



TOWN OF WARNER

PO Box 265
Warner, New Hampshire 03278-0265
Telephone: (603) 456-2298 Fax: (603) 456-2297
Warnernh.gov administrator@warnernh.gov
selectboard@warnernh.gov

Select Board: Alfred Hanson, Chairman
Rick Bixby, Vice Chair
Michael J. Smith

Select Board Meeting Minutes September 29, 2026 6:00 PM

I. Open meeting Roll Call

Chairman Alfred Hanson called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Select Board present: Chairman Alfred Hanson, Vice Chair Rick Bixby and Mike Smith.

Public present: Judy Newman-Rogers, Herm Blanchette, Eric Sargeant, Kathy Carson, Sara McNeil, Clyde Carson, Elizabeth Labbe, Martha Mical, Ed Mical, Russ Smith, John Noble, Mary Mead, Amelia Gardner, Dana Myskowski and Julia Bodnarik.

II. Select Board Business

a. Departments

Highway, Herm Blanchette, Update on Highway Garage

Herm Blanchette explained that the removal of the panels in the wash bay has begun. He stated that he was disappointed with the workmanship on the install of the new panels, yesterday the contractor began to rectify the issues. Herm Blanchette explained that they are still waiting on the new roof panels. Herm Blanchette informed the Select Board that three trucks should be back in service by the end of October after having to be reconditioned. Herm Blanchette advised the Select Board that he, Clyde and Ed have been working to correct issues on the grant for Schoodac Road.

III. Select Board other Business

a. Eric Sargeant, NH Department of Transportation, Construction of West Joppa Road

Eric Sargeant from NHDOT provided an updated the Select Board on the construction of a service road off of West Joppa Road. He explained that it is a service road, noting that when Interstate 89 was laid out it was a limited access highway. He explained that service roads were to be constructed to any of those parcels that had lost access. Eric Sargeant stated that it was determined that a service road was necessary for the then Danforth property. He stated that the Commissioner of Transportation has the authority to lay out service roads and the classification of that highway under limited access statute. Eric Sargeant explained that the DOT was contacted by the current owners of the property (the Clarks) about the access road that was laid out but never constructed questioning if they have a legal right to cross. He stated that they do have a legal right to cross. Eric Sargeant explained that looking at the history and why the service road was never constructed it as agreed upon back then that the owners (Danforth) needed to cross for logging purposes. He explained that the Clarks were permitted to construct the road themselves and the DOT entered into a temporary use and occupancy agreement. He stated that the Clarks were granted permission to go across and construct the road. Eric Sargeant advised the Select Board that there are stipulations that the Clarks must meet. He explained that they must meet all local approvals and acquire the necessary permits as well as DES requirements. Eric Sargeant explained that the Clarks were to coordinate their work with the DOT District 5 office to be sure there was no impacts to the limited access highway. He stated that the DOT has now learned that the Clarks have begun their construction.

1 Alfred Hanson asked if the Clarks have come to the Town regarding the stipulation that they must meet local
2 approvals. Herm Blanchette stated that the Clarks have not, the driveway permit was laid out with a 15"
3 culvert. He stated that the road would need to be designed so that water does not impede on Joppa Road.
4

5 Elizabeth Labbe asked if this will be a class VI road. Eric Sargeant confirmed that once constructed it would
6 be a class VI highway. Elizabeth Labbe asked if the town would be required to adopt the road. Eric Sargeant
7 reiterated that the Commissioner has the authority to determine the classification under RSA 230:51. He
8 noted that there has been a lot of communication between the DOT and the former DPW Director (Tim
9 Allen). Alfred Hanson asked if the DOT tells the Town that the road is to be adopted. Eric Sargeant reiterated
10 that the Commissioner has the authority to classify the road as class VI road and it is the users of the class VI
11 road who are responsible for maintaining the road.
12

