



TOWN OF WARNER

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

Selectboard Meeting DRAFT Minutes January 7, 2025, 4:00 PM

Lower Meeting Room Warner Town Hall 5 E Main St

I. Open the Meeting and Roll Call

Chairman Smith called the meeting to order at 4:10 PM

Present: Michael Smith (Chair), Faith Minton, Harry Seidel, Kathy Frenette and Judy Newman-Rogers
The order of business was adjusted.

Mike Smith moved up the Red Chimney Road Overrun Discussion

II. Tim Allen Director of Public Works, Red Chimney Road Overrun

Tim Allen explained that he previously asked for \$50,000 of Capital Reserve Funds to redo 900 feet of Red Chimney Road in conjunction with the box culvert. He stated that he had intended to pay for the paving out of the operating budget. He stated that other projects on North Road Chemical and smaller projects near the post office have depleted the funds. He had hoped the project could be done for approximately \$80,000 but it is closer to \$108,366. Tim Allen stated that he had decided to finish the project with the paving money in the budget. He is asking for the funds from the Capital Reserve account to pay for the project. He advised the Select Board that he finished the project because it did not make sense to him to leave it unfinished until the spring. Faith Minton asked how much he is requesting. Tim Allen stated that the total cost of the project is \$108,366, the balance in the Capital reserve account is \$357,715.

Harry Seidel stated that it is an expense that the Town needed to spend. He acknowledges that overruns happen but in the long run the town benefits. Faith Minton and Harry Seidel both stated they support the request. Mike Smith stated the Select Board needs to hold a public hearing to expend the funds. The Select Board agreed to schedule a public hearing on Tuesday, January 21, 2025.

III. Raffle Permit Request, Warner Fish and Game Club

Harry Seidel made a motion seconded by Faith Minton to approve the raffle permit request from the Warner Fish and Game Club for 2025. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. Simonds Elementary School Request for Bartlett Funds for Students to attend McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center

Faith Minton explained that the fund was established for enrichment activities for students. The requested amount is \$1,289.00 for all students and staff to attend the McAuliffe Discovery Center.

Faith Minton made a motion seconded by Mike Smith to request the funds in the amount of \$1,289.00 from the Bartlett Fund. Motion passed unanimously.

V. Select Board Business

a. Sale of Town Owned Properties

None

b. Review for Town Auditor

Kathy Frenette stated she has not been able to reach the third auditing firm. She said the average cost is approximately \$25,000. The Select Board agreed to accept the bid from Plodzik and Sanderson for the town's auditing needs.

Harry Seidel made a motion seconded by Mike Smith to accept the proposal for auditing services for the Town of Warner for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2024 from Plodzik & Sanderson PA. Motion passed unanimously.

d. Budget Discussion/Review

Requests for Warrant Articles: Economic Development Advisory Committee, Elderly Exemption and Emergency Management, Capital Reserve Fund

Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) Capital Reserve Fund warrant article:

Harry Seidel read information submitted by the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC). EDAC requested a Capital Reserve Fund (CRF) be established to address building safety concerns and energy efficiency. The improvements will reduce the Town's liability due to potential fire and personal injury and decrease energy costs. Once the CRF is created and funded the EDAC and the Town Administrator can apply for grants to community development finance authority having the required matching funds on hand. For 2025 EDAC recommends prioritizing safety concerns within and outside the building. The EDAC proposal was read as follows: The EDAC recommends the creation of a CRF for the Warner Community Center for \$20,000 based on community input from the Warner Community Center survey, listening session and tour of the building town residents overwhelmingly support improving the building over time. A CRF is beneficial before applying for grants, those funds will be used towards safety issues 1) Upgrading the electrical to code 2) Fixing the ramp to ADA compliance 3) Upgrading the bathrooms to ADA compliance and 4) Improving the stairwell railings.

Harry Seidel spoke about the expressed community support for maintaining the building. He stated that a CRF would open the door for larger grants to address safety issues. Sarah Hansen explained that this year the primary focus is on the safety concerns of the building. Faith Minton supports putting to the voters. Alfred Hanson asked if it is necessary to create a CRF to secure grants. He spoke about the need for a study to be done on the building and what the needs are. Harry Seidel explained that a study was done that examined all the various aspects of the building. He further noted that another study was done that looked at the mechanical, electrical and thermal. James Gaffney suggested adding language to the warrant article that stipulates that the funds are intended to be used for direct repairs as well as matching funds for grants. Faith Minton spoke about the history of the building, services that have been administered within the building. She explained that the last renovation of the building was 50 years ago. Alfred Hanson spoke about the lack of revenue in the Town of Warner and questioned the future expenses. He noted that currently the building does not generate revenue to support it.

