

TOWN OF WARWICK
In Person & Virtual Meeting of the Warwick Selectboard
Warwick Community School
January 29, 2024
6:00 p.m.
MEETING MINUTES

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

Selectboard Members Present via Zoom: Keith Ross, Vice-Chair

Others Present: David Young, Town Coordinator; Amanda Carey, Selectboard Secretary; Sharon Matthews, Tree Warden; Bruce Kilhart, Highway Commission; Tracy Styles, Highway & Assessor Clerk; George Day

Present via Zoom: Christine During, Conservation Commission; Diana Noble, Finance Committee Chair; Mike Mauri, Licensed Forester; Zac Marti, Claudia Lewis

I. CALL TO ORDER

Alan Genovese called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

II. APPEARANCES

George Day provided an update on the water at the fountain at the library. Originally, the fountain was fed with led pipe and the overflow went to Fire Department. When that piping deteriorated, it was decided to put a new spring up on the mountain with 1.5 inch plastic pipe. This work was done in 1984. A cement well was put up there. A shut off was put in 60 feet down the mountain. Recently, that shut off broke. Don Matthews dug it up and replaced it with stainless steel and bronze couplings. The shut off is in the well house now. When they turned the water back on, they turned it on full pressure and it blew another coupling in front of the Library. Matthews came the next morning and fixed that. While the water was shut off at the spring, they put in a new stainless steel and bronze piece under the fountain where plastic couplings used to be. Going forward any repairs should be made with bronze and stainless steel. George thanks Mike Mankowsky, Don Matthews, and his crew for helping out with this unforeseen project.

The Board requested the Town Coordinator to draft and send a letter of appreciation to Don Matthews and his crew, Mike Mankowsky, and George Day for the work they did on the spring fed water system.

III. DISCUSSIONS AND REPORTS

a. “Gulf” tree cutting

Ross informed the Board that bids have been put out for the tree work in the gulf. Chief Shoemaker recommended that we close down the road and do a detour around it so the work can be completed faster.

Licensed Forester, Mike Mauri came before the Board to discuss the project. Mauri explained that it is going to be a challenging project. A plan needs to be made. The eminently dangerous trees need to be addressed first. The State is moving along rapidly with their side of the project. The tree work needs to be completed prior to the guardrail replacement project. Currently, they are waiting on parts for guardrail project. The next steps to move forward with the project will be to meet on site, make a plan and mark trees. Anything over \$50,000 will have to go out to bid. Young explained that we could put out a bid for qualifications rather than price. The plan is to fund the roadside hazard tree removal in the gulf with funds received from the storm damage. The necessary permitting from the Conservation Commission will only be good for 30 days once granted, so that process needs to be timed correctly with the project. The Conservation Commission only needs a couple of sentences from the Selectboard stating that there is a public safety emergency in order to start the permit process. Ross will send an email to the State representative, Eric Reynolds, to provide them with an update of what was discussed tonight in an effort to put us on the same timeline as them. A Notice of Intent will have to be submitted to the Conservation Commission for the guardrail project. Ross confirmed that the hired company for the guardrail project will be the ones to file the Notice of Intent.

Ross MOVED to sign and award the contract with Michael Mauri, MA Licensed Forester for a timber harvest at the Allen Lot and Roadside hazard tree removal, to be paid out of funds to be determined at a future point. Snell SECONDED. Motion CARRIED. 3-0-0. Passed by roll call vote.

Mauri explained that the trees will be taken down and moved down the slope with a crane and then chipped. They will leave the branches there on the slope. The Conservation Commission agrees with this approach as that will be good to act as a barrier to the erosion.

b. Library Spruce Tree

Sharon Matthews informed the Board that she is planning to take down the double trunk spruce tree next to the Library. The tree has been declining for a while. The Library Committee has requested that it be removed and Matthews has approved the request. Matthews thought it would be nice to have something made out of it because it was a Charlie Brown tree. Charlie Brown worked hard to take care of the cemeteries for a lot of years. Matthews suggested possibly making a sign out of it for the cemetery or the beach. Snell suggested reaching out to the School Committee for stump seating that they are planning to use as well. Matthews will save the wood and figure out what it is to be used for.

c. Highway Commission updates

Bruce Kilhart reported that the Highway Commission held a meeting tonight at 5:00. In attendance at their meeting was Verne Bass, Bruce Kilhart, and Tracy

Styles. They have a contract for the next grant to pave the other half of Route 78. Young explained that we elect to participate in the FRCOG Collective Purchasing Program every year through the FRCOG Highway materials.

Snell MOVED to authorize the Selectboard Chair to sign the \$1,000,000 Winchester Road pavement project grant contract. Ross SECONDED. Motion CARRIED. 3-0-0. Passed by roll call vote.

Snell MOVED to authorize the Selectboard Chair to sign the FRCOG Collective purchasing program for highway materials contract. Ross SECONDED. Motion CARRIED. 3-0-0. Passed by roll call vote.

Kilhart reported on the 6 inch culvert on the left hand side of Barber Hill Road. The culvert is currently blocked and the Highway Commission has authorized a contract with Don Matthews to repair it. This work will probably happen in the Spring.

Kilhart expressed safety concerns for the current state of the Gail Road Bridge. Genovese stated that there should be signage installed as soon as possible stating that the bridge is closed and there is no trespassing. It is the consensus of the Selectboard for the Highway Department to put up the necessary signage as discussed.

