

TOWN OF WARWICK
In Person Meeting of the Warwick Selectboard
Warwick Community School
March 24, 2025
6:00 p.m.
MEETING MINUTES

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

Others Present: David Young, Town Coordinator; Mike Mankowsky, Deputy Fire Chief; Justin Gale, Building Inspector; Sharon Matthews, Tree Warden; John Bradford, Planning Board Chair; Janice Kurkoski, Buildings and Energy Committee; Steve Kurkoski, Buildings and Energy Committee; Clyde Perkins Sr., Finance Committee; Matthew Dorgan, Highway Superintendent; Sue O'reilly McCrae, Tracey Kirly, Wayne Kirly, Barbara Thurston, Bruce Kilhart

Present via Zoom: Brian Gale, Building Commissioner; Donna Haskins

I. CALL TO ORDER

Keith Ross called the meeting to order at 6:03p.m.

II. APPEARANCES

a. Spectrum/Charter regarding their meeting commitments made to serve all residents

Ross has continued his efforts to get all residents served by Spectrum/Charter. He has drafted a letter to Spectrum and will be emailing it out tomorrow.

b. Justin Gale, Local Building Inspector, regarding junk car and junkyard violation

Building Commissioner Brian Gale reported that Building Inspector Justin Gale contacted him after being made aware of a potential junkyard violation on a property in Town. Commissioner Gale noted that before providing direction to Justin, he requires additional information. According to Commissioner Gale, the situation involves an accumulation of vehicles that may be in violation of the Town's zoning bylaws. He stated that the Town has been aware of the issue for approximately three to four weeks. There are currently no residents occupying the property, and the Building Inspector has not yet established contact with the property owner. Although the Selectboard has requested that Justin Gale begin

issuing citations immediately, Commissioner Gale recommended attempting to first contact the property owner to determine whether they are willing to voluntarily bring the property into compliance. He emphasized that proceeding with citations prematurely could lead to significant legal expenses should the matter escalate to court proceedings. Board Member Genovese shared that the Police Department has made contact with the property owner, who is claiming an agricultural exemption. Commissioner Gale clarified that zoning enforcement is not within the Police Department's jurisdiction and reiterated the importance of giving the owner a chance to engage with the Town before taking enforcement action. Young expressed concern about the increasing number of properties in Town with similar issues and stressed the need for prompt enforcement. Young believes the property in question is effectively operating as a junkyard, and the house is uninhabitable. He advocated for immediate issuance of citations and expressed frustration with any delay. Several residents and abutters also voiced their dissatisfaction with the condition of the property. Commissioner Gale acknowledged the community's concerns but maintained that outreach to the owner should be the first step. Chair Ross requested that both Brian and Justin Gale attempt to contact the property owner, determine if a resolution can be reached, and report back to the Selectboard at the next meeting in two weeks. Young further requested that the Town begin addressing other properties exhibiting similar violations. Commissioner Gale cautioned that such an effort would be both time-consuming and costly, particularly given that both his and Justin's positions are part-time, and they each maintain full-time employment elsewhere. He concluded by noting that zoning enforcement in Town has historically been based on the receipt of complaints.

Snell MOVED to request an official update from the Building Inspector on the junkyard property at the next meeting. Ross SECONDED. Motion CARRIED. 3-0-0.

III. ETHICS EXEMPTIONS – None

IV. MINUTES

Snell MOVED to approve the minutes of the March 10, 2025 meeting as presented. Ross SECONDED. Motion CARRIED. 3-0-0.

V. CITIZEN'S CONCERNS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Sharon Matthews, Tree Warden, informed the Board that she will be going around with National Grid flagging hazardous trees next week.

VI. DISCUSSIONS AND REPORTS

a. Coordinator Report

Young explained that the First Parish Meeting House only has three remaining trustees and they wish to turn the Meeting House over to the Town. The building is on Town land and there is no title or deed for the property. Town Council will look at this to see how the Town can acquire the First Parish Meeting House and create a restricted trust with the former church's assets to ensure that proceeds are used exclusively for Meeting House maintenance. It is something that will need to go to Town Meeting for approval.