Elderly Exemption warrant article:

Judy Newman-Rogers explained that the Select Board revised the exemption amounts and did not approve or deny if they would be moving the proposal to a warrant article. David Carle stated that he does not support the Select Board's revised exemption figures.

David Carle proposed the following increases: (current amount)

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

Select Board's revised exemption

	Income	Assets	Age and Exemption Amount		
Single	\$50,000	\$160,000	65-74 \$110,000	75-79 \$150,000	80+ \$200,000
Married	\$65,000	\$180,000			

James Gaffney stated that he believes it is less expensive for the Town to keep people in their homes than it is for the town to take and maintain the property. Mike Smith explained that he is cognizant of the burden that this will shift to the other taxpayers. He stated that he would prefer to start modestly knowing that if there is a need they can always increase the exemption. David Carle asserted that there have been incorrect statements made regarding his proposed exemptions amounts. He feels the Select Board's revised amounts are arbitrary while his proposal was derived from the Town's previous vote. He stressed that his proposal is justified.

Alfred Hanson asked Mr. Carle to speak to the cost of this proposal. Mr. Carle stated that it is unknown because he does not know who and how many applicants would be qualified. Sherry Gould raised the issue of how excess land is valued as an asset. Harry Seidel stated that he originally supported Mr. Carle's proposal. He voted in favor of the revised amounts because he feels that it is important to give something rather than do nothing. He would support putting Mr. Carle's proposal to the voters. John Leavitt stated that it feels wrong to save a few dollars for some while other elderly residents are pushed out of their homes. Mike Smith reiterated that the Select Board recognizes the need for an increase to the exemption. He stated that he feels that it would be prudent to start modestly and see how that impacts the Town. Mike Smith explained that the Select Board must consider all residents not just a select group. John Leavitt stated the Select Board should put the original proposal on the ballot and allow the voters to decide.

Harry Seidel made a motion to reverse the Select Board's previous vote on the elderly exemption, and put forward the original amounts in the presentation from Mr. David Carle. No second was made.

Faith Minton stated that she appreciates both positions. She would support the original proposal and let the voters decide. David Carle reiterated that his proposal used the same percentages as what they were in 2006. He explained that if part of the master plan is to keep those who are 65 plus in town then the Town needs to do something to keep them here.

Harry Seidel made a motion seconded by Faith Minton to reverse the decision of the December 17, 2024 Select Board meeting and recommend the elderly property tax exemption as presented on December 17, 2024. Motion passed 2-1-0 Mike Smith voted in the negative.

Emergency Management CRF warrant article:

Ed Mical explained that he is requesting a CRF for emergency management activities outside the normal budget. He is requesting up to \$6,500. He stated the funds would be used to help support the emergency operations center and or a shelter during a disaster or emergency. He requested the funds come from the unassigned fund balance.

Harry Seidel made a motion seconded by Mike Smith to create an Emergency Management Capital Reserve fund in the amount of \$6,500 to come from the unassigned fund balance. Motion passed unanimously.

c. Volunteer Interest, Alternate Planning Board Member 2 Vacant Positions

Micah Thompson and Janice Loz

Mike Smith asked Janice Loz if she had considered volunteering on any other board. Janice Loz stated that she had not and feels that she is most qualified for the Planning Board. Faith Minton asked Janice Loz if she has given consideration as to how being a land use employee will differ from being a Planning Board member. Janice Loz stated that she has 16 years of experience. She is looking for a new challenge. She appreciates finding middle ground. She enjoys working with people.

Faith Minton made a motion to appoint Janice Loz to the Planning Board as an alternate for a term that expires in 2026. The motion was not seconded.

Discussion on the motion: Barbara Marty stated that when an employee resigns there should be a waiting period before that person can sit on the board. She stated that with a resignation that could indicate that there was a reason for them to volunteer somewhere else for a while until that department settles back down. Faith Minton explained that was the reason she asked the question she did and she was satisfied with the answer. Faith explained that her view is that when the Town has volunteers interested in serving in a volunteer capacity and they understand their role is work collaboratively that is different than an employee. Mike Smith stated that was the reason behind his question. He stated he would like to see Janice Loz on the EDAC but does not see the Planning Board as an option right now. Janice stated that she previously served on the Planning Board for many years, years longer than she was an employee. She stated that she is most comfortable in the land use environment. She spoke about other employees who have served on boards. She stressed that she just wants to serve using her many years of institutional knowledge. Janice stated that she did not anticipate that this would be a problem.

