minton thanked Ed Mical and everyone who assisted him. Faith Minton read the Hazardous Mitigation resolution.

A Resolution Adopting the Warner Hazard Mitigation Plan Update 2024

WHEREAS, the Town of Warner has historically experienced severe damage from natural hazards and it continues to be vulnerable to the effects of the hazards profiled in the Hazard Mitigation Plan Update 2024 including but not limited to flooding, high wind events, severe winter weather, and fire, resulting in loss of property and life, economic hardship, and threats to public health and safety;

and WHEREAS, the Town of Warner has developed an updated Plan and received approval pending adoption (APA) from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for its Hazard Mitigation Plan Update 2024 under the requirements of 44 CFR 201.6; and Hazard Mitigation

1 *WHEREAS, public and Committee meetings were held between September 2023 through July 2024 regarding*
2 *the development and review of the Hazard Mitigation Plan Update 2024;*

3 *and WHEREAS, the Plan specifically addresses hazard mitigation strategies, and Plan maintenance*
4 *procedures for the Town of Warner;*

5 *and WHEREAS, the Plan recommends several hazard mitigation actions (projects) that will provide*
6 *mitigation for specific natural hazards that impact the Town of Warner with the effect of protecting people*
7 *and property from loss associated with those hazards;*

8 *and WHEREAS, adoption of this Plan will make the Town of Warner eligible for funding to alleviate the*
9 *effects of future hazards;*

10 *now therefore be it RESOLVED by Town of Warner Select Board: The Hazard Mitigation Plan Update 2024*
11 *is hereby adopted as an official plan of the Town of Warner; The respective officials identified in the*
12 *mitigation action plan of the Plan implementation of the recommended actions assigned to them; are hereby*
13 *directed to pursue Future revisions and Plan maintenance required by 44 CFR 201.6 and FEMA are hereby*
14 *adopted as a part of this resolution for a period of five (5) years from the date of this resolution; and An*
15 *annual report on the progress of the implementation elements of the Plan Select Board by the Emergency*
16 *Management Director or designee. Shall be presented to the IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned have*
17 *affixed their signature and the corporate seal of the Town of Warner on this 10th day of December 2024.*

18 **Faith Minton made a motion seconded by Mike Smith to adopt the Town of Warner 2024 Hazardous**
19 **Mitigation Plan as of December 10, 2024. Motion passed unanimously.**

20
21 **III. Emergency Management Director Ed Mical, Deputy Director Resignation**

22 Ed Mical: Ron Piroso, Emergency Management Deputy Director, has resigned effective December 31, 2024.
23 The Select Board extended their appreciation to Ron Piroso for his dedication.

24 **Faith Minton made a motion seconded by Mike Smith to accept Ron Piroso's resignation as Emergency**
25 **Management Deputy Director effective December 31, 2024.**

26
27 **V. Boston Post Cane Candidate, Rebecca Courser Presenting**

28 Rebecca Courser: nominated is Virginia Sweeney, 104 years young, born in 1920; lives in Warner with her
29 family; believes it is important to stay active, be curious and to never give up. She is honored to be nominated.
30 The Historical Society will schedule the ceremony for either January 25, 2025 or February 1, 2025.

31
32 **VI. Election Poll Book Discussion**

33 Michele Courser, Town Clerk: she recently heard from the State regarding a change to the State All for One
34 program (accessibility voting software for the disabled); this new change is required for all elections going
35 forward at the Town's expense; the cost is unknown at this time. The State is looking at different vendors, the
36 tablet will range from \$4,000-\$7,000 and the programming of the device will range from \$500-\$2,500 at each
37 election. Michele Courser stated that because of the short notice and the unknown costs she would prefer to
38 hold off on purchasing the Election Poll Book system. Faith Minton would like the Select Board to talk to their
39 State Representatives regarding the short notice and the funding mandate. The Select Board agreed that the
40 Town should postpone the Election Poll Book purchase and wait to hear from the State next week regarding the
41 actual cost of the All for One system.

42
43 **VII. Select Board Business**

44 **a. Flooring for the Police Department**

1 Harry Seidel: available funding is in the 2024 budget to replace the flooring, and the Police Department budget
2 will not be overspent. Mike Smith: the carpet is posing a tripping hazard. Kathy Frenette will speak to the
3 Police Chief tomorrow for his quotes. The Select Board is supportive of this request.
4