13 Alfred Hanson allowed public comment.
14

15 James Gaffney explained that this right-of-way or the taking of the property was never recorded at the
16 registry of deeds. He stated that the entire justification behind this was predicated on the whole 89 project.
17 James Gaffney stated that it was never executed and in the 60 years since the highway went in the state has
18 had no need for this. James Gaffney believes this will be an uphill battle in the court to take this property
19 because the State does not own it.
20

21 Eric Sargeant explained that the State took the land under the Commissioner's return of highway layout
22 pursuant to the statute. He noted that a public hearing to inform the public that the highway was needed for
23 the public good. He stressed that as part of that the Commissioner's return layout is the taking document that
24 acquires all property. He explained that since this is a limited access highway it also acquires all fee title to
25 the land. Eric Sargeant noted that it is described within the Commissioner's return layout and emendation
26 was done identifying the return and where it located. He stated that the owners were compensated at that
27 time. Eric Sargeant explained that the Commissioner's return is not required to be filed at the Registry of
28 Deeds but it is filed with the Secretary of State's office and with the municipalities that the project was
29 located within. James Gaffney asked if there is an RSA that supports that. Eric Sargeant stated that he will
30 provide the RSA. James Gaffney requested the RSA and the documents that he referred to. James Gaffney
31 understood that it does have to be recorded on the deed. He explained that he saw a document from 1966 that
32 indicated that would happen and it would be coordinated with the Town of Warner. James Gaffney reiterated
33 that there is no evidence that ever happened. James Gaffney asserted that because it was never executed in
34 1966 or thereafter and that the ROW has never been used, there is not a "need" associated with the
35 justification which was the construction and maintenance of Interstate 89. Eric Sargeant stated that he will
36 leave copies of the Commissioner's return of layout and the inundation that identifies it. He will also provide
37 the RSA.
38

39 Audience member questioned the engineering overview over the road that is being put in. Audience member
40 asked if anyone is monitoring what is being done to the Class VI road to make sure it is safe and viable
41 given the unfriendly terrain. Eric Sargeant explained that the Clarks are to coordinate their activities with
42 district 5 and that is how it is monitored regarding impacts to Interstate 89 and West Joppa Road.
43

44 Alfred Hanson asked if the Clarks are following a design. Eric Sargeant stated that the Clarks were supposed
45 to obtain any local approvals necessary. Alfred Hanson stated that they have only obtained a driveway
46 permit. Elizabeth Labbe stated that it was understood that the Town should be supervising. Alfred Hanson
47 asked if that would fall to the DPW. Herm Blanchette noted that the property owner has not followed the
48 driveway permit rules. The Select Board discussed sending a cease and desist letter. Mike Smith asked if
49 anyone attempted to call the Clarks. Alfred Hanson explained that he has spoken to Mr. Clark because his

1 property abuts the Clarks. Eric Sargeant explained that his office has also reached out to the Clarks to remind
2 them that it is their responsibility to coordinate with the district office and the town of Warner. Mike Smith
3 stated that if the Clarks do not respond fairly quickly the Select Board should issue the cease and desist. The
4 Select Board agreed to ask Mr. Clark to come to the next Select Board meeting.

5
6 **b. Outsourcing Payroll, Review Proposals**

7 Alfred Hanson explained that this process began on April 26, 2026. He stated that the timeline given for this
8 was tight in the last two weeks a problem has been discovered regarding how to fund this initiative. He
9 noted that there is funding for this in the 2027 budget. Alfred Hanson explained that the Town approved
10 article 7 but did not fund it. He read the following to address funding;

11
12 *New Hampshire law provides the governing body with the mechanisms of transferring appropriated funds, RSA 32:10*
13 *allows the governing body, when circumstances arise during the year to transfer an unexpected balance from other*
14 *appropriations to an appropriation in need of the additional funding. However, the statute established the following*
15 *limitations: total spending cannot exceed the total amount appropriated by the town, appropriate records must be*
16 *maintained, certain special warrant appropriations cannot be transferred and capital reserve funds appropriated*
17 *cannot be used.*