Judy Newman-Rogers explained that she previously worked for the Town and resigned. She further elaborated that she was Selectperson which also was overseeing the department that she once worked in. She thinks it up to those who are tentative about a person coming back, to decide what they want to do. She commends anyone who is willing to serve as a volunteer at times when volunteers are difficult to find. Faith Minton feels that it is up to the board to work together. Mike Smith indicated that he has a lot of background and history that is making this appointment difficult. He indicated that he has other reasons why he does not see an appointment to the Planning Board as an option. Harry Seidel stated that he has remained silent on this because he respects Janice Loz a great deal having known and worked with her for many years. He does share some of Barb's concerns. He is moved by Janice's love of the town and her willingness to help. Harry Seidel suggested Janice could volunteer with the upcoming HOP grant and housing commission. Janice Loz stated that she is hurt by Mike Smith's comment and has no idea what he is referring to. She does not want him to elaborate for the sake of her reputation. Mike Smith stated he was denied when he requested that this be discussed in non-public. Harry Seidel reiterated the EDAC or Housing Committee could be an opportunity.

Faith Minton asked if Mike Smith or Harry Seidel would second the motion. Mike Smith and Harry Seidel both declined to second the motion.

Mike Smith appreciates Janice Loz willingness to volunteer and encouraged her to consider the EDAC.

Judy Newman-Rogers stated that there are several people online with comments:

Pete Swenson online: the misogyny is overwhelming today. This is embarrassing. You do not get to decide where someone wants to volunteer, that is up to the volunteer. You can do better.

Faith Minton echoed the comment. She strongly feels that when someone wants to volunteer whether we agree with that person or not they should be accepted.

Micah Thompson: Mr. Thompson stated that he was encouraged by his neighbor David Bates to attend town meetings and hear what is said and to make his voice heard. He acknowledged that serving as a volunteer is a thankless job. He came from Colorado and has lived in Warner for 4 years. He stated that he is a builder by trade, in the past he was a tax consultant relating to property. Harry Seidel gave a quick account of the Planning Board and the Zoning Board's responsibilities. Mike Smith asked if Micah Thompson is willing to attend 2 Planning Board meetings a month. Micah Thompson stated he would. Faith Minton reiterated her position that when the Town is fortunate enough to have someone willing to volunteer they should be accepted. She thanked him for his interest. John Leavitt informed Micah the meetings are typically 3 hours and rarely extended. He

stated that the meetings are only a fraction of the time involved; it is learning the process and the preparation for meetings is significantly more.

Faith Minton made a motion seconded by Harry Seidel to appoint Micah Thompson to the Planning Board as an alternate for a one year term expiring in 2026. Motion passed unanimously.

Harry Seidel asked the Select Board if they would take up the issue regarding the application of James Sherman to serve as a volunteer on the EDAC. Faith Minton stated that she would support that nomination. Harry Seidel read the appointment and oath confirming the acceptance of James Sherman to the EDAC.

Faith Minton made a motion seconded by Mike Smith to appoint James Sherman to serve on the EDAC. Motion passed unanimously.

January 9, 2025 Budget Committee Agenda: YTD Expenses, Revenue, Analysis of 2024 Expenses vs 2025 Budget and Analysis of 2024 Revenue vs 2025 Anticipated Revenue

Kathy Frenette explained that a change was made recently to include the cost of the Tax Collector's software in the amount of \$3,330 and the last year for the Tax Collector's BMSI software in the amount of \$321. She informed the Select Board that December invoices are still coming in which will change the YTD final numbers. Mike Smith asked if there was any public comments regarding the budget review. No public input was offered.

Karen Coyne returned to the meeting and asked to be recognized by the Chair. She advised the Select Board that when the discussion with Janice Loz concluded, Janice Loz used expletive language towards the Zoning Board chair. She informed the Select Board that her vehicle has now been vandalized with expletive language. The Select Board extended their apologies to Karen Coyne.

The Select Board agreed to continue reviewing the budget for any further reductions. Kathy Frenette stated she will be meeting soon with the Finance Director to discuss revenue. She contacted DRA about the rooms and meals tax and the highway block grant. She was advised that the DRA does not anticipate a significant change for next year. The Select Board agreed to discuss the capital budget and expenses at the next meeting.

VI. Town Administrator's Report

- The land use position has been filled. Chrissy Almanzar started Monday January 6th.
- The Poll Pads have been ordered with ARPA funds
- The computers have come in and are currently being configured.
- The Police Department had money left over in their budget and that was used to pay for the Police Department laptops.
- Department Head meeting tomorrow to discuss updating computers and managed IT
- She and Judy are working with the town attorney regarding 91A requests records to be posted on the town website. She distributed a draft of the request form and the spreadsheet that will be posted on the website.
- Peter Flynn will return on Thursday.

