

Town of Warwick

Selectboard

April 1, 2019

Minutes

Members present: Lawrence Pruyne, Todd Dexter

Member absent: James Erviti

Others present: Town Coordinator David Young, Town Secretary Rosa Fratangelo, Fire Chief Ron Gates, Highway Superintendent Larry Delaney, Finance Committee members Diana Noble and Laurette Crane, Highway Advisory Committee Chair Kevin Alden, Kevin Bickford, Adam Holloway, Pam Kimball

I. Call to Order

Chair Pruyne called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. in the Town Hall.

II. Minutes

Dexter MOVED to accept the minutes of March 4, 2019 as printed. Pruyne SECONDED. Motion CARRIED 2-0-0.

Dexter MOVED to accept the minutes of March 11, 2019 as printed. Pruyne SECONDED. Motion CARRIED 2-0-0.

Pruyne said that the minutes of March 18, 2019 would have to be put off until Jim Erviti is present, as Pruyne himself did not attend the March 18th meeting (he was attending a different meeting) and therefore could not vote to accept these minutes.

III. Presentations and Discussions

1. Annual Town Meeting—Young said that the warrant needs to be opened, effective for citizen petition articles only, as the Selectboard can add or remove warrant articles right up to the deadline to post the meeting. Young pointed out that any petition article must be clear in its intent and that defective language will not automatically disqualify a petition article from being placed on the warrant. Town Clerk Fratangelo said that a minimum of ten signatures of registered voters is required in order to certify a petition for inclusion in the ATM warrant.

Dexter MOVED to declare open the 2019 Annual Town Meeting warrant, effective immediately, and close it on Tuesday, April 9, 2019 at 2:30 p.m. Pruyne SECONDED. Motion CARRIED 2-0-0.

Pruyne said that he wanted to find a way to effectively publicize Warwick's many attributes. Dexter said that a website run by the Town is also necessary. Young said that \$15,000.00 would be a good place to start for a firm to run a website for the Town and reminded the Board that a professionalized website brings with it a whole new class of compensation and expenses.

2. Fire Department Proposed FY 20 Budget—Chief Ron Gates said that he has not yet met with the Finance Committee, but he has let them know that he is requesting an additional \$1,000.00 for the SCBA account. The Chief said that he needs to be able to replace three bottles per year. This is for Article 12 of the 2019 ATM warrant, which currently reads \$2,800.00. The Chief noted that all SCBA packs have been reconditioned and explained that if he does not receive any grant funds the Fire Department will have to purchase bottles. Chief Gates said that Charlemont Fire Chief Annear has offered their old bottles to Warwick FD at no cost to the Town; these bottles are good for one more year. Chief Gates said that he will meet with the Fin. Comm. Before deciding on an actual amount to request in Article 12. Young said he will contact BMAG to verify the amount currently in the SCBA account.

3. Highway Department—Highway Superintendent Larry Delaney introduced Kevin Bickford as the new hire. Delaney said that Bickford has met all requirement except for the hydraulic license. Bickford told the Board that he has worked for the Town of Orange Highway and Police Departments and has worked at Starretts for thirty years in methods and process engineering. As he is currently training a new employee at Starretts, he asked to be allowed to give three weeks' notice to his current employer. Dexter asked Delaney to be sure and make Bickford aware of the Personnel Policy, to give him a copy and have him sign the form acknowledging that he has received and read the policy. Delaney mentioned that Bickford will also have to complete the conflict of interest training.

Dexter MOVED to hire Kevin Bickford as the new employee for the Highway Department at an hourly pay rate of \$18.14 subject to Warwick Personnel Policy. Pruyne SECONDED. Motion CARRIED 2-0-0.

4. Tree Warden—Tree Warden Sharon Matthews did not attend the meeting. Dexter said that there needs to be consistency in the colour of ribbons used on emergency trees to be removed. Young said that he wanted to see more funds in the Tree Warden budget for tree cutting, as the current amount has remained historically low after former Tree Warden Dana Songer had lowered it to save the Town money during a tight budget season. Young said the amount needs to be bumped back up to the former amount to keep pace with the work.