18
19 Alfred Hanson explained that it will take time to implement this and he full supports the idea. He would
20 prefer to implement this starting January 1, 2026 because the funding would be available. He stated that it
21 would be very irresponsible of the town to sign a contract without knowing where the funding would come
22 from. He asked the Select Board for their input. Rick Bixby acknowledged that this is something that the
23 voters approved, but he does recognize that January 1st would be a better time. Mike Smith stated that
24 people voted for this and the Select Board has had ample time. He stated that there is no reason why the
25 Select Board should not make a decision even a month ago. Alfred Hanson stated that Mike Smith never
26 wanted to be involved in this effort. He asserted that he and Clyde Carson have spent hours and hours on this
27 process. Mike Smith stressed that he spent plenty of time last year and the year before on this. He would like
28 to be spoken to kindly and respectfully. Mike Smith reiterated that there is no reason why this should not
29 move forward now. Mike Smith stated that there are ways to move forward and fund this. Alfred Hanson
30 stated that he is in favor of article 7 but he is not in favor of signing a contract without the appropriated
31 funds. He believes it very irresponsible.

32
33 Alfred Hanson explained that the Select Board could vote tonight on the vendor and begin looking for
34 funding sources but he will not sign a contract without the appropriate funding in place. Alfred Hanson
35 explained that there have been several meeting with vendors.

36
37 Rick Bixby made a motion to select MRI for the outsourcing of payroll. No second.

38
39 *Discussion on the motion:* Mike Smith stated that MRI is the most expensive on the list. Alfred
40 Hanson asked Clyde Carson to speak to this. Clyde Carson explained that it is a basic level and he is not
41 certain that it will make a big difference in what the finance department does relating to payroll. He
42 explained that between the three companies, MRI has the majority of experience with NH municipalities.
43 Clyde Carson stated that most communities use MRI. He stated that Checkmate would be the second choice,
44 being NH based and a number of municipal clients. Clyde Carson expressed concern about how Checkmate
45 would integrate with the Town's financial software. Clyde Carson explained that the third vendor PayChex
46 has limited municipal experience and did not provide a list of municipal clients. Alfred Hanson noted that
47 PayChex does not currently provide a service for the New Hampshire Retirement. Clyde Carson explained
48 that in the past the Town looked into outsourcing payroll twice and each time the Select Board decided that it
49 made more sense to keep it in house. Clyde Carson noted that at that time he was a proponent for
50 outsourcing. Alfred Hanson stated that regarding the integration of software he wants to make sure there will

1 not be a need for an additional purchase of software to ensure the two systems communicate. He stated that
2 when he asked that question he did not receive the assurance that he had hoped for. Alfred Hanson asked if
3 the MRI service would integrate seamlessly with the town's financial software. Clyde Carson explained that
4 the town utilizes the full suite of MRI financial systems, the MRI payroll service would work. Clyde Carson
5 recapped the various services the town utilizes: general ledger, accounts receivables, invoicing, personnel
6 data, payroll, cash management, audit reports, NH retirement reports and Department of Revenue reports.
7 Alfred Hanson asked about the town's history. Clyde Carson explained that MRI has the town's financial
8 history and payroll history. Alfred Hanson explained that proposals were received (\$8,000 and \$9,000) but
9 since then the prices have crept up with add-ons. He stated that MRI's price is \$14,000. Rick Bixby stated
10 that MRI makes the most sense but he is unsure if the Town will save any money by out sourcing.

11
12 Alfred Hanson explained that they are trying as hard as they can to make this happen. Mike Smith stated that
13 Checkmate makes the most sense with everything they offer. He stated that they are by far cheaper. Rick
14 Bixby agreed they are cheaper but he is concern about compatibility. Alfred Hanson would like a detailed
15 answer from Checkmate and PayChex detailing how the historical payroll records would be maintained.