VII. Public Comment

Heidi Crozer thanked Kathy Frenette for all her assistance. She informed the Select Board that she has contacted the registry of deeds for the county and the attorney general office. She asked the Select Board to outline the steps that they will take going forward to make sure that a check goes to the bank immediately rather than waiting for months. Mike Smith acknowledged and accepted responsibility. He assured Heidi that the problem has been rectified.

Ed Mical asked for clarification regarding the request for Bartlett funds. He stated the amount should come from the interest. Mike Smith concurred.

John Leavitt expressed his opinion that a town's community center serves the community. He stated a revenue stream should not be expected to support the building, tenants should be evaluated on how they serve the community.

Sherry Gould thanked the Select Board and administration for all they do. She recognized the difficulties they face.

VIII. Select Board Minutes 12/17/24, 12/19/24 and 12/23/24

12/17/24

Page 4 item G strike January 2 insert January 7

Faith Minton made a motion seconded Harry Seidel to approve the minutes for December 17, 2024 as amended. Motion passed unanimously.

12/19/24

Page 1 item II. Strike schol insert school

Faith Minton made a motion seconded Harry Seidel to approve the minutes for December 19, 2024 as amended. Motion passed unanimously.

12/23/24

Harry Seidel made a motion seconded by Faith Minton to approve the minutes for December 23, 2024 as presented. Motion passed, Mike Smith abstained.

IX. Consent Agenda

Motion to Approve by the Warner Selectboard: a request to the Trustees of the Trust Funds for \$7,500 from the Bridge Repair/Replace Capital Reserve Fund to pay an invoice from Michie Concrete Products and \$17,869.88 from the Bridge Repair/Replace Capital Reserve Fund to pay an invoice from Weaver Brothers.

Faith Minton made a motion seconded by Harry Seidel to approve the consent agenda as read. Motion passed unanimously.

X. Manifest

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

- Accounts Payable check numbers 10918 through 10921 dated 12/12/2024, in the amount of \$218,717.91.
- Accounts Payable check numbers 10922 through 10966 dated 12/18/2024, in the amount of \$464,707.99.
- Accounts Payable check numbers 10967 through 10968 dated 12/23/2024, in the amount of \$60,645.31 for the Payroll and Federal Tax deposits for the December 26th bi-weekly payroll.
- Bi-weekly payroll checks numbers 3868 through 3872, and direct deposit check numbers E02081 through E02109 dated 12/26/2024 for a net payroll of \$45,943.44.
- Accounts Payable check numbers 10969 through 10973 dated 12/23/2024, in the amount of \$5,140.00.
- Accounts Payable check numbers 10974 through 11004 dated 12/31/2024, in the amount of 28,903.85.
- Accounts Payable check numbers 11005 through 11006 dated 1/3/2025, in the amount of \$33,937.24 for the Payroll and Federal Tax deposits for the December 7th quarterly payroll.
- Quarterly payroll checks numbers 3873 through 3897, and direct deposit check numbers E02110 through E02113 dated 1/7/2025 for a net payroll of \$27,156.53.

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

● Accounts Payable check numbers 11007 through 11008 dated 1/7/2025, in the amount of \$53,905.01 for the Payroll and Federal Tax deposits for the January 9th bi-weekly payroll.

● Bi-weekly payroll checks numbers 3898 through 3903, and direct deposit check numbers E02114 through E02144 dated 1/9/2025 for a net payroll of \$41,243.12.

Harry Seidel made a motion seconded by Faith Minton to approve the Manifest motion as read. Motion passed unanimously.

Mike Smith would like the Manifest motion scanned and uploaded to the website going forward so that the Select Board can approve it and it does not have to be read.

XI. Select Board Unanticipated Business

Kathy Frenette confirmed that a Public Hearing will be scheduled for January 21st for Public Works CRF withdrawal. She advised the Select Board that a public hearing needs to be held for HOP Grant. The Select Board agreed to schedule it for January 21st.

Kathy Frenette asked for clarification regarding the Fire Department donation towards their holiday celebration rather than giving them a gift card. The Firefighters association usually pays for the celebration.

Faith Minton made a motion seconded by Mike Smith to make a \$500 contribution to the Firefighters Association for their holiday celebration. Motion passed unanimously.

Harry Seidel stated that the Select Board needs to determine if they want a commission or committee for the Housing grants that are available. Harry Seidel stated a committee could be formed quicker because a commission would need to be approved at town meeting.

Faith Minton is currently working on scheduling an information session to inform residents about the structure of property taxes and funding public education in the State of NH.

XII. Non-public Session (If needed, RSA 91-A:3 II (a,b,c,d,e,f,g,h,I,j,k,l))

Mike Smith made a motion to move to non-public session.

Respectfully submitted by Tracy Doherty
Edited by Darcie Buskey, Assistant Clerk