

**WARREN BOARD OF
SELECTMEN REGULAR MEETING
Wednesday, December 16, 2020**

CALL TO ORDER:

Selectman Romano called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.

Select Board Members Present: Lesa Romano, Chuck Sackett, and Charles Chandler were present.

Staff/Officials Present: Town Administrator – Austin Albro, Police Chief – John Semertgakis, Fire Chief – Art Heath, Treasurer – Sheila Foote, Buildings and Grounds Supervisor – George Russell, Road Agent – Bruce Dimond

Public Present: Scott Brown, Victoria Berger, Mike Panus.

L. Romano led those present in the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

SELECT BOARD MANIFEST: C. Chandler *moved approval of the manifest. L. Romano seconded the motion. Vote: Chandler – yes, Romano – yes, Sackett – yes, and the motion passed 3-0-0.*

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: C. Chandler *moved approval of the December 2, 2020 meeting minutes. L. Romano seconded the motion. Vote: Chandler – yes, Romano – yes, Sackett – abstained, and the motion passed 2-0-1.*

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mike Panus expressed to the Selectmen that he intends to run for Road Agent next year and shared his belief that position could be done in a part time or on-demand fashion throughout the summer months. Donald Bagley suggested to the Selectmen that the 2020 Town Report be dedicated to Nancy Chandler and Lyle Moody.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Treasurer, Sheila Foote was present at the meeting and provided a report to the Board for review.

The Town of Warren Operating Account balance is \$591, 162.82 after tonight's approved manifest total of \$29,587.27.

The Tax Collections Account balance is \$251,107.59.

C. Chandler moved to acknowledge receipt of the Treasurer's Report. L. Romano seconded the motion. Vote: Chandler – yes, Sackett – yes, and Romano – yes.

ROAD AGENT REPORT:

Bruce Dimond, Road Agent was present at the meeting and offered a report of recent activity for the Board's review. The Road Agent, B. Dimond reported that the backhoe, grader, and sander have been fixed. The Road Agent expressed that he wanted to create an equipment maintenance schedule for repairs and replacement. There was discussion about the current status of the "big truck" and Chairwoman Romano asked if there was a list of necessary repairs to make the "big truck" safe and operable, if needed. The Road Agent said that we did not have a list but was aware that the trailing arms needed to be replaced, among other things. L. Romano asked if B. Dimond could get a list of problems with the "big truck". B. Dimond continued to explain that in the future, he hopes that a scheduled maintenance and replacement schedule would save the Town on maintenance costs in the long run.

TAX COLLECTOR'S REPORT:

The Tax Collector provided receipts to the Board for review.

FIRE DEPARTMENT:

Fire Chief, Art Heath stated that there had been no activity in the reporting period but the Chief alerted NHEC about power lines causing a small fire on Mountain Meadow Road.

CHIEF OF POLICE REPORT:

Chief John Semertgakis reported recent activity to the Board of Selectmen. Road Hazard, Mountain Meadow Road; report of tree on the wires causing fire, Warren FD was on scene upon arrival. Suspicious Person/Activity, Route 118; report of a person at a residence that is currently unoccupied. Spoke with the home owner, person was allowed to be there. Welfare Check, Route 25, Glenclyff; report of a person missing for a day, located the next day, staying in Manchester. VIN Verification, East Side Road; VIN Check on a trailer. Paperwork Service, Lund Lane; paperwork needed to be filed for a resident.

22 Motor Vehicle Stops, 2 Citations

TRANSFER STATION/BUILDINGS & GROUNDS REPORT:

The Manager, George Russell present at the meeting and provided the Select Board a report of recent activity.

Grounds: G. Russell reported that he had been assisting the Road Agent with snow removal and sanding, as needed. He also reported recent projects at the library. G. Russell also discussed that he would be proposing a Warrant Article for the Selectmen to review in advance of Town Meeting, to create two additional offices spaces at the Town Office. G. Russell was currently in the processes of getting quotes for the job. G. Russell also mentioned that he would gather information for another Warrant Article for the replacing the decking for the Town Hall entry ramp and landing.

Transfer Station: G. Russell reported that he had cleaned up the waste oil at the Transfer Station. He also reported that he shipped two loads of scrap metal, which included the refrigerator.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR:

The Town Administrator reported that he had attended the Community Facilities Grant Program workshop and intends to complete a Planning Grant application to begin the process of obtaining grant funds for construction of a new highway garage. The Administrator informed the Board that receipt of the Warm Zone Equipment would likely have to wait until the holding period is up which is expected to occur in 6 months. In the meantime, the EMS providers have time to complete the online training and the Town will have time to create and adopt a purchasing policy. The Administrator informed the Board that the extension for the FEMA Mitigation Projects from 2017 was submitted to the State for review. This will give the Town one additional year to complete the projects. The Administrator shared that the corrections have been processed for the July tax billing errors and that he had been working on the Town Budget and Annual Report.