16
17 **Mike Smith made a motion seconded by Alfred Hanson to hire Checkmate as the new payroll service**
18 **provider. Roll Call Vote Smith YES Bixby YES Hanson YES**

19
20 *Discussion on the motion:* Alfred Hanson reiterated that the funds needs to be appropriated before a
21 contract is signed. He stated that if the Select Board decides to start this immediately they will need to
22 determine the funding mechanism and follow the RSA. Clyde Carson spoke about the conversion process.
23 He explained that the Town will need to turn over a significant amount of information. He stressed that there
24 needs to be an implementation plan that Checkmate and the town can both meet as well as enter into
25 negotiated contract. Mike Smith explained that the Checkmate had indicated that from their stand point it
26 should not take very long to convert over. Clyde Carson spoke about the Town's ability to commit to the
27 necessary time it will take for the conversion. Alfred Hanson noted that it is budget season which is a busy
28 time for the town. Clyde Carson explained that staff is working very hard and they are picking up the duties
29 of the town administrator.

30
31 **Alfred Hanson made a motion seconded by Rick Bixby to begin the payroll service when the**
32 **appropriate funding is determined. Roll Call Vote Smith NO Bixby YES Hanson YES**

33
34 *Discussion on the motion:* Rick Bixby explained that makes sense with everything else that is going
35 on. He acknowledged that staff is working hard. Mike Smith stated that there is money available in the
36 budget to implement this now. He would rather not upset the voters who expect this to be done by the date
37 they gave. Alfred Hanson questioned why they did not fund this.

38
39 Alfred Hanson explained that he will follow the steps to determine the appropriate way to fund this. He
40 stressed that he will work as fast as he can. He stated that when the money is secured he will put forward an
41 agenda item to discuss the funding source. Mike Smith said there has been plenty of time already.

42
43 **c. Beautification Group, Town Hall Lighting**

44 Sara McNeil and Kathy Carson advised the Select Board that phase 2 has been completed. The lights have
45 been installed in the three arches on the front of Town Hall. The historical light on the front of the building is
46 not operational because it needs a milk glass globe but no longer make those. She explained that bulb has
47 been removed and fixture remains. She stated that a hanging light in the front hallway has been installed.
48 Motion detectors have been installed in the side hanging lights. Sara McNeil explained that they will

illuminate automatically and stay on for 10 minutes. Kathy Carson explained that they were not able to complete the vestibule light under the current circuit concerns, she stated that they will meet with the electrician to discuss options for reconfiguring the light switches. Sara McNeil explained that two exterior lights will require the use of bucket truck to remove the lights. Kathy Carson stated that for the fall festival the lamp post light will be on from Thursday to Saturday from dusk to dawn and the spot light on the side of the building will be turned off. The three arch way lights will be on.

Sara McNeil informed the Select Board that they do not have a Christmas tree. She stated that they would be willing to look for a replacement.

d. **Julia Bodnarik, Volunteer for Library Trustee**

Mike Smith made a motion seconded by Rick Bixby to accept the volunteer interest form for Julia Bodnarik as trustee of the Pillsbury Free Library. Roll Call Vote Smith YES Bixby YES Hanson YES

e. **Community Action Program, Letter of Request for New Board Member**

Clyde Carson explained that Mike Taberry from Community Action Program (CAP) is looking to appoint a new municipal representative member to their Board of Trustees. He informed the Select Board that he would be interested in serving. Clyde Carson explained that CAP requires a letter of recommendation from the Select Board.

Alfred Hanson made a motion seconded by to send a letter of recommendation to Community Action Program nominating Clyde Carson as a new member to their Board of Trustees. Roll Call Vote Bixby YES Hanson YES Smith ABSTAIN

f. **Wage Scale Adoption**

Alfred Hanson explained that the wage scale has been updated and needs to be adopted. He stated that it is guide for department heads.

