

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MINUTES OF JANUARY 19, 2016
SHEPARD MUNICIPAL BUILDING**

PRESENT: Dario F. Nardi, Chairman, Robert E. Lavash Sr., Vice-Chairman, James A. Gagner Jr., Clerk

ATTENDEES: see attached listing

Chairman Nardi called the meeting to order at 7:00 and led the Pledge of Allegiance in the Selectmen's Meeting Room in the Shepard Municipal Building.

Chairman Nardi announced that tonight's meeting was being both video and audio taped and requested anyone in the audience to disclose if they are recording tonight's meeting. Ms. Colleen Montague acknowledged she was recording.

Minutes

None

Old Business

Mr. Nardi noted that concerns from resident in the area of Knox Trail are being addressed. He further noted that the area is part of the Warren Beaver Plan; developed in 2005.

Comments & Concerns

Ms. Soltys asked for a follow-up to her question as to officer LaFlower being paid for K-9 training. Mr. Nardi responded he had spoken with the Chief, who offered that there was an opening in the training slot schedule, therefore Officer LaFlower was enrolled. Mr. Gagner added that Chief Spiewakowski is a strong Chief and manages his department. Ms. Soltys asked what would have happened, had the Grant not come through. Mr. Nardi answered there was good indication the grant would have been approved. There was continued discussion on the matter of 'strong chief' and how the Selectboard could evaluate him [the Chief]. Mr. Nardi added that the Board works together with the Chief offering some directives at times. Ms. Soltys opined that "he [Chief] runs the Town and does what he wants". Resident, Leona Wrobel suggested folks not "...come to a Selectmen's meeting with questions about the police, or you will be labeled... on-line".

Mr. Stanley Soltys asked if the written responses to his list of questions regarding the K-9 unit had been read by the other two members. Both responded they had not. Mr. Soltys additionally inquired if Officer Mark Chase had retired. Mr. Nardi offered the matter is in progress and could not discuss.

Fire Chief Adam Lavoie spoke to the Board regarding a complaint raised over the mandatory retirement of a member in his department. At this time, the individual has been placed on administrative leave, pending further review by Town Council. It is his hope to re-assign and appoint this member to a 1st responder position on the ambulance, a non-fire-fighter position; to permit the member to stay active in the department and complete 50 years of service to the Town.

Correspondence

The Board reviewed the following:

1. The office received Notification under Chapter 61A for property located on Southbridge Road in Warren. The Town of Warren has 120 days to exercise its right of first refusal to the property. *Mr. Gagner referenced this parcel of land is the proposed site for the cell tower project.*
2. Chairman Nardi received an email from an individual with concerns over by-laws and rubbish/litter being left by the roadside which turns into the town's responsibility to remove. *Mr. Nardi spoke briefly on the matter. He referenced other concerns he has received and urges residents to contact the PD or our office when they see this offense. He additionally mentioned that the Board may bring an amendment to the current by-law.*

3. The office received an email from Louise Mundell, Secretary for the Warren Action Committee requesting an update on the recently completed PARP (Property Assessment and Re-use Planning Project). They are inquiring whether or not the BOS have any plans on for follow-up for this project and if any recommendations have been implemented. *Mr. Lavash made note that some of the properties in the report have come to some resolution. Mr. Nardi stated the Board is still looking at it.*
4. The office received an email from