Kilhart conveyed concerns regarding the Highway Superintendent and Laborer's hourly rates. Laborer, Mike Truehart is at \$28.00/hour as laborer and Superintendent Matthew Dorgan is at \$28.75/hour. Kilhart feels that the vote for \$28.00/hour for Truehart came from the recommendation of Kevin Alden and not the Highway Commission as a whole. He does not feel that only 75 cents more an hour is enough pay for the Superintendent. Ross requested the Highway Commission to discuss this together at their next meeting and figure out how they want to address this. Genovese pointed out that Truehart accepted this pay when it was offered and the Selectboard said they would review after six months and consider an increase. Both of the employees have different qualifications. It is the hope that they can use those qualifications to work together and make a good team. Ross understands Genovese's point but feels it is important to consider the Highway Commission's recommendation and their role. The Highway Commission should have something submitted to the Selectboard early enough for them to review and discuss at their next meeting. Genovese requested Young include the Highway Superintendent Screening Committee meeting minutes in the next meeting packet.

d. Coordinator Report highlights

Jess Marshall has been in contact with the Tech School for the pavilion roof deck so that project is set up and will be moving forward.

Young reported that about 15-20 Broadband customers have left to go to Spectrum. He expects to lose about half of Broadband's client base by June. We will need to look at Warwick Broadband policies in the future to keep up with their new competitive environment. There will need to be discussions regarding what to do with people that are leaving Broadband and have an outstanding balance and people that leave and may want to end up coming back (suspend vs. disconnect). Genovese stated that it needs to be clear that if they want to come back to Broadband, they will have to pay any past due fees before they are allowed back on. He suggested informing people ahead of time, that if they leave and want to reconnect later on there will be a charge for that.

IV. MINUTES

Snell MOVED to approve the minutes of the December 18, 2023 meeting as amended. Ross SECONDED. Motion CARRIED. 3-0-0. Passed by roll call vote.

V. ACTIONS

Snell MOVED to approve the administrative action by the Town Coordinator to execute the contract in the amount of \$6,880 with Energia for the insulation of the Fire Department upper and lower shared wall. Ross SECONDED. Motion CARRIED. 3-0-0. Passed by roll call vote.

Snell MOVED to approve the contracts with Energysource, funded by Green Communities, in the amount of \$30,588 for air source heat pumps at the school and the contract in the amount of \$13,862 for the storm window project at the school. Ross SECONDED. Motion CARRIED. 3-0-0. Passed by roll call vote.

Snell MOVED to authorize the Selectboard Chair to sign the Emergency Management Preparedness Grant in the amount of \$2,500. Ross SECONDED. Motion CARRIED. 3-0-0. Passed by roll call vote.

Snell MOVED to approve the two year contract with Mark Popham in the amount of \$4,120 for the monitoring of the closed landfill. Ross SECONDED. Motion CARRIED. 3-0-0. Passed by roll call vote.

VI. ITEMS UNANTICIPATED AT TIME OF POSTING

Young informed the Board that there will be an upcoming Building Inspector vacancy

Young and Chief Larson met recently with the MA Department of Labor. They are inspecting our bathrooms/cleanliness.

Genovese requested a thank you letter be sent to Representative Whipps for obtaining us the \$50,000 for the Fire Station.

Young suggested considering adopting a Town flag flying policy. He suggested that it state that the municipal flag poles in Warwick are for display of US flags, State flags,

and official flags of Warwick. He will review a draft of this and discuss at the next meeting.

Young reported that the elevator inspector found water in the pit. They shut the elevator off because some wires were dangling in the water. The inspector went back and trouble shot it. The ground fault circuit is perfect but the sump pump died. Young approved the elevator company to order another pump and install it.

Young reported that heating elements in the school dishwasher are not working. He got the costs reduced to about \$200 to fix it.

Young talked to the Town Accountant about including the school warrants. He has three potential candidates for a Town Accountant. He is planning to engage with a lady named Kelli to take on the School's warrants for the rest of this fiscal year. Kelli will be starting on the next warrant schedule. She would prefer to be a consultant. The School Committee has not discussed this yet, they will discuss it at their next week's meeting.

The DESE Commissioner is holding firm on not changing or interpreting the school choice to say if we accept a student under school choice in our elementary school, then we would be responsible to pay their tuition when they go on to Pioneer. It was suggested that we do a home rule petition with Senator Comerford. If the Selectboard votes to do this, we will need to send something saying that the Selectboard took a vote to support her efforts to file a home rule legislation. Snell suggests putting this on the next agenda to discuss further.

Snell MOVED to request a home rule petition or other mechanism from Senator Comerford and Representative Whipps to change the "school choice" policy mandating inclusion through graduation and alleviate the burden of paying for non-Warwick choice students that would want to continue to Jr. High. Ross SECONDED. Motion CARRIED. 3-0-0. Passed by roll call vote.

Claudia Lewis asked how there will be more communication regarding meeting postings and when minutes will be posted on the new website. This is all in the progress.

Ross left the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

Snell MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m. Genovese SECONED. Motion CARRIED. 2-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Carey
Selectboard Secretary

Documents consulted at this meeting:

- *Meeting agenda dated January 29, 2024
- *Coordinator Report dated January 11, 2024
- *Draft Selectboard meeting minutes dated December 18, 2023
- *23EMPG Warwick contract to be signed
- *Mauri and Warwick contract Allen Lot Town of Warwick 12-2023
- *PRELIM CHERRY SHEET WARWICK FY25
- *HRA explains PI
- *Coordinator Report for Feb Newsletter
- *Jan 7 Recorder Nygard Warwick 2024
- *Climate Forestry Committee Report – Final 12.28.23