

2026-08-31 Selectboard Minutes – DRAFT

Town of Warwick Minutes of Hybrid Meeting of the Warwick Selectboard Warwick Community School Monday, August 31, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

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

Others Present: Diana Noble, Assistant to the Town Coordinator; Jill DeLisle, Finance Committee Chair; Bruce Kilhart; Dawn Magi; Nancy Kilhart; Clyde Perkins Sr., Finance Committee; John Bradford, Planning Board Chair; Steve Soucy, National Grid; Janice Starmer

Others Present via Zoom: Jessica Atwood, FRCOG; Sarah DeStefano, Joe Spencer, and Jill Ready from Weston & Sampson; Signe Friedrichs, Finance Committee

CALL TO ORDER – Genovese called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm

I. Announcements, and introductions

- A. This meeting is noticed under legacy OML so requires a quorum of the board in the room and if the remote aspect fails the meeting may continue.

II. Chapter 268 Section 20C and 20D Ethics disclosures or exemptions – none

III. Appearances, Comments, and Updates

- IV. **Wendell Rd PFAS site update** – Jessica Atwood from FRCOG and representatives from Weston & Sampson Engineering and Environmental Consulting gave an update on the town-owned property at 355 Wendell Road. Significant grant funding has gone toward assessing the site. PFAS was found in groundwater above reportable levels, and was also detected below the applicable standard in one nearby private well. Additional soil, groundwater, and bedrock-well testing is being done to determine whether the two are connected. Weston & Sampson is preparing an updated status report and looking at cleanup options, including possible assistance through EPA's emergency removal program.

V. **National Grid S. Holden Rd Pole Hearing**

- A. The Selectboard held a public hearing on a request to move a utility pole about 26 feet on South Holden Road to provide clearance for the new house at 20 South Holden Road. Discussion focused on concerns that Verizon could leave the old pole in place, causing potential safety concerns, and cited Verizon's unresponsiveness in removing poles in the Gulf. Steve Soucy of National Grid explained that they cannot control Verizon's timeline. The Board approved the pole relocation and may follow up separately with Verizon or town counsel about removal of the old pole. The pole hearing concluded at 6:53 pm.

- **MOTION: Snell moved to approve the pole removal by the electric company and the hopeful removal by Verizon at 20 South Holden Road. 2nd Ross. Snell – aye; Genovese – aye; Ross – aye. Voted unanimously.**

- B. Snell proposed keeping David Young available in some capacity post-retirement, given his knowledge of the Wendell Road property, broadband and utilities, and the school building. Members suggested looking into a small retainer or stipend so the town could consult him when needed. No action was taken.

VI. Public Comment

- A. Bruce Kilhart asked about deteriorated playground equipment near the police station and the old police cruisers that have been sitting there for several years. Noble responded that she has and will continue to follow up with an auction company, but will wait a few days to see whether another vehicle will be added before proceeding.
- B. John Bradford of the Planning Board explained that new state clean-energy siting and permitting regulations will require Warwick to designate a local representative to coordinate applications and reviews for larger-than-residential projects. The Board voted to have a Planning Board member to select one of their members to serve in that role.
- ***MOTION: Snell moved that a government representative to Warwick for small energy permitting and siting will go to a Planning Board member. 2nd Ross. Voted unanimously.***

VII. Six-Town Regionalization and October 6 Special Election

- A. Genovese updated the Board that the state legislature moved forward to enable a special town election to be scheduled on October 6th. The proposal is that Warwick and the other participating towns vote on the establishment of the Great River Regional School District on 10/6/26, from 12:00-8:00 pm.

- ***MOTION: Ross moved as follows:***
 - ***WHEREAS, on August 25, 2026, the Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts signed Senate Bill No. 3181, "An Act providing equal opportunity for residents to vote on establishment of the Great River Regional School District" ("S.3181" or "the Act"), which is now law;***
 - ***WHEREAS, the Act requires that the Town of Warwick place on the ballot, at the first annual or special town election held after the Act's effective date, the question of accepting the establishment of the Great River Regional School District;***
 - ***WHEREAS, the Six Town Regionalization Planning Board has recommended that the towns of Bernardston, Gill, Leyden, Montague, Northfield, and Warwick hold this vote on a single, coordinated date – Tuesday, October 6, 2026 the same date already scheduled for the Franklin County Technical School district's special election, with polling hours of 12:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., in order to avoid voter confusion and reduce administrative burden on the Town Clerk;***
 - ***WHEREAS, the Town's Selectboard, holds the authority to call a special town election and to set its date, hours, and location;***
 - ***NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED that the Selectboard of the Town of Warwick hereby calls a Special Town Election to be held on Tuesday, October 6, 2026, with polling hours of 12:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., for the purpose of submitting to the voters the question of accepting the establishment of the Great River Regional School District, in accordance Special Legislation S.3181 "An Act Providing Equal Opportunity For Residents To Vote On Establishment Of The Great River Regional School District," enacted on August 25, 2026.***
 - ***BE IT FURTHER MOVED that the Board directs and authorizes the Town Clerk, in consultation with town counsel, to prepare the official warrant and notice of election – including the ballot question language required by S.3181 and to take all other steps necessary to post, notice, and administer said election in accordance with law; and***
 - ***BE IT FURTHER MOVED that the Selectboard is authorized to sign the warrant for said election.***
- ***2nd Genovese. Ross – aye; Genovese – aye; Snell – abstained. Motion carried.***

