



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: Harry Seidel, Chairman
Alfred Hanson, Vice Chair
Michael J. Smith
Kathleen Frenette, Town Administrator

Select Board Public Meeting Minutes December 15, 2025 9:30 AM

I. Open the Public Meeting / Roll Call / Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Harry Seidel called the meeting to order at 9:32 AM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Select Board present: Chairman Harry Seidel, Vice Chair Alfred Hanson and Mike J. Smith via Zoom.

Public Present: Judy Newman-Rogers, Police Chief Bill Chandler, Michele Courser, Ginger Marsh, Ed Mical, Martha Mical, Tammy Hill.

II. Select Board Business

1. Department Heads:

a. Personnel Policy Updates

Michele Courser explained that the previous edits have been made to the document.

Michele Courser stated that on page 8 under the Holidays there are eleven paid holidays. She explained that Juneteenth was added. She noted that the asterisks note Indigenous Peoples Day for the Highway staff, the day after Thanksgiving for Town Hall and Easter for the Transfer Station.

Vacation pages 10 and 11: Michele Courser reviewed the accrual of vacation and sick time changes.

Compensation time: Bill Chandler explained the adjustment to the compensation time policy. He stated that the change allows supervisors to approve the use of comp time and that is to be used within the same calendar year.

Bill Chandler explained that at this point the updated policy is before the Select Board to review and approve in hopes that it would be effective January 1, 2026.

Harry Seidel made a motion seconded by Mike Smith to accept and adopt the proposed personnel policy to be effective January 1, 2026. Roll Call Vote Hanson YES Smith YES Seidel YES

Discussion on the motion: Harry Seidel thanked Bill Chandler and Michele Courser for their hard work.

b. Town Clerk, Process Update for State Funds

Michele Courser explained that the State is changing the bank from Sugar River to Citizens Bank for State funds to be deposited. She explained that the funds are deposited every day. Michele Courser explained that the funds would still be deposited into Sugar River Bank and then by an ACH transfer the funds would be deposited into Citizens Bank daily. Michele Courser explained that the State requires the transfer to be made by the Finance Director. She informed the Select Board that she contacted the town auditor to discuss that the Town does not have a backup finance employee to handle the transfer if Clyde Carson, Finance Director, is out. She explained that the auditor advised her that when she sends the transfer email she indicate that the Finance Director is out. Michele Courser explained that every day the amount changes. She stated that she was told that in other Towns the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk makes the transfer. She stated that she was concerned that would be considered a conflict but she was advised that would not be a conflict. Michele Courser believes that it would be easier if she or her deputy took care of the transaction.

1 Harry Seidel asked Ginger Marsh Town Treasurer for her thoughts. Ginger Marsh stated that she believes
2 the transfer should be done by the Finance Director but she understands that the Town does not have a back-
3 up finance employee. Ginger Marsh stated that she needs a letter from the Town requesting the Town Clerk
4 and Deputy Town Clerk to initiate ACH transfers from the Town Clerk account to the Citizens Bank State
5 account.

6
7 **Mike Smith made a motion seconded by Alfred Hanson to authorize the Town Treasurer /**
8 **Administrator of Cash Management Accounts to set up the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk to**
9 **initiate ACH transfers from the Town Clerk's Sugar River Account to the State's Citizen Bank**
10 **account. Roll Call Vote Hanson YES Seidel YES Smith YES**

11
12 *Discussion on the motion:* Judy Newman-Rogers suggested a slight modification to the language,
13 Mike Smith agreed to the modification.

14
15 **2. Applications – Director of Public Works**

16 Harry Seidel explained that there are two applications for the position, both are currently employed in the
17 Highway Department. Mike Smith stated that he has not received the Select Board packet for this meeting
18 and he is not informed as to who the applicants are. Judy Newman-Rogers stated that both applications came
19 in this morning prior to the meeting and she is emailing them to Mike Smith now. Mike Smith reiterated that
20 packets need to be emailed because he is not coming into the Town Hall building. Harry Seidel stated that
21 the meeting packet is in Mike Smith's mail box. Harry Seidel questioned why Mike Smith is not coming into
22 the building because there is nothing barring him from coming in. Mike Smith disputed that and stated he
23 would be happy to go into the reasons why. Mike Smith stated that receiving the applications during the
24 meeting is absurd. Judy Newman-Rogers clarified that the applications came in this morning. She stated that
25 she scanned the applications and emailed to Mike Smith and she distributed them to Harry and Alfred at the
26 start of the meeting. Harry Seidel explained that the Select Board needs to schedule a non-public meeting to
27 review and discuss the applications. Alfred Hanson stated that when Mike Smith has reviewed the
28 applications he can contact them (Harry & Alfred) to schedule the non-public. Mike Smith agreed. Mike
29 Smith asked if there was a meeting on Friday. Harry Seidel explained that on Friday he attended a meeting
30 with partial representation from Webster and Hopkinton to discuss the ambulance situation. Harry Seidel
31 stated that he sent the meeting information to Mike Smith.

