

Minutes of February 27, 2024 Meeting
Warren Select Board
Streamed on MRVTV
6:30 PM
-draft-

Members Present: Luke Youmell, Chair; Andrew Cunningham, Vice Chair; Bob Ackland; Camilla Behn; Devin Klein Corrigan

Staff Present: Jeff Campbell (Fire Chief), Rebecca Campbell, Town Administrator; Ruth Robbins, Zoning Administrator

Others Present: Doug Bergstein, Tracy Brannstrom (Valley Reporter), Alice Cheney, Michele Eid (Cemetery Commission), Bob Kogut, Andy Phelan, Macon Phillips (Planning Commission), Dan Raddock (Planning Commission), Sam Robinson (MRVPD), Charles Snow (Cemetery Commission), Samantha White (Granicus)

Public Comment

Nobody offered comments for the Board.

Agenda Changes

Mr. Youmell noted that the Executive Session will be for legal matters as well as personnel.

Mad River Triathlon - Bob Kogut

Bob Kogut provided information regarding the running leg of the event, which begins at the Warren School and heads north on Route 100 to Lareau Park. He explained that volunteer marshals as well as state police will be monitoring traffic, etc. He also indicated that if there are muddy conditions, the runners will not be traversing the field at the school.

MOTION: *Mr. Ackland made a motion to approve the Mad River Triathlon's request to use the Town of Warren roads for the event. The motion was seconded by Ms. Klein Corrigan. All voted in favor.*

Listers Certificate of Grand List

Ms. Campbell explained that this Certificate of No Appeal will lock in Grand List values for the years 2016-2023.

MOTION: *Mr. Ackland moved to approve the Certificate of No Appeal as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Behn. All voted in favor.*

Certificate of Highway Mileage

Ms. Campbell confirmed that there are no changes to the Certificate from previous years.

MOTION: *Mr. Ackland moved to approve the Certificate of Highway Mileage as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Klein Corrigan. All voted in favor.*

ARPA Committee Update

Ms. Klein Corrigan indicated that an application and guide have been created, and that a scoring matrix has been developed as well; no edits were suggested from other Board members. Ms. Klein Corrigan noted that the ability to apply for funds will be publicized in this week's Valley Reporter. The Board reviewed the press release which had been composed, and suggested an adjustment to the contact information, and also that an explanation and examples of the scoring methodology be included. Applications are due by May 1, and it is intended to complete review of those received by mid-June.

Short Term Rental (STR) Discussion

Sam Robinson introduced the topic of STR software for use in monitoring for compliance, and Samantha White provided an overview of the tools that the Granicus software provides, outlining the challenges of monitoring STRs and handling related compliance matters. Ms. White indicated that as of February 2024, 678 listings for 587 unique rentals units were found in Warren, with several rental platforms being utilized by owners of the units. Ms. White provided the following information:

- Almost all of the units being rented are entire homes, rather than a rooms within residences
- All data gathered by the software is publicly available
- Granicus is a site primarily for governmental use; the focus is on compliance
- The main module is focused on address identification; associated communications are also available
- Each posting found can be drilled into and the timeline of rental activity confirmed
- Communication with owners is through town-specific templates, and specific to the rental unit as well
- All interactions are online, which is very suitable for this audience

Macon Phillips asked about integration with the Town's general website, and wondered if the Selectboard would be interested in determining if Granicus might provide a more interactive website platform for Warren. Ms. White explained that the STR rental software might be part of a larger plan, and that Granicus has related modules. Mr. Ackland cautioned that taking in payments through the Town's site is not viable due to the substantial security needs involved.

Ms. Behn asked about the timeline for recouping the cost of the software; Ms. White explained that it is suggested that a registration fee be set at approximately two to three times the average nightly rental rate in a town; the average nightly rate in Warren is about \$280. She indicated that towns generally see a slower uptick, and then likely there would be 70% compliance by the end of the first twelve months of having the software fully in place. She explained that several months are needed for set up and training.

Mr. Youmell noted that an ordinance must be drafted and adopted before any registrations and related compliance work can be set up. It was discussed that regulations need to speak to the goals of the community, with potential for different registration levels for those people renting out a portion of their owner-occupied home.