Alfred Hanson made a motion seconded by to adopt the updated wage scale steps. Withdrawn

Alfred Hanson made a motion seconded by to adopt the wage scale steps that was updated in July 2026. Roll Call Vote Bixby YES Smith YES Hanson YES

g. **Nick Edraos, Frustration with Avitar Assessing**

Nick Edraos explained that two years ago he was at \$8,000 per lot but because he cleaned up a part of his farm Avitar assessed it as a building site at \$80,000 and he owed 10% of that value because it was not considered in current use any more. He stated he appealed to the Board of Tax and Land Appeals (BTLA) who reduced the amount to \$6,000. He told the Select Board that Avitar was not there to help him. He told the Select Board that they are now adversaries. He said Avitar is upping everyone's values. He acknowledged that he did build a new home in 2024, he applied for a building permit, provided plans for 2900 square feet home. He stated his assessment reflected 700 feet more than it should have. He did not catch the mistake for a year and it cost him money. He distributed pictures of a lean-to attached to his barn that is assessed at \$400. He explained that he understood assessments were calculated at replacement cost minus depreciation. He asserted that Avitar added things and told residents to prove them wrong. He stated that when he went to the appeal process he was told that he has the burden of proof and he does not think that is right. He stated that he lives in this small town and it should not be like this. He spoke about inheriting the farm from Larry Fletcher. He explained that Larry Fletcher had a stroke and had to wait for an ambulance to come from Hopkinton because Warner did not have an ambulance. He stated that minutes counted and Mr. Fletcher died.

1 He stated that he does not blame the Town because Larry knew the risks of living in a small town. He spoke
2 about his frustration with the assessor who enforced the current use rules. He stated that she is technically
3 correct but she is nailing everyone and they don't like it. He stated that the most precious resource of a town
4 is the sense of community but does not feel the sense of community. He stated that since he and the Select
5 Board (who hired Avitar) are now adversaries he will do what the Select Board did not have the courage to
6 do for him. He paid the bill in the amount of \$6,000 and he feels that he is owed \$6,000 in community
7 awareness and pride. He stated that he will park his truck in front of Town Hall with a sign that reads Avitar
8 must go and Warner does not support farmers. He is going to park in front of town hall every day. He
9 explained that he created a website called, now look here Warner.org. He started a charity to pay fees for
10 anyone who files an appeal for their assessment. He is going to make a motion at town meeting to require
11 notification of assessment change. He is going to run for Select Board in the next election on the platform to
12 remove Avitar. He said the Select Board sent the attack dog.

13 14 **IV. Public Comment**

15 James Gaffney stated that the funds are in the budget for the payroll outsourcing. He explained that a reason
16 for the warrant article was to mitigate the cost of payroll mistakes. He stated that there was an \$11,000 IRS
17 penalty for failing to submit information and no one provided evidence that the penalty went away. James
18 Gaffney stated there is no reason not to move on this today. He expects a contract to be signed within a
19 month. Alfred Hanson stated he hopes to. James Gaffney stated that the RSA referenced (32:10) pertains to
20 unencumbered funds, funds left over at the end of the budget year. James Gaffney addressed the complaints
21 about Avitar. He urged the Select Board to address the issue or discuss it at town meeting.

22
23 Martha Mical asked when the contract with Avitar expires. Elizabeth Labbe stated that each year the contract
24 needs to be voted on or either party can opt out with a 30 day notice.

25
26 Jon Noble expressed concern about recommending Clyde Carson to the CAP Board of Trustees would take
27 time away from his town responsibilities.

28
29 Ginger Marsh stated that the homeless encampment received a cease and desist order and they have now
30 moved over to the Market Basket land. She questioned what will be done to clean up the town's portion of
31 the site. Elizabeth Labbe explained that the town's portion will be taken care of next week. She stated that a
32 detail from the prison will come in and clean up the site. Alfred Hanson asked if Market Basket has been
33 notified, Ginger Marsh expressed frustration on the extended time that it took to correct the situation. She
34 stated that there are needles on the site and now people are going to be there to clean up the site. Elizabeth
35 Labbe explained that a prison representative walked the site, she stated that the people coming will come
36 protected. Ginger Marsh stated that MRI is the financial operating system and the historical data will be
37 retained. James Gaffney spoke about the waste from the homeless encampment saying that it has made its
38 way into the brook.