32
33 **3. Avitar Contract**

34 Harry Seidel asked if Mike Smith reviewed the Avitar contract that was sent to him previously. Mike Smith
35 stated that he has not received it. Harry Seidel explained that the contract projects forward over the next five
36 years and it has a cost for 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029 and 2030 of \$32,172 per year. Harry Seidel explained that
37 at the end of the contract (2030) there is an additional amount due of \$85,536 totaling \$246,396 which is the
38 cost of the revol. Harry Seidel explained that the Town would typically start with the total cost of the
39 revaluation, then include 1/5th of the total in each year as requested in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)
40 for budget planning.

41 Harry Seidel explained that he contacted NHMA because the Select Board is not able to sign a five-year
42 contract. He informed the Select Board that NHMA does not view this as a five-year contract where the
43 town gives a lump sum for five years but it is a one-year contract that locks in a price for the next five years,
44 there is an annual payment for each of the 5-years and included is a provision that allows either party to
45 terminate the agreement in writing by giving 30-days notice.

46
47 Harry Seidel stated that he would like the Select Board to act on this and he stated that he is unsure if Mike
48 Smith has reviewed the contract. Judy Newman-Rogers was acknowledged by the Chair. Judy Newman-
49 Rogers stated that this was originally addressed at the November 4th meeting and was posted on-line as well.

1 Judy Newman-Rogers emailed a copy to Mike Smith. Mike Smith acknowledged he has received the email
2 but he had not reviewed it prior. Mike Smith stated that he is hesitant to sign something for 5 years. Harry
3 Seidel understands the reluctance that Mike Smith expressed. Harry Seidel stated that he is disappointed that
4 Mike Smith has not reviewed the contact that he has had since November 4th. Harry Seidel reiterated that he
5 would like to move forward with this. Mike Smith acknowledged that the contract was posted on-line but he
6 did not *receive* it.

7
8 Alfred Hanson asked what legal counsel has advised to do regarding the language noting a 5-year contract.
9 Harry Seidel explained that legal counsel views this as a one-year contract that is linked to four other years
10 because the Town is not paying a lump sum for a 5-year contract. He noted that it is paid one year at a time
11 with the continuing agreement that it can be terminated in writing with a 30-day notice by either party.
12 Harry Seidel stressed that this agreement with a fixed annual payment enables the Town to reduce the current
13 planned CIP annual payments from \$52,000. Alfred Hanson stated that the fixed annual payment of \$32,172
14 would be included in the operating budget. Alfred Hanson also stated that he was accepting of legal's
15 explanation.

16
17 **Alfred Hanson made a motion seconded Harry Seidel to accept the contract with Avitar Associates of
18 New England for 5 years.**

19 **Roll Call Vote Hanson YES Seidel YES Smith NO**

20
21 *Discussion on the motion:* Mike Smith reiterated that the Select Board cannot sign a 5-year contract.
22 He stated that he likes Loren, Avitar Assessor, but with all the problems over the past year, he is hesitant to
23 sign this. Harry Seidel stated that the previous Select Board signed a five-year contract with Sansoucy to
24 defend the utilities. Alfred Hanson explained that legal counsel is behind the agreement. Mike Smith
25 expressed frustration to the intense pushback with similar issues he has presented. He stated that the Board
26 voted to put out a Request for Proposal (RFP) for assessing to see what else is out there and now he learns
27 the Board changed the decision between meetings and he was not notified of the change. Alfred Hanson
28 explained that if the town moved to a new assessing company the Town would need to pay to have the new
29 company do another reval for \$250,000 similar to what Avitar did when they started with Warner and the
30 Town would be starting over. Mike Smith reiterated that he is frustrated with the board making a decision
31 and not following through.

32
33 Ed Mical noted that there is an added cost for any appeal defense of \$200 per hour. Harry Seidel disagreed
34 with Mike Smith that the Board voted to put out an RFP. Harry Seidel stated he did not believe he would
35 have voted for that because he is not in favor of that. Harry Seidel explained that the assessor through the
36 reval process brought Warner's property values up to market value pursuant to state law. He noted that it is
37 occurring in communities throughout the state. He explained that a new assessor would follow the same
38 process and it would be at a significant cost to the town.