Pruyne said that he met with the Cemetery Commissioners and they were concerned about the

process of having a tree taken down. Pruyne said that a tree near the cemetery could have come down on power lines so he ordered it removed and willingly took the heat from the Cemetery Commission regarding his decision. Young reminded the Board that the Town can be held liable for trees that pose a hazard and are ignored, even if those trees are not on Town property. Dexter noted that the Highway Advisory Committee is working on the issue of when the Highway Department can take down trees that potentially threaten utility wires. The Tree Warden and Planning Board can identify trees that qualify as dead hazard trees.

Finance Committee Chair Diana Noble said that the Tree Warden requested a \$1,300.00 increase to the roadside clean-up line item and a \$300.00 increase in the stipend for FY 2020.

Dexter MOVED to recommend the requested increases for the Tree Warden: \$1,300.00 roadside clean-up and \$300.00 stipend. Pruyne SECONDED. Motion CARRIED 2-0-0.

5. Annual Town Meeting Petition Article—Pam Kimball said that she had a citizens' petition for the ATM warrant regarding a proposed change to the flag and State seal of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts due to the negative connotations of the current depiction and representation of Native Americans. She said there is a movement to create a new design for the State seal and flag that is respectful of culture and heritage. This would be a non-binding referendum, and approval at Town Meeting would express Warwick's support for a new State flag and seal. Kimball gave the Town Clerk the petition at 6:47 p.m.

6. Discussion of School Closure, District Finances, Building Lease and Related Topics — Adam Holloway said that we begged and were granted one more school year for WCS. He said that on December 31, 2019 a decision on whether to stay with the District, and listed our options as do nothing, negotiate on how to proceed with PVRSD, or leave. Holloway pointed out that the short-term issues have not changed, and that not knowing does nothing to attract school choice students. Speaking as Town Coordinator, Young said that we should work on the creation of a private school, which would require a Town Meeting vote. It was pointed out that we would still have to be part of a public school district even if WCS became a private school. Young said if we go bigger, we will lose character and political linkage. Pruyne said that staying with PVRSD would likely have a financially negative impact. Holloway said that we would hope that private school tuition would offset some of what we would have to pay to the District of which we are a part. He noted that we have very little time in which to decide from among many options. Holloway said that we have no autonomy and are at the mercy of twelve members of the School Committee until the loan is paid off. He stated that we need to sit down with PVRSD and discuss better terms for Warwick.

Pruyne said that we need to meet with the Superintendents and Finance Directors of other districts. Dexter said that we need to have some serious conversations starting right now. Young said that PVRSD is leading the way to financial ruin, and that other districts are not far behind, so we need to find a new way. Dexter said that all available options must be examined and we

narrow it down from there. Holloway said that the Education task Force will double down on its efforts going forward. Pruyne noted that it will take a great number of people to do all the necessary research.

7. Pole Hearing—Pruyne called the hearing to order at 7:15 p.m. Young said that Warwick Broadband Service (WBS) wanted to install a stub pole on Quarry Road. He explained that most poles have overhead electrical service, but in this case, there is a large oak tree in direct line between the WBS pole and the utility pole. Young said that WBS wants to install a stub pole and trench up the side of the road approximately 80 – 90 feet in order to avoid having to cut down the oak tree. He noted that it was likely Warwick Highway will do the work.

Dexter MOVED to run underground service on Quarry Road from the utility pole to WBS service pole and to grant an easement. Pruyne ECONDED. Motion CARRIED 2-0-0.

Pruyne closed the hearing at 7:19 p.m.

8. PVRSD School Discussion (continued)—Pruyne said that he doesn't see any effort on the part of PVRSD to reduce the budget and take advantage of the savings incurred from the closure of Pearl Rhodes Elementary School in Leyden. Young noted that in light of the proposed Superintendent's contract there is no incentive for the Teachers Union to take any cuts. He pointed out that the multi-year contract is not valid until the first year is funded, so it could be invalidated if two towns vote the assessment down or if the assessment is divided into two articles and the contract is voted down. There was a consensus of the Board that Young as Town Coordinator talk with the other member towns about opposing the PVRSD Superintendent contract and possibly the entire assessment. Noble said that at the recent four-town meeting it was discussed that all four towns stay together and keep assessments from increasing and that the savings from the school closure be returned to the towns and not absorbed by the District. She said that PVRSD Finance Director Tanya Gaylord would be attending the next Fin. Comm. Meeting on Monday, April 8th at 7 p.m.