NEW BUSINESS:

- a. The Town Administrator presented an abatement recommendation completed by Richard Dorsett, Assessor for Map 218, Lot 011. The Selectmen reviewed the abatement. *Chandler moved to approve the abatement as presented. L. Romano seconded the motion. Vote: Chandler – yes, Sackett – yes, and Romano – yes. The motion passed 3-0.*
- b. The Board of Selectmen reviewed abatement recommendations for property identified as Map 228, Lot 028 and property identified as Map 250, Lot 005/BG0004. These abatements were the result of July tax billing issues due to incorrect assessments. *Chandler moved to approve the abatement as presented. L. Romano seconded the motion. Vote: Chandler – yes, Sackett – yes, and Romano – yes. The motion passed 3-0.*
- c. The Board of Selectmen continued to review the first draft of the 2021 Budget. Various department heads were present at the meeting to discuss their budgets. G. Russell presented the Buildings and Grounds and Sanitation Budgets for 2021. As presented, there was a total increase of \$240 for Buildings and Grounds and a total increase of \$2,982 compared to last year. The Board unanimously agreed to increase the proposed line for "Ground Workers' Wages" for an additional increase of \$1,040. Fire Chief Heath presented the FD Budget for 2021. There was brief discussion. The Selectmen approved the proposed budget which showed a total increase of \$596 compared to last year. The Selectmen reviewed the Police Department Budget as presented. Chief Semertgakis explained that the budget featured a total increase of \$3,301. The Chief explained the increase was a result of adding a \$6,000 line item to join the Plymouth Area Prosecutors Association. There were other places in the budget where Chief was able to lower his budget, resulting in the increase. There was

brief discussion. Chief Semertgakis explained that Chief Trott of Wentworth PD volunteered to speak to the Board about the advantages of joining the association. The Select Board agreed to leave the line item in the budget as presented until Chief Trott had an opportunity to address the Board. Treasurer Foote shared her budget with Board. The only increase came as a result of additional mileage for trips to Plymouth to make bank deposits. The Board briefly reviewed the Highway Budget. There was discussion about the current condition of highway equipment, as well as, cost to maintain the new pavement on Beech Hill Road and Batchelder Brook Road. The Board agreed to approve the budget at this time but afforded themselves an opportunity to review prior to publication of the budget for the Budget Hearing on February 9. The Selectmen then reviewed the remainder of the 2021 budget with the Town Administrator. There was discussion regarding the stipend amount for Selectmen. Selectmen Chandler expressed that he thought the Selectmen in Warren were historically underpaid and discovered that the average salary was about \$3000 for Selectmen in towns, comparable in size to Warren. After discussion, the Selectmen agreed, despite vast amounts of support from the members of the audience, to leave the line item for Selectmen at \$4,200 or \$1,400 per Selectmen for further discussion at the Town Budget Hearing or Town Meeting. The Selectmen spoke briefly about the proposed increase in wages for the Town Administrator. Selectmen Chandler provided details of wages for administrators in towns comparable to Warren. After further discussion, the Board voted 2-1 (Romano – yes, Chandler – yes, Sackett – no) to approve the increase in Administrator salary by \$4,000 to \$49,000 annually. The discussion continued and the Administrator explained that the Town is due to complete the Total Revaluation of Property and that the increased cost to the Town would be approximately \$21,000. The Administrator reminded the Board that there was approximately \$13,000 in the Revaluation Trust Fund that could be utilized, limiting the impact to taxpayers. The Administrator reviewed the remainder of the Budget with the Selectmen, which included Parks and Rec, Library, and other departments that were either level funded or slightly lower than the previous year's budget request. There was an abundance of discussion regarding funding non-profit requests. Selectmen Sackett informed the Board that there may be an increase of up to \$5,000 for the WWAS contract.

OLD BUSINESS:

a. COVID-19 Discussion:

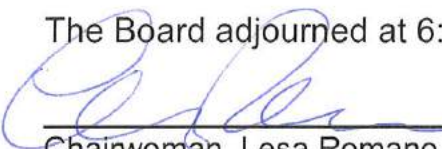
The Administrator stated that the Budget Hearing is scheduled for February 9 at Warren Village School and that the meeting will be available for the public to attend both virtually and in person, at this moment. The Administrator also suggested that the Board consider options for Town Meetings and recommended the discussion will continue at future meetings. Lastly, the Administrator informed the Board that the Attorney General's Office had called concerning a complaint against a local business due to customers not adhering

to the Governor's Emergency Order #74. The AG's Office advised that the Town should ensure that local businesses are aware that local law enforcement is an available resource if customers are not in compliance with the Governor's Emergency Orders.

ADJOURN:

C. Sackett moved the adjournment of the regular meeting of the Select Board. The motion was seconded by L. Romano. Voting in favor of the motion were Chandler-yes, Sackett – yes, and Romano – yes. The motion passed 3-0-0.

The Board adjourned at 6:58 PM.



Chairwoman, Lesa Romano

Selectman, Charles Chandler

Selectman, Charles Sackett, Jr.