

TOWN OF WARWICK
In Person & Virtual Meeting of the Warwick Selectboard
Warwick Community School
December 4, 2023
6:00 p.m.
MEETING MINUTES

Selectboard Members Present: Alan Genovese, Chair; Brian Snell, Clerk

Selectboard Members Absent: Keith Ross, Vice-Chair

Others Present: David Young, Town Coordinator; Amanda Carey, Selectboard Secretary; Kevin Alden, Highway Commission; Bruce Kilhart, Highway Commission; Todd Dexter, Highway Commission; Sharon Matthews, Tree Warden; Janice Starmer, School Committee; Clyde Perkins Sr., Finance Committee; Dawn Magi

Present via Zoom: Diana Noble, Finance Committee Chair; Laurette Crane, Finance Committee; Tracy Styles, Assessor's Board Clerk

I. CALL TO ORDER

Alan Genovese called the meeting to order at 6:05p.m.

II. APPEARANCES

a. Highway Commission

Due to a quorum present, Kevin Alden called the Highway Commission meeting to order at 6:06p.m.

The Highway Superintendent job description has been reviewed and edits have been made at the recent screening committee meeting. The Highway Commission made a recommendation to approve the updated job description.

Snell MOVED to accept the updated Highway Superintendent job description. Genovese SECONDED. Motion CARRIED. 2-0-0.

Young reported a recent issue with the salt to sand ratio used to treat the roads. The Highway Department has lost a lot of their institutional knowledge with staff changes. Young wants to make sure that the current employees know what the ratio is supposed to be. Currently, we are down to one sander because one broke last year and was not repaired. Young has been looking on the state bid and the used market to purchase another one. He will pass any potential leads on to the Highway Commission to decide what they want to purchase.

Young presented a guardrail contract that was recommended by the Highway Commission. The Highway Department previously received grant funding for this project. The grant deadline is June 30, 2024.

Snell MOVED to approve and sign the guardrail contract with Premier Fence for the amount of \$651,938. Genovese SECONDED. Motion CARRIED. 2-0-0.

Alan discussed his recent research on what the thresholds are to qualify as an exempt employee. In order to be considered an exempt employee, the employee must earn a salary of about \$35,000 per year or more, manage at least two employees, must retain administrative/professional relationships and make decisions on their own, and they must participate in the hiring and firing of employees. Being an exempt employee means that the Selectboard establishes the parameters for compensation. Genovese discussed the different options for compensation. Some options were an annual salary with X amount of hours per week, if those hours are exceeded the employee could make overtime or could accrue comp time, or the employee could just have a base salary with no overtime or comp time allowed.

Young suggested offering some flexibility in order to hire someone and keep them in the position. The Board agrees.

Genovese offered to do the interview at a regularly scheduled meeting to speed things along if the candidate does not mind an open meeting/public interview. Kevin Alden will reach out to the candidate to see if they are willing to do a public interview and if they can set it up for the end of this week.

The Highway Commission adjourned their meeting at 6:48p.m.

b. Tree Warden – report on Winchester Road / “Gulf” needed tree work in vicinity of road, edge and guardrail replacement

Sharon Matthews had loggers lined up to take down the hazard trees in the gulf but she has backed out of leading this project. Her hope was to have the hazard trees removed before winter and then put together a long term plan for the spring. This issue needs to be addressed before installing new guardrails.

Snell will coordinate a joint meeting with the Highway Commission, Selectboard, Tree Warden, Conservation Commission, and Town Forest Committee to figure out a plan for this. Genovese suggests making sure there is a solid agenda ready for the meeting so all the different factors and issues can be addressed and a plan can be put in place for it all.

III. ETHINGS EXEMPTIONS AND DISCLOSURES IF ANY

Janice Starmer is an elected School Committee member. She is seeking an exemption under Chapter 268a, Section 20d so she can be paid as a substitute teacher here at the school. As a member of the School Committee she will have to abstain from any School Committee conversations regarding substitutes.

Snell MOVED to grant Janice Starmer an exemption under Chapter 268a, Section 20d to be a paid as a substitute teacher while also being a member of the School Committee. Genovese SECONDED. Motion CARRIED. 2-0-0.

IV. SPECIAL TOWN MEETING (December 11, 2023) WARRANT REVIEW

Due to a quorum present, Diana Noble called the Finance Committee meeting to order at 7:04p.m.

Article 1: The vote would be to fund a new hybrid police cruiser with stabilization, instead of the vote that was passed at a previous town meeting to fund it through borrowing. The amount to be funded through stabilization will be about \$68,000. If not all of the \$68,000 is expended, the remaining funds will go back into stabilization. The Finance Committee supports this.

Article 2: This article is only necessary if article 1 passes.

Article 3: It is suggested to add the dollar amount in parentheses on the explanation sheet.

Article 4: No discussion.

Article 5: Young explained the benefit of moving the certified free cash to stabilization now rather than at the next Annual Town Meeting is that the funding will gain interest being in stabilization. The Finance Committee supports this.

Articles 6 and 7: Young explained that new regulations have come out as to what you can buy for a school bus. Genovese would like to have an up-to-date balance of our stabilization account to present at the STM. Noble stated that the motion might need to be amended on town meeting floor to take out the "SUV". Noble explained that the school needs something that will seat between six and eight passengers. She is not sure if there is anything available for an electric vehicle at that size. The State does provide exemptions if there is nothing else available. We need to have this school bus/vehicle by next fall. Noble suggested approaching it like we did with the police cruiser (authorized borrowing) in order to have funding approved to enter into a purchase agreement. This would allow us to shop around and find what we want. Noble will have an idea of how much this will cost before the meeting.

Article 8: This article is asking for the Town's permission to enter a five year bussing contract.

Article 9: This article was recommended by the Planning Board and requested by the land owner.

Article 10: This article is to request authorization to pay prior year bills. It is not requesting funding, just permission to pay the invoices.

Article 11: No discussion.

Article 12: No discussion.

Article 13: Snell will recuse himself from any discussion and vote for this article.

Genovese suggested the Finance Committee report on what funding is available in stabilization and why they are recommending what they are.

The Finance Committee adjourned their meeting at 7:52p.m.

V. MINUTES – none

VI. CITIZEN’S CONCERNS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Dawn Magi asked how the new employee time clocks project is moving along. Young explained that we have moved to a portal instead of paper timesheets. He will follow up with Treasurer on this.

VII. DISCUSSIONS AND REPORTS

a. Selectboard Reports

Genovese will be sending something out to all of the Boards representing the six towns to ask how they want to provide feedback to the Six Town Regional Planning Board. It was brought to his attention that the meeting should have highlighted educational benefits so he will put something together highlighting that and send it out to everyone.

Snell MOVED to adjourn at 8:09p.m. Genovese SECONDED. Motion CARRIED. 2-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Carey
Selectboard Secretary

Documents consulted at this meeting:

*Meeting agenda dated December 4, 2023

*Coordinator Report dated November 30, 2023

*DRAFT Special Town Meeting Warrant FY24_December 2023 v2

*DRAFT Special Town Meeting Explanations

*Warwick Highway Job Description 11.21.2023

*Copy of Warwick PD Hybrid Patrol v2 111822