Ross announced another item that will need to be brought to Town Meeting is the adoption of short-term rental tax. Warwick is currently the only Town in Franklin County that has not adopted this yet. The maximum is a 6% rate, and the Department of Revenue makes the collections and turns the funds over to the Town.

VII. ACTIONS

a. Authorization for SB Chair to sign DOER Green Communities Grant Contract

Snell MOVED to authorize the Chair to sign the DOER Green Communities Grant Contract. Genovese SECONDED. Motion CARRIED. 3-0-0.

b. Approve application for decarbonization roadmap assistance grant

Janice Kurkoski explained that this is a planning assistance grant in order to create a roadmap to decarbonize our municipal buildings. The grant is due on March 28th.

Snell MOVED to approve the decarbonization roadmap assistance grant. Genovese SECONDED. Motion CARRIED. 3-0-0.

c. Recommendation by Capital Planning workgroup that asks SB to rescind vote to surplus GMC firetruck and leave it registered, insured at FS with a load of water

Young indicated that he spoke with the Fire Chief in regard to keeping the 1990 GMC firetruck a little longer and keeping it stored in the fire station. It is still registered and insured. Chief Larson agreed to allow it to be stored in the fire station a little longer as long as it is not a long-term parking solution. It will be blocked in by the in-service fire truck and would require a firefighter

to access to it or move it. There is further discussion regarding Highway employees being trained to use the truck so they can utilize it to flush culverts. Deputy Chief Mankowsky indicated that Highway employees cannot drive the truck without having a tanker stamp on their license.

Genovese MOVED to rescind a previous vote that declared the 1990 GMC firetruck as surplus property and transferred it to the Highway Department. Snell SECONDED. Motion CARRIED. 3-0-0.

Snell MOVED to declare the 1990 GMC firetruck as surplus property and disposition it. Genovese SECONDED. Motion CARRIED. 3-0-0.

Ross informed the Board that Chief Larson has requested the Selectboard work with the Finance Committee to increase the Chief's salary from \$5,800 to \$10,000/year because the excessive time it takes for the job. Other surrounding towns that are comparable to Warwick pa their Fire Chiefs a lot more than Chief Larson. Chief Larson also requested a command vehicle. The Board supports his salary increase.

d. Highway Commission requests

Genovese would like to see the Highway Commission address a performance review for Matthew Dorgan at their next meeting.

Dorgan indicated there has been issues with authorization of repairs. Highway employees spend too much time in the garage doing repairs and not working on the road. He has had issues with employees not following his instructions so repair authorizations have been going through Kevin Alden. Their repair expenses have doubled this year from the previous year. Dorgan also indicated there was an issue with Kevin Alden authorizing holiday pay for other employees during their probationary period but not for Dorgan when he was on his probationary period.

Genovese will also request the Highway Commission to discuss authorization of repairs and the holiday pay issue. Ross requested the Highway Commission to attend the Selectboard's next meeting.

e. Approval of administrative actions taken – none

f. Items unanticipated at time of posting – None

The next Selectboard meeting is scheduled for June 7, 2025 and the Annual Town Meeting is May 5, 2025.

Snell MOVED to adjourn at 7:41p.m. Genovese SECONDED. Motion CARRIED. 3-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Carey
Selectboard Secretary

Documents consulted at this meeting:

*Meeting agenda dated March 24, 2025

*Coordinator Report dated March 20, 2025

*Draft Selectboard Meeting Minutes dated March 10, 2025

*Budget VS Actual General Fund Town & School – December 2024

*DOER PON-ENE-2024-015 Municipal Decarbonization Planning Assistance Grant

*Report on Short-Term Rental Tax Policy and Revenue Implications for Warwick

*SB for FY24 Town report draft 1.2