39
40 Mary Mead spoke about her frustration with Avitar and her new assessment. She stated that items that are
41 now assessed were not in the past and she does not agree that the items add value.

42
43 Ed Mical stated that the Selectmen are the assessors. He stated that the Select Board should be reviewing the
44 assessment changes. Martha Mical stated that anyone can bring assessment concerns to the Select Board,
45 she stressed that it is the homeowner's responsibility.

46 47 **V. Consent Agenda for September 29, 2016**

48 Motion by the Warner Select Board to Approve the following or previously signed:

49 1. A request to the Trustees of the Trust Funds for:

- 1 a. \$55,404.00 from the Fire / Rescue Vehicles Capital Reserve Fund to pay the invoice from MacMulkin
2 Chevrolet for a 2026 Chevy Tahoe.
- 3 b. \$17,000.00 from the Highway Equipment Capital Reserve Fund to pay the invoice from John Deere for
4 new attachments to the loader for a street sweeper.
- 5 2. \$5,225, Commercial Driver's License, Class B, Employee Training and Service Agreement

6 **Alfred Hanson made a motion seconded by Rick Bixby to approve the Consent Agenda as read. Roll**
7 **Call Vote Bixby YES Hanson YES Smith ABSTAIN**

8

9 **VI. Manifest**

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

11 Accounts Payable check numbers 12893 through 12935 dated 8/26/2026, in the amount of \$1,090,588.58,
12 which includes a \$900,000 payment to the Kearsarge Regional School District.

13 Accounts Payable check numbers 12936 through 12940 dated 8/31/2026, in the amount of \$5,957.91.

14 Accounts Payable check numbers 12941 through 12944 dated 9/1/2026, in the amount of \$100,576.84 for the
15 September 3rd bi-weekly payroll deposits and an advance payroll deposit of \$44,000 for the September 17th
16 payroll.

17 Bi-weekly payroll check numbers 4303 through 4307, and direct deposit check numbers E03499 through
18 E03532 dated 9/3/2026 for a net payroll of \$43,749.40.

19 Accounts Payable check numbers 12945 through 12955 dated 9/1/2026, in the amount of \$56,981.11.

20 Accounts Payable check numbers 12956 through 12958 dated 9/3/2026, in the amount of \$3,580.40.

21 Accounts Payable check numbers 12959 through 12960 dated 9/17/2026, in the amount of \$12,387.98 for the
22 September 17th bi-weekly payroll deposits.

23 Bi-weekly payroll check numbers 4309 through 4311, and direct deposit check numbers E03533 through
24 E03561 dated 9/17/2026 for a net payroll of \$41,463.61.

25 Accounts Payable check numbers 12961 through 13010 dated 9/23/2026, in the amount of \$204,020.71.

26 Accounts Payable check numbers 13011 through 13013 dated 9/24/2026, in the amount of \$3,111.03

27 **Alfred Hanson made a motion seconded by to approve the Manifest for September 29, 2026 as read.**
28 **Roll Call Vote Bixby YES Hanson YES Smith ABSTAIN**

29

30 **VII. Minutes: September 15, 2026**

31 **Alfred Hanson made a motion seconded by Rick Bixby to approve the September 15, 2026 Select Board**
32 **meeting as presented. Roll Call Vote Bixby YES Hanson YES Smith ABSTAIN**

33

34 **VIII. Non- Public Session** if needed (RSA 91-A:3 II (a-m))

35 None

36

37 **IX. Adjournment**

38 **Rick Bixby made a motion seconded by Mike Smith to adjourn the Select Board meeting. Roll Call**
39 **Vote Smith YES Bixby YES Hanson YES**

40

41 The meeting adjourned at 7:55 PM

42 Respectfully submitted on 10/2/26 by Tracy Doherty

43 Edits, Judith Newman-Rogers, Select Board Admin Asst.