- B. The Board voted to hold a Special Town Election on October 6, 2026, from noon to 8:00 p.m., the same day as the Franklin Tech vote, and authorized the Town Clerk to prepare and administer the election. The two questions will be on separate ballots.
 - C. The Board discussed the separate October 6 vote on the Franklin County Tech School building project. Several community members felt residents had not received enough information, particularly about Warwick's financial obligation, cited as roughly \$89,000 per year. The Finance Committee is planning an informational session, and the general feeling was that Franklin Tech and Six-Town regionalization should be covered in separate sessions to avoid confusion.
 - D. An informational meeting for the six towns involved in the regionalization proposal will be held Thursday at 6:00 p.m. at Gill Town Hall. The meeting will be open to the public and will focus on explaining the proposal and voting process. Members also discussed making sure the meeting is properly posted for boards whose members may attend.
- VIII. **WRAP grant use** – Warwick was awarded \$146,663 through the state's Winter Recovery Assistance Program. The town learned that a fall Special Town Meeting could rescind the earlier vote to use \$87,257 from this year's budget for last winter's snow and ice deficit, allowing grant funds to cover it instead. Town Meeting could then consider returning the freed-up money to stabilization, while nearly \$60,000 in grant funds would remain for the coming winter. The Board discussed holding a Special Town Meeting in mid-October.
- IX. **DCR Land Acquisition** – Ross updated the Board on the state's proposed purchase of the Whipple property. He raised concerns about preserving the conservation protections and losing additional property from Warwick's tax rolls. He plans to seek written acknowledgement from the state that the land will remain protected.
- X. **School compost contract** – The school composting agreement has been reviewed by Town Counsel and the Buildings and Energy Manager, and can move forward at no cost to the town. The Board authorized the Town Coordinator to handle the agreement administratively. The town can also move ahead with Greenfield Co-op collecting compost from the transfer station once the necessary equipment is installed.
- ***MOTION: Snell moved to vote in favor of the administrative action. 2nd Ross. Voted unanimously.***
- XI. Meeting House Committee roof repairs
- ***MOTION: Snell moved to allow the Chair of the Select Board to sign on behalf of the Town of Warwick on a contract to repair the Meeting House's slate roof that will not exceed \$5000. 2nd Ross. Voted unanimously.***
- XII. FRCOG appointments
- A. Vote to appoint Alan as FRCOG representative
 - B. Vote to appoint David Shoemaker as Emergency Management Director (EMD)
 - C. Vote to appoint Joe Larson as Emergency Response Coordinator (ERC)
 - ***MOTION: Ross moved to approve all three aforementioned appointments to their respective positions. 2nd Snell. Voted unanimously.***
- XIII. **Discussions and reports**
- A. Selectboard Reports – none
 - B. **Coordinator Report**
 - i. **PILOT program** – Alwan requested support to attend meetings to advocate for a higher PILOT valuation for Warwick. The Board discussed Warwick's low reimbursement through the state's payment-in-lieu-of-taxes program (\$8 per acre, the second lowest in the state, as compared to Norwich's \$12,000 per acre), particularly given the large amount of state-

owned land in town (51-53%). Ross referenced a similar issue in Shutesbury and elsewhere that is getting media coverage.

- **CONSENSUS:** *The Selectboard reached consensus to support the Coordinator in advocacy around PILOT land prices.*

- ii. **Repair updates, BoH Clerk Job Availability, and Intern Request** – Alwan reported that the town hall dishwasher repair is still in progress and that there is a possible candidate for Board of Health clerk. She also proposed bringing in UMass Amherst School of Public Policy interns to help organize Town Hall records and improve storage of records currently vulnerable to fire or flooding.

C. Assistant Coordinator Report

- i. **Straw poll** – The informal poll on Town Meeting location resulted in 39 votes for Town Hall and 16 for the school, with responses split roughly evenly between online and paper voting. The Board also discussed continuing to provide childcare during Town Meeting if possible.

XIV. Actions – none

XV. Citizens' concerns and suggestions for future agenda items – none

XVI. Minutes of previous meetings – none

XVII. Items unanticipated at time of posting

- A. Snell briefly discussed the awards presented at Old Home Days to David Young, public-safety personnel, and Arlene Lincoln. He thanked those who participated, and talked about whether the event might be held a little earlier in future years.

XVIII. Review topics for future meetings

- A. Meeting schedule: Mondays at 6:00 pm: 9/14/26, 9/28/26

ADJOURNMENT: Ross MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 8:04 pm. 2nd Snell. Voted unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by Heather Berlin, Town Secretary.

Documents consulted at this meeting:

[20260831 Selectboard meeting notice and agenda](#) Download

[20260831Coordinator Report](#) Download

[Assistant Coordinator Report 8.31.26](#) Download

[08312026_notice_S_Holden_Rd_PoleHearing](#) Download

[20260831_ConservationEasement](#) Download

[Copy of DCR Exhibit A_P-001128](#) Download

[Copy of DCR Proposed Land Acquisition for SB 8.17.26](#) Download

[Pole Hearing Petition holden rd](#) Download

[Property photo Poll Hearing 8.31.26](#) [Download](#)

[Property photo2 Poll Hearing 8.31.26](#) [Download](#)

[Received_6town](#) [Download](#)

[SPP Internship -Warwick Town Hall Records Management Intern](#) [Download](#)

[STRPB Motion for Selectboards for Special Election](#) [Download](#)

[STRPB Notice to Selectboards re_ Ballot Question FINAL 8.28.26\(2033726.1\) \(2\)](#) [Download](#)

[WCS calendar for Compost Collection](#) [Download](#)

[WCS COMPOST COLLECTION AGREEMENT](#) [Download](#)

[RE 301 CMR 51.00 NOTICE OF PROPOSED LAND ACQUISITION WARWICK](#) [Download](#)

August 31, 2026