

**TOWN OF WARWICK**  
**In Person & Virtual Meeting of the Warwick Selectboard**  
**Warwick Community School**  
**March 13, 2023**  
**6:00 p.m.**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Selectboard Members Present:** Brian Snell, Chairman; Alan Genovese, Vice-Chairman; Keith Ross, Clerk

**Others Present:** David Young, Town Coordinator; Amanda Carey, Selectboard Secretary; Larry Delaney, Highway Superintendent; Bruce Kilhart, Todd Dexter

**Present via Zoom:** Diana Noble, Finance Committee Chair; Carole Learned-Miller, Founding Superintendent; Susan Hollins, Education Consultant; Jess Marshall, WCS Administrative Assistant; Jo Comerford, State Senator – Hampshire, Franklin, Worcester District

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Brian Snell called the meeting to order at 6:04p.m.

**II. APPEARANCES**

**a. Senator Jo Comerford**

Senator Comerford came before the Board to hear what the Board feels the Town of Warwick's priority needs are. Ross reports on the Fire Department's needs and states that because we are a smaller community, we are not eligible for a lot of available grants. A majority of the fire department's equipment is very old. Ross suggests that Senator Comerford research the development of a process for smaller towns to purchase equipment directly from bigger communities to make the procurement of used equipment a little easier. Senator Comerford plans to appoint a director of rural policy and hopes to become much more responsive to rural communities but it will take some time. Young has a list of Town needs/priorities to present. He thanks Senator Comerford for all of her support in various things. Young presents the issue of taking in a school-choice child and being responsible for their tuition costs when they go on to middle school and high school. The Town hopes that this issue can be looked at legislatively because sending the school-choice children off to middle school and high school at our expense is not realistic. Other issues Young brings to Senator Comerford's attention include retiree health insurance, pension for non-teachers and reimbursement for school bus transportation routes. DESE has stated that they will not fund transportation reimbursement because we are not a regionalized district. Snell points out that rural support as a whole versus regionalization is an issue. Hollins and Miller will send Senator Comerford our top four school priorities. Ross would like to encourage legislation to not put a pause on state

management of forest lands. Ross feels that it is a necessity to have solid and sustainable forest management because proper forest management leads to a healthy forest and a large majority of Warwick is forest land. The Board is drafting a letter to send in regards to this matter. Young reports that we have identified browns field sites and that there are probably other sites in town that also have this issue. Senator Comerford requests more information be provided to her regarding the things that have been uncovered in the Town. Snell will send Senator Comerford a “catch up” on our capital planning needs.

### **III. MINUTES**

**Genovese MOVED to approve the minutes of the February 13, 2023 and February 27, 2023 meetings as presented. Ross SECONDED. Motion CARRIED. 3-0-0.**

### **IV. APPEARANCES**

#### **a. Carole Learned-Miller – report from founding superintendent**

Miller reports that Mel Shamot, a new Pro Tem member, is putting out weekly newsletters with updates about the school. The newsletters are currently registering 250 views per week. They have arranged enrollment and screening activities for the following weekend. The consultant teachers will be available for families to sign up and meet with them to have a school tour.

#### **b. Susan Hollins**

Hollins has been working to get the school district set up and functional for when we have our election. She has been working with technology and finance representatives. They have meeting scheduled with the accounting firm. Schools require a lot more reports and data than regular municipal departments. They are clarifying how the Vadar program must be adjusted so that the school reports can be provided. Liz Gilman requests the Town to consider asking for two separate utility bills so it's easier to prepare the year end report. The next set of policies that need to be in place are the financial policies, there are about 18 of them.

### **V. ACTIONS**

#### **a. Approve snow and ice deficit spending**

**Ross MOVED to approve snow and ice deficit spending for FY23. Genovese SECONDED. Motion CARRIED. 3-0-0.**

#### **b. ARPA funds**

Young suggests using ARPA funds for the following: \$742.50 to landfill monitoring for an overspent account, \$4,000 to the police department for cruiser replacement, and \$4,000 to the fire department for a well pump replacement.

Dexter asks what the balance of the ARPA funds is currently at. Young explains that we have expended around \$70,000 and the total amount is awarded was about \$230,000.

Dexter brings up that it has previously been discussed about using ARPA funds to purchase needed equipment specifically for the Highway Department. Ross will follow up on this with the Highway Commission at their next meeting.

**Genovese MOVED to appropriate \$742.50 of ARPA funds for landfill monitoring, \$4,000 of ARPA funds for police department cruiser replacement, and \$4,000 of ARPA funds for well pump replacement at the fire department. Ross SECONDED. Motion CARRIED. 3-0-0.**

- c. Vote on additional 2% COLA for our employees for Franklin County Retirement**

**Snell MOVED to approve an additional 2% COLA for our employees from Franklin County Retirement. Ross SECONDED. Motion CARRIED. 3-0-0.**

- d. Surplus property declarations**

Young requests that a refrigerator and a freezer be declared surplus property.

**Genovese MOVED to declare the WCS refrigerator and freezer as surplus property. Snell SECONDED. Motion CARRIED. 3-0-0.**

- e. Opioid settlements**

This item will be discussed at the next meeting.

## **VI. DISCUSSIONS AND REPORTS**

- a. Selectboard Reports**

Genovese reports that the Six Town Planning Board recently held a field trip for Pioneer students to visit Gill-Montague or Turners Falls and report on their thoughts regarding the possibility of the two districts merging.

Ross recently met with the Fire Chief. He provided a report that Chief Larson put together identifying their concerns. Their trucks are 34 years old and are not made to handle the equipment they need when they go out for fires. Chief Larson also would like to get a plan together to finish the fire station. They discussed the need for a command vehicle for the Fire Chief. This would be a vehicle that they can put four or five different radios in to be able to communicate with other mutual aid towns. The Fire Chief's salary is \$5,200 per year, he is asking to have that increased. Snell will send Chief Larson's report to the Finance Committee.

- b. Coordinator Report**

Young had nothing to add to his report dated March 9, 2023.

**VII. CITIZEN'S CONCERNS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE AGENDA**

Todd Dexter requests that a Capital Plan be a future priority. There is money that has been put aside for the past few years for capital funding. Dexter points out that a lot of the highway equipment is very old. Genovese asks Delaney to compile a report of what equipment they need and what they currently have.

**Ross MOVED to go into Executive Session to hear a complaint against an employee as the Chair determined in interest of the Town and employee, and to convene into open session only to adjourn. Snell SECONDED. Motion CARRIED. 3-0-0.**

The Board returned to open session at 7:46 p.m.

**Genovese MOVED to adjourn at 7:47 p.m. Ross SECONDED. Motion CARRIED. 3-0-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Carey  
Selectboard Secretary

*Documents consulted at this meeting:*

- \*Meeting agenda dated March 13, 2023
- \*Coordinator Report dated March 9, 2023
- \*Draft Selectboard meeting minutes February 13, 2023
- \*Draft Selectboard meeting minutes February 27, 2023
- \*Policy Section D Budget policies 1.17.2023 SH
- \*Snow and Ice Deficit Spending Letter FY23
- \*FY24 Chapter 90 award Warwick
- \*FY24 Local Aid
- \*WPD Req Trans Res Fund
- \*2 percent cola Franklin retirement