The costs of the software were outlined; \$27K includes both the address identification and outreach/communication modules. Mr. Robinson pointed out that Granicus' system was the best of those systems reviewed by the MRVPD for providing historical information, such as how many properties have converted to rental units in recent years. Ms. White explained that, regarding town personnel time required, information would need to be collated related to assessments, and that the staff person who will be the key point person will need training. She also noted that the town would need to test the system before it goes live. Her estimate was for an hour a week of staff time once all the preliminary work is completed, and the system is running as desired.

Cemetery Committee

Michele Eid reported on recent communications between the Cemetery Commission and landowners along the private road accessing the Cemetery. She explained that the shed at the alternate entrance will be removed, in order to enable work vehicles access to the site from that location. This will eliminate the use of the private road for cemetery access, as well as any cost sharing for maintenance of that road. Ms. Eid noted that, if access is necessary at any point in the future, the Town will agree to repair any damage caused to the road. The road will be given a name, and 'private' and 'dead end' signs could then be put

in place if the landowners prefer. Posts and a gate closing off access to the Cemetery would be in place, with room provided for a plow turnaround.

Ms. Eid also spoke of the prior damage caused by drainage to the shared driveway, noting that it is not clear that the runoff is caused by the Cemetery portion of the road. This will be looked into next time there is a significant rain event.

MOTION: *Mr. Ackland made a motion to accept the Cemetery Commission's suggestion regarding ceasing the use of the private road access to the Cemetery and the related points of agreement with the other property owners; and to request that the Commission provide Ms. Campbell with a typed proposal outlining the agreement. The motion was seconded by Ms. Klein Corrigan. All voted in favor.*

Ms. Eid provided some information clarifying some recently published commentary by VLCT regarding the Vermont State Ethics Board.

Capital Update / Truck Purchase

Mr. Ackland reviewed the bids which had been received, reminding Board members that a long lead time is still required for ordering trucks and other equipment. This purchase is scheduled for next year, and three bids had been received, ranging from \$298K to \$311K (for a vehicle that up until the past couple of years would have cost approximately \$220K). Mr. Ackland also provided some information about the three companies from which quotes were received, noting that International (purchased by Allegiance) has delayed delivery of the current truck on order and is exhibiting less quality in their customer service. Their bid was lower than Western Star's \$298K by approximately \$6K. The bid from Kenworth was for \$311K. All three offer a 7-year warranty. Mr. Ackland recommended that the bid from Western Star be accepted. Mr. Cunningham suggested that, due to the low trade amount offered, it might be beneficial to sell the old vehicles on the private market.

MOTION: *Mr. Cunningham made a motion to proceed with the truck purchase through Western Star. The motion was seconded by Ms. Behn. All voted in favor.*

Mr. Ackland reviewed an updated capital equipment purchase spreadsheet with Board members, noting that it has been determined that the graders are likely to last longer than originally anticipated. He explained that 2024 and 2025 have enough funds designated to cover anticipated purchases, but that the capital fund will run negative from 2028 through 2034 without further annual infusions of funding.

Town Meeting Preparation

Doug Bergstein was present for a discussion regarding his serving as Town Moderator at this year's Town Meeting, as he has recently moved out of Warren, but is still registered to vote in Warren. Mr. Youmell had received information from VLCT that this would be acceptable, but information from other sources, including Town Clerk Brent Adams, indicated otherwise. It was agreed to confirm what the pertinent State bylaws allow for; Mr. Bergstein expressed that he is willing to work with Mr. Adams to enable him to take over the moderator role if that is necessary.

Ms. Campbell indicated that she is taking care of ensuring that the school is set up for the Meeting. Mr. Ackland noted that he has a budget presentation ready. Ms. Behn asked that each Board member encourage five people to attend Town Meeting, particularly those who were not planning to be there.

Administrative Items

MOTION: *A motion to approve a Tobacco Substitute license and 2ND Class Liquor License for Global Montello Group (Jiffy Mart) passed unanimously.*

MOTION: *A motion to approve the payroll warrant in the amount of \$55,287.00 passed unanimously.*

MOTION: *A motion to approve the accounts payable warrant in the amount of \$46,444.74 passed unanimously.*

Executive Session

MOTION: *A motion to enter Executive Session for the purpose of discussing personnel and legal matters passed unanimously.*

The meeting entered Executive Session at 8:28 pm and returned to open session at 9:07 pm.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:07 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Carol Chamberlin

The Warren Selectboard

Luke Youmell, Chair

Andy Cunningham, Vice Chair

Bob Ackland

Camilla Behn

Devin Klein Corrigan