**Minutes of July 28, 2026 Meeting**
**Warren Select Board**
**-draft-**

**Members Present:** Harvey Blake, Devin Klein Corrigan, Jeremiah Kemp, Joel Taplin
**Staff Present:** Patti Begin, Town Treasurer; Rebecca Campbell, Town Administrator; Kerry Newton, STR Administrator
**Others Present:** Camilla Behn, Chris Behn, Gene Bifano, Perry Bigelow, Jim Crafts, Chach Curtis, Beverly Kehoe, Lisa Loomis, John (MRVTV), Tom Marincic, Kate Marincic, Kathy Meyer, Michael Miller, Quayl Rewinski, Joshua Schwartz (MRVPD), Tim Seniff, Donald Steinhoff

Ms. Klein Corrigan called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm. The meeting was held in person at the Warren Town Offices and online via Zoom.

## Public Comment

Quayl Rewinski asked about the impact of the reappraisal on tax increase related to the bond for the Town Garage, Ms. Klein Corrigan explained that in general tax rates decrease as overall property values rise.

## Agenda Changes

Discussion of the Board's meeting schedule, an update on East Warren Schoolhouse work, a Festival Permit application, and a potential Executive Session were added to the agenda.

## East Warren Schoolhouse Painting

The color for the exterior of the Schoolhouse was discussed. Tim Seniff expressed that he was under the impression that the Town had no say in Schoolhouse operations; Ms. Klein Corrigan explained the agreement between the Town and Rootswork, noting that the Town owns the building and had recently become more involved in planning for long-term maintenance of the building, and that this current project includes repair of rotting exterior wood as well as painting. She then indicated that there is an interest in providing for uniformity among Town-owned buildings, and that the off white used on the Village buildings was more historically accurate than the bright white which is currently on the Schoolhouse.

## STR Update

Kerry Newton reviewed the report she had provided for the Board, noting an identification rate of 78.7%, a compliance rate of 29%, and $35,400 in fee receipts. She indicated that there continue to be delays and communication challenges with Granicus; Ms. Klein Corrigan explained that Granicus had been notified that the Town was not prepared to sign a contract renewal at this point, no further updates had been provided by the software company.

Ms. Newton asked whether penalties should be imposed at this point, as all associated letters had not yet been distributed, and that letters were only being sent in small batches being prepared by Granicus. She explained that Granicus has informed her that nobody gets the same letter twice, and so the system might be used to determine who should be fined. Ms. Klein Corrigan offered to meet with Ms. Newton to determine what fines are appropriate to be levied at this point. A draft of the second compliance letter, which outlines the penalty, had been provided to the Board for review.

Ms. Newton also asked about the upcoming November 1 renewal date for those who have registered. Mr. Bigelow pointed out that those who paid the registration fee at the onset of the process are in effect being penalized if required to renew before all STRs are registered and the fee paid.

Ms. Klein Corrigan clarified that the intent of the registration fee is to cover the cost of gathering the data necessary to determine the impacts of STRs on the community.

### Local Options Tax (LOT) Discussion with Mad River Valley Planning District

Joshua Schwartz presented information regarding a LOT, an allowable 1% tax that towns may charge on retail sales, alcoholic beverages, and/or rooms and meals. He noted that the same exemptions that apply to the state sales tax are included, for necessities such as groceries, medical supplies, and some clothing. Mr. Schwarts outlined that towns typically use the revenues raised through a LOT for infrastructure development and repair, emergency services, housing initiatives, and to address other fiscal challenges.

Mr. Schwartz provided some other general background information, and then reviewed related data pertinent to Warren. He indicated that the total receipts for the LOT categories from 2021 through 2024 indicated that model revenue for in-person sales would be approximately $416K annually, and explained that the Planning District attempted an estimate based upon data they were able to gather for online sales, which would bring the total annual revenue to approximately $495K. The impact on residents is estimated be approximately $178 per household annually, and the same revenue raised by property taxes would mean an increase of $282 per year on a home appraised at $450K.

Those in attendance raised several questions, for which answers were provided:

- Mr. Schwartz noted that there was no vocal opposition from Chamber of Commerce members, and that leadership supported the use of a LOT as strategy to support infrastructure needs that also benefit visitors.
- The LOT must be approved by a Town vote.
- Most towns either begin by taxing all three possible categories, or quickly decide to include all three after the initial period of charging a LOT on only one or two categories.
- Mr. Schwartz has been working to gather data to outline the percentages paid by residents vs visitors, but the necessary details are not available.
- The 25% of funds raised that is retained by the State is used for the PILOT program, although there is currently excess being collected, which is being used for other municipal purposes.
- The processing fee charged to towns which have implemented a LOT is used to cover administration of the system.
- Retail sales include ski passes, lift tickets, and ski equipment. The Tax Department has a list of items that are exempt as well as a list of taxable items.
- It was unclear where a LOT receipt would be credited for a company located in Waitsfield that offers delivery to Warren. Currently, if an item is delivered to Warren by such a firm, no LOT is charged. It was agreed that it is likely that the LOT credit would be Waitsfield's if Warren adopted a LOT.
- Rooms tax is collected from STRs, even those who have not been identified/registered with the Town.