5 **b. Sale of Town owned property – Map 21 Lot 09**

6 Mike Smith: he has presented this to the Select Board previously; an interested party would like to expedite the
7 process. Faith Minton: the Conservation Commission has not held a site walk; she would prefer to wait until
8 everyone has had the opportunity to review the property. Mike Smith concurred. Nancy Martin Chair of the
9 Conservation Commission stated that because of the proximity to Kearsarge State Park, a large farm nearby &
10 private property on the other side of the town line, she would like the Conservation Commission to review this.
11 Mike Smith stated that the abutting farmer is the interested party. Bob and Sam Bower moved from the
12 audience seating to the table to speak to the Board: they are interested in leasing the land from the Town of
13 Warner; adding the land to their forest management and farm management plans which are up for review in
14 2025; potentially using the land for sugar maple trees or cattle grazing; it is very important to them to keep the
15 impact on the road (class VI Discontinued) at a minimum; a lease agreement would return the property to the
16 tax rolls; they would be looking for a 30-35 year lease. Mike Smith stressed that it is important to allow the
17 Conservation Commission to weigh in. Nancy Martin agreed that the Bowers are good stewards of land;
18 expressed reservations about deviating from the established process of selling property to leasing property; does
19 not foresee any reason why the Conservation Commission would oppose the lease; the commission meets again
20 in January. Rebecca Courser stated an auction of the property runs the risk of someone else purchasing the
21 property. Mr. Bower stated that it is a concern for them; outlined how his farm utilizes the land surrounding the
22 property for farming, and sugar tapping; explained that a section of the road is maintained by farm; the lease
23 would be beneficial to the Town, his farm and to the tax payers. Mike Smith encouraged the Bower's to
24 expedite their proposal submission; could include a review by the Agricultural Commission in addition the
25 Planning Board and Conservation Commission.
26

27 **VIII. Town Administrator's Report**

- 28 - Finalizing the 2025 Budget
- 29 - No decision yet on the Land Use position, would like to hold a second interview with one candidate and
30 there is a possible second candidate.
- 31 - American Relief Program Act (ARPA) Funds: laptops with Windows 10 need to be replaced; inquired about
32 the use of ARPA funds to purchase replacements reducing the need to budget for them in 2025; ARPA fund
33 balance is approximately \$16,000. The Board discussed the possibility of using the funds for the new
34 mandate from the state regarding accessibility polling software and also the E-Poll tablets. The Select
35 Board needs to know the exact ARPA fund balance. Clyde Carson Finance Director: the deadline for ARPA
36 funds to be designated for a specific documented project is end of year 2024; after the balance due of \$6,000
37 for the 250th town anniversary celebration there is roughly \$16,000 remaining. Kathy would like to use the
38 funds toward the Windows 10 replacement laptops and the E-Poll tablets.
- 39 - Tomorrow, department head meeting, will inquire if any encumbrances and it is open insurance enrollment.
- 40 - Working with legal counsel regarding the maintenance of 91-a requests, non-public session minutes and the
41 accounting of those requests to be tabulated on the town website.
- 42 - Finalizing the Empower Retirement and Colonial Life benefits (Both options paid 100% by the employee).
- 43 - She asked if future agendas could be reformatted to include the planning for the next agenda.
- 44 - Holiday party/employee gift cards: The balance is \$6,700. The Fire Chief requested that any amount given
45 to the firefighters be put toward the Firefighters Association for their Christmas gathering.

46 **Faith Minton made a motion seconded by Mike Smith to purchase gift cards (\$100) for town employees.**
47 **Motion passed unanimously.**
48

1 **Renewable Energy credit-** Faith Minton stated there is a better price if they switch over to Community
2 Power Coalition. Ed Mical suggested adding this to the next agenda. The Select Board agreed.
3

4 *At 5:54 PM the Select Board took a five minute recess.*
5 *Harry Seidel called the meeting back to order.*
6

7 **Elderly Property Tax Exemption Informational Session 6:00 PM**
8 **RSA 79:39a and b**

9 *(*Screen sharing Mr. Carle's powerpoint caused a delayed start)*

10 David Carle provided his findings regarding the Town of Warner's elderly property tax exemption.

11 To qualify: the applicant must be 65 years old on or before April 1st and reside in New Hampshire for three
12 consecutive years prior to April 1st. The property must be the principal residence, owned by either the applicant
13 or spouse. The couple must be married for at least 5 years. The applicant must meet the criteria passed at the
14 2006 Town Meeting: single person income cannot exceed \$30,000 and a married couple cannot exceed \$45,000.
15 The assets for applicant(s) cannot exceed \$85,000. The current criteria (income and assets) has not been
16 adjusted since adoption.
17

18 Bill and Sherry Gould expressed their confusion regarding assessed value versus market value relative to land
19 value as an asset. They stated that they own significant acreage that disqualifies them. David Carle: urged them
20 to speak to the Town's assessor; the purpose of this presentation is to determine if the criteria should be
21 adjusted; stressed that the 2006 income and assets limits need to be re-evaluated; the median household income
22 for Warner has doubled since 2000 and home values have tripled; in 2023 the median household income for
23 those 65+ was \$52,193; people 65 and older make up 20% of Warner's population; the 2024 median home value
24 in Warner is \$428,000.
25