39
40 Judy Newman-Rogers was recognized by the Chair. Judy Newman-Rogers read an excerpt from the draft
41 minutes from a previous Select Board meeting regarding the motion for an RFP. *"Mike Smith made a motion
42 to put the assessing services out for an RFP. No second was made. Alfred Hanson made a motion seconded
43 by Harry Seidel to table the Avitar contract for further discussion. Roll Call Vote Hanson YES Seidel YES
44 Smith NO"*

45
46 Martha Mical explained that precedent has been to stay with the Assessor for the next four years until the
47 next required reval. She stated that an RFP can be done at that time. She cautioned that continuity is
48 important to the process.

49
50 Mike Smith reiterated that he did not receive the contract or the meeting packet.

1 **4. Cell Tower at Transfer Station, Draft Option**

2 The Select Board discussed a letter received from Sam Tweedale the representative for Verizon addressing
3 the Select Board's request for the installation of repeaters at no cost to the Town and the possibility of
4 additional wireless carriers to utilize the tower. The letter asks the Select Board to provide the repeater
5 specifications (dimensions and weight). Alfred Hanson and Harry Seidel stated that the letter does not state
6 that the repeaters would be installed at no cost to the Town. Harry Seidel asked Ed Mical if he has
7 knowledge regarding who would assist the Town with the repeater specifications and what is needed for 911.
8 Ed Mical stated that he could contact the Police Chief and Fire Chief. Alfred Hanson noted that the tower is
9 not owned by Verizon, it is owned by another company who leases it to Verizon.

10 Select Board Questions: who owns the tower, who pays for the repeaters and has the initial offer been revised

11 Bill Chandler was recognized by the Chair. Bill Chandler suspected that individual carries would request the
12 repeaters to be installed. He stated that the Sheriff department is the dispatcher for Warner and should be
13 involved. Bill Chandler offered to contact the Sheriff's office. Mike Smith explained that the repeater
14 should be available to the Department of Public Works. Martha Mical asked if the repeater is necessary if
15 Warner is on the repeater on the Mt. Kearsarge Tower. Harry Seidel explained that service in the proposed
16 tower location is very poor. Bill Chandler agreed and spoke about the west side of Warner where service is
17 poor.

18 Ed Mical asked about the proposed height of the tower. Alfred Hanson explained that will be determined
19 when they conduct their study.

20 **5 Rules of Procedure, Updates**

21 Tabled

22 **6. Perambulation**

23 Harry Seidel explained that Henniker is still working with Hopkinton and nothing new has developed.

24 **III. Public Comment** None

25 **IV. Consent Agenda** None

26 **V. Manifest**

27 Motion for the Select Board to approve the following previously signed manifests:
28 Accounts Payable check numbers 12055 through 12065 dated 12/11/2025, in the amount of \$1,611,705.00
29 which includes funding the warrants from taxation approved at the March 2025 Town Meeting and the
30 Merrimack County annual tax apportionment.

31 **Alfred Hanson made a motion seconded by Harry Seidel to accept the manifest motion as read. Roll**
32 **Call Vote Hanson YES Seidel YES Smith NO**

33 *Discussion on the motion:* Harry Seidel acknowledged that this is a lot of money. He explained that
34 this funds everything that was approved at Town Meeting.

35 Harry Seidel called a five minute recess at 10:54 AM

36 **VI. Minutes** None

1 **VII. Select Board Other Business**

2 Harry Seidel recapped the meeting he attended regarding the ambulance situation. He stated that Mr. John
3 Clark from Webster (former police officer and current Webster Selectman) along with Webster's assistant
4 Town Administrator Russell Tatro and himself met with two Hopkinton Selectmen and the Hopkinton Town
5 Administrator. Harry Seidel explained that he presented Warner's position. He provided copies to this
6 Board of a summary of the discussions. Harry Seidel stated that he offered a proposal to see how it would be
7 received. Harry Seidel explained that the proposal is not something that the Warner Select Board has
8 discussed at length. He wanted to confirm that for practical and economic reasons keeping the alliance
9 together really is the best thing for all three towns. Harry Seidel stated that Warner learned September 24,
10 2025 that the appropriation of \$89,000 was not enough and the new amount is \$241,000 an increase of 170%
11 from what Warner was told. Harry Seidel spoke about the trending calculations used to determine Warner's
12 share. He stated that Warner has not been included in determining the calculations. He stated that a new
13 contract is needed and trust needs to be re-established.