Several comments were provided by people present at the meeting:

- There is anecdotal evidence that restaurant sales have diminished as tax rates have increased over the years.
- Support for a LOT if used for projects already planned, but not to fund new projects that would not have been initiated without LOT funding.
- Vermont is a high tax state, creating a high cost of living, in large part due to education funding.
- A preference for finding places to save rather than determining ways to raise more money.
- A suggestion that tripling the STR fee would be another potential revenue stream.

Ms. Klein Corrigan explained that the Board is seeking to build equity to the extent possible, while continuing to maintain the Town's infrastructure. She indicated that there would be further opportunities for public discussion of a LOT, and that potentially the matter will be voted on at Town Meeting in 2027.

## Quarter 2 Budget Review

Ms. Begin reviewed the budget and actuals to date, providing quarterly information. She had nothing of note to report, indicating that expenses were as anticipated. There was some discussion of adjustments that might be made to the spreadsheet used for this presentation, in order to provide further clarity for the Board during upcoming reviews.

## Other Business

Tax Rate – It was agreed to meet on July 30, 2026 at 2:30 pm to set the FY27 tax rate.

Festival Permit – Beverly Kehoe presented information regarding the Library's monthly Cookbook Club dinner being held in the covered bridge in August, to celebrate Covered Bridge Week. She noted that parking will be at the Town Hall, and that the building would be open for use as needed. No alcohol will be served at the event. Barricades will be needed to block traffic, Ms. Campbell explained related logistics. Board members asked that there be further coordination as necessary with Mr. Campbell for security and safety. Ms. Kehoe will confirm that the number of participants expected will not exceed the bridge's weight limit.

**MOTION:** *Mr. Taplin moved to approve the Festival Permit for Cookbook Club dinner, and to allow for closure of the covered bridge from 5:30 pm to 8:00 pm on August 3, 2026 so that the dinner may be held in the bridge. The motion was seconded by Ms. Klein Corrigan, and passed unanimously.*

Speed Humps Update – A quote of $20,250 had been received from ECI to reinstall the speed hump features, including warning markings for these and the existing speed tables. No other responses to the request for proposals had been received. It was confirmed that grant funds are available for this project.

**MOTION:** *Mr. Kemp moved to approve the quote of $20,250 from ECI for rebuilding the speed features per VHB specifications. The motion was seconded by Mr. Taplin, and passed unanimously.*

Meeting Schedule – Brent Adams had requested that the Board consider changing the August 11 Board meeting to another date, so that Board members can assist as Board of Civil Authority members with the primary election. Board members were unable to find a suitable replacement date for a quorum to attend, and agreed to schedule a later, 7:00 pm start time for the meeting, and individual members noted their availability earlier on August 11 to assist with polling.

Town Garage Update – Ms. Klein Corrigan reported that a well had been drilled to a depth of 800 feet, resulting in 1.1 gallons per minute (gpm); the Garage requires 5 gpm in order to operate as intended. Board members agreed that dowsing would be the next step to take, Ms. Klein Corrigan will arrange for this to take place. She noted that hydrofracturing would also be an option to consider, and other suggestions were offered, generally related to storage strategies.

## Administrative Items

**MOTION:** *A motion to approve the payroll warrant in the amount of $34,122.44 passed unanimously.*

**MOTION:** *A motion to approve the accounts payable warrant in the amount of $104,879.28 passed unanimously.*

**MOTION:** *A motion to approve the minutes of July 14, 2026 passed unanimously.*

**Executive Session**
**MOTION:** *A motion to enter Executive Session passed unanimously.*

The meeting entered Executive Session at 9:02 pm and returned to open session at 9:36 pm.

**MOTION:** *A motion to give the remaining funds from the Warren PTO Project Manager Contract to the Warren PTO to support playground infrastructure and maintenance improvements passed unanimously.*

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 9:38 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Carol Chamberlin

The Warren Selectboard

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| ________________________ | _________________________ |
| Devin Klein Corrigan, Chair | Joel Taplin, Vice Chair |
| ________________________ | __________________________ |
| Harvey Blake | Jeremiah Kemp |