26 David Carle is proposing the following increases: (current amounts in parenthesis)

	Income	Assets	Age 65-74	Age 75-79	Age 80+
28 Single	\$50,000 (\$30,000)	\$170,000 (\$85,000)	\$128,400 (\$50,000)	\$179,760 (\$75,000)	\$239,680 (\$100,000)
29 Married	\$65,000 (\$45,000)	\$170,000 (\$85,000)	\$128,400 (\$50,000)	\$179,760 (\$75,000)	\$239,680 (\$100,000)

30
31 There was continued discussion regarding an audience member's experience relating to the elderly exemption
32 and how their land is valued. David Carle and Elizabeth Labe, Assessing Clerk, encouraged them to reach out
33 to the Town's assessor, Avitar. Mike Smith expressed his reservations relating to the proposed amounts which
34 would put Warner in the top tier in Merrimack County. Elizabeth Labbe: currently there are 25 exemptions; in
35 the OC-1 and the R-3 district it is very difficult to qualify because most properties are larger than 5 acres which
36 would exceed the asset limit. She spoke about a resident of very little means who financially qualifies but
37 because the size of their property is 1.5 acres larger than what the RSA allows they will not qualify for the
38 elderly exemption.
39

40 David Carle presented wording for a draft warrant article for Town meeting to modify the elderly exemption
41 and to require the Select Board to review the property tax exemptions every five years. He would like the
42 Select Board to make a decision sooner rather than later. He noted that warrant articles need to be finalized
43 early in February. There was more discussion regarding the value of larger land parcels. Harry Seidel
44 explained that the residents have the final say. He stressed that this will need to go to Town Meeting. The
45 Select Board agreed to revisit the topic at their next meeting.
46

47 **IX. Consent Agenda - None**
48

1 **X. Manifest**

2 Motion for the Select Board to approve the following previously signed manifests:

- 3 • Accounts Payable check numbers 10878 through 10906 dated 12/5/2024, in the amount of \$630,671.87, which includes a payment to the Kearsarge Regional School District of \$600,000.

5 Motion to authorize the Select Board to approve and order the Treasurer to sign the following manifests:

- 6 • Accounts Payable check numbers 10907 through 10908 dated 12/10/2024, in the amount of \$69,935.30 for the Payroll and Federal Tax deposits for the December 12th bi-weekly payroll.
- 7 • Bi-weekly payroll checks numbers 3860 through 3867, and direct deposit check numbers E02047 through E02080 dated 12/12/2024 for a net payroll of \$53,170.95.
- 8 • Accounts Payable check numbers 10909 through 10916 dated 12/10/2024, in the amount of \$1,442,804.00. This includes:
- 9 • The Merrimack County 2024 apportionment of \$893,625.
- 10 • Payment of \$357,000 to the Warner Trustees of the Trust Funds for 2024 Warrant Articles # 9, 10, 12, 14, 15 and 16 as approved at the March 2024 Annual Town Meeting.
- 11 • Remittal of 2024 second half taxes to the Warner Village Water District of 192,179.00.

16 **Harry Seidel made a motion seconded by Faith Minton to approve the Manifest as read. Motion passed. Mike Smith abstained.**

18 *Discussion on the motion:*

19 There was a brief discussion on the payment schedule for the Kearsarge Regional School District

21 **XI. Public Comment**

22 Kathy Frenette stated that most other communities begin their meetings with the Pledge of Allegiance. Mike Smith and Faith Minton support the idea. Harry Seidel does not feel it is necessary. The Select Board agreed that stating the meeting rules and expectations at the beginning of the meeting would be helpful. Kimberley Edelman, Tax Collector, entered the meeting room stating that the Pledge of Allegiance puts people on the spot. She stated the pledge is recited by American citizens and those who are not American citizens would be singled out. Mike Smith feels that reciting the Pledge of Allegiance is unifying for those in attendance.

29 **XII. Select Board Unanticipated Business**

- 30 a. Mike Smith asked for the Select Board’s position on the Poll Books. Faith Minton stated she would like to move forward but she prioritizes the purchase of the laptops. Harry Seidel would prefer to purchase the Poll Books first. Kathy Frenette will provide the Select Board with a report of the total number and cost for the purchase of the laptops.

34 **Mike Smith made a motion seconded by Faith Minton to purchase the Electronic Poll Books in the amount of \$6,475 from the ARPA funds, furthermore the remaining balance of the ARPA funds to be expended for the purchase of computers for the Town of Warner. Motion passed unanimously.**

- 38 b. Faith Minton stated that she has begun working on the Select Board’s procedures and rules

40 **XIII. Non-public Session (If needed, RSA 91-A:3 II (a,b,c,d,e,f,g,h,I,j,k,l)) – None**

42 **XIV. Adjournment**

43 **Faith Minton made a motion seconded by Mike Smith to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed unanimously. 8:38 pm meeting adjourned.**

46 Respectfully submitted by Tracy Doherty
47 Edits by Judy Newman-Rogers, Selectboard Admin Asst