14

15 Harry Seidel stated that Webster does not have a contract and fortunately Warner does for 2025. Harry Seidel
16 stated that it is uncertain if the \$152,000 increase for 2026 given the current conditions in Warner can be
17 done. Harry Seidel spoke about the possibility of splitting the \$152,000 in half and adding \$76,000 to the
18 previous amount of \$89,000 bringing Warner's 2025 contribution to \$165,000. He explained that for 2026
19 \$165,000 would be a transitional amount and then in 2027 Warner would be a full partner at \$241,000.

20

21 Alfred Hanson stated that he would like to review the formula that Hopkinton used to determine Warner's
22 share. He would like more explanation on how the formula was established. Alfred Hanson would like to
23 review that information before making an offer.

24

25 Harry Seidel stated that Jeff Donahue made the statement at the meeting that Warner has been taking
26 advantage of Hopkinton for the last 10 years relating to the actual cost of ambulance services. Harry Seidel
27 asserted that Warner has always paid the amount that Hopkinton billed. Harry Seidel informed the Board
28 that Jeff Donahue also stated that someone may stand up at Hopkinton town meeting and say that Warner is
29 not paying their share and remove Warner from the alliance. Harry Seidel explained that he was surprised
30 that a Selectmen would say that because that would eliminate Warner's contribution entirely which would
31 increase the cost to Hopkinton and Webster.

32

33 Harry Seidel questioned how Warner can protect itself because there is not another viable options for
34 ambulance services. Henniker was not receptive and New London already services 7 other towns.

35

36 Martha Mical stated that Warner residents used to be responsible for their ambulance cost. She explained that
37 was how it was done prior to the 2011 ambulance agreement with Hopkinton.

38

39 Tammy Hill encouraged the Select Board to carefully consider how any change from the current agreement
40 may impact the Town.

41

42 The Select Board discussed future protections for Warner that need to be included in the contract. Alfred
43 Hanson stressed that he does not want to lose the service. Mike Smith stated that he would like to look into
44 the legality of the Town billing residents for the cost of ambulance services. He stated that he looked into it
45 in the past and found conflicting answers. He inquired if there is the possibility that an outside service could
46 bill for ambulance services. Harry Seidel asked for Mike Smith's position regarding the 2026 ambulance cost
47 increase. Mike Smith stated that there is a contract in place for 2025. Alfred Hanson reiterated that he wants
48 to hear from Hopkinton on the reason for the large increase. He stated that Warner abided by the agreement
49 and if a mistake was made for the last 10 years that is not the fault of Warner. Judy Newman-Rogers stated

1 that goes to the issue of trust. She stated that she feels it is Hopkinton's responsibility to justify the
2 difference.

3
4 Harry Seidel explained that Hopkinton points to lack of Medicare reimbursement, the state involvement and
5 the increase in costs. Alfred Hanson reiterated that he is not ready to agree to anything before the meeting
6 tomorrow with Hopkinton and Webster. Harry Seidel stated that ambulance services are struggling statewide
7 due to the cost of services. Harry Seidel stated that Mike Smith is skilled in negotiations and he asked if
8 Mike Smith will attend the meeting tomorrow. Mike Smith said he is going to try but if not in person he will
9 Zoom in. He would like Warner to investigate billing Warner residents for their costs to save the Town
10 money.

11
12 Harry Seidel spoke about how Warner got here. He explained that Hopkinton had not been quantifying the
13 cost until the town administrator from Bradford went to Hopkinton and that she previously worked closely
14 with Henniker on their ambulance service. Harry Seidel stated that when she went to Hopkinton she brought
15 the quantifying calculations to Hopkinton and now Warner's cost has substantially increased.

16
17 The Select Board discussed the landfill agreement between Warner and Hopkinton. Harry Seidel stated that
18 he learned during the meeting last Friday that due to the significant rains earlier this year a crack occurred
19 and the cost to repair it is \$800,000. Judy Newman-Rogers explained that a contract between Hopkinton and
20 Warner relating to the landfill has never been found despite asking Hopkinton for a copy over these past
21 years. Alfred Hanson suspects that Warner still has a responsibility. Ed Mical was under the impression that
22 Warner was only responsible for the monitoring of the wells. Tammy Hill encouraged the Select Board to do
23 their due diligence because there are federal and state environmental regulations.

24
25 **VIII. Non-Public Session if needed (RSA 91-A:3 II (a,b,c,d,e,f,g,h,i,j,k,l,m)) None**

26
27 **IX. Adjournment**

28 **Alfred Hanson made a motion seconded by Harry Seidel to adjourn the meeting. Roll Call Vote**
29 **Hanson YES Seidel YES Smith YES**

30
31 The meeting adjourned at 11:42 AM

32 Respectfully submitted on 12/17/25 by Tracy Doherty
33 Edits, Judith Newman-Rogers Select Board Admin Asst