9. New and Other Business Unanticipated at Time of Meeting Posting—Highway Advisory Committee Chair Kevin Alden said that he will be in charge of the list of priorities for Highway Superintendent Delaney and also wants budget reports and work schedules a couple of weeks in advance along with a report on what has actually been done in the past couple of weeks. Alden stressed the importance for Delaney to have a plan in place and prioritize work. He said he has had trouble getting reports from Delaney and asked the Board what they wanted to do. There was a consensus of the Board that a daily report should be required. Dexter said that it is time Delaney had some responsibility.

The Highway Advisory Committee (HAC) marked April 1st as the beginning of construction season, but the Highway Department is not ready to go. Dexter said that as Selectmen they need to instruct Delaney to set a work schedule for each week and report to HAC as requested for records and reports. Adam Holloway said to document everything, set expectations and define

the consequences for non-compliance. Holloway also suggested asking Delaney what management and leadership courses he wants to take and plan for them. Noble suggested a mentorship with the Royalston Highway Boss. Alden said that Delaney needs motivation and direction and that The Selectboard and HAC need to show him we are serious about this. There was a consensus of the Board to have a talk with Delaney. Young suggested a possible restructure or reorganization of the Department whereby Delaney is demoted to working foreman rather than Superintendent. Dexter said that an ultimatum needs to be issued: comply with requests or that will be the next step. Dexter said he wanted to give Delaney one last opportunity for compliance. Alden said there needs to be a list created of what is being worked on and what should be worked on as well.

10. Annual Town Meeting (continued) —Young said that the traditional revenue line item (Assessor's Overlay) is close to zero due to good tax collecting. He said he wanted to put the FY 20 lunch payment in debt service to use on the PVRSD assessment. Noble said that there will be no District Agreement article on the 2019 ATM warrant. Young noted that 3.5% increase in compensation would add about \$9,000.00 to the omnibus budget. Stabilization, free cash, closing of the FY 2018 books and the BMAG accounting firm were also discussed. Young said that he was able to check the amount currently available in the SCBA account: \$14,000.00

11. Coordinator Report—There was nothing to add to the written report.

12. Selectboard Reports—Pruyne said he talked with Union 28 (Shutesbury, Leverett, New Salem, Wendell and Erving) and said they were optimistic. He noted that the Swift River building is not in very good shape and that even that District looks to be a bit strapped.

13. Public Comment—None.

Adjournment

Dexter MOVED to adjourn at 7:37 p.m. Pruyne SECONDED. Motion CARRIED 2-0-0.

Documents consulted at this meeting:

- *Draft Minutes of March 4, 2019; March 11, 2019; March 18, 2019 Selectboard meetings
- *Coordinator Report dated March 28, 2019
- *Draft warrant articles for May 6, 2019 Annual Town Meeting
- *Change log 3/29 Warwick 2019 ATM Warrant
- *Draft spreadsheet for May 6, 2019 Annual Town Meeting Omnibus budget
- *Spreadsheets for proposed FY 20 budgets: Transfer Station and Warwick Broadband
- *Letter from the Finance Committee and Selectboard of the Town of Northfield to DESE Commissioner Jeffrey C. Riley dated March 25, 2019 RE: request to invalidate the agreement

between PVRSD and Interim Superintendent Jonathan Scagel for a five-year contract

*Letter from PVRSD Financial Director Tanya Gaylord to Warwick Treasurer Beth Gilgun dated March 6, 2019 RE: Town of Warwick's share of the Operating Assessment and Capital Project Assessment for FY 2020 *Petition for Pole and Wire Locations; Pole Trenching and Wire Locations Document; Legal Posting for Public Hearing WBS Pole Hearing

*Letter from Governor Charles Baker to Town of Warwick dated February 28, 2019 RE: FY 2020 Chapter 90 funding

*Letter to William Hayes of Eversource Energy from MDAR Commissioner John Lebeaux dated March 5, 2019 RE: notice of approval of the Eversource Western Massachusetts as modified

*Letter from William Hayes to Town of Warwick dated March 15, 2019 RE: selective application of herbicides by Eversource Energy Western Massachusetts

*Annual Report from Franklin County Regional Housing & Redevelopment Authority to Warwick Selectboard dated January 19, 2019 RE: summary of activity in Warwick Rehabilitation Revolving Loan Fund account January 1 – December 31, 2018

*Invitation to Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for the newly renovated Franklin County Technical School Welding & Metal Fabrication Program on Friday, April 5, 2019 at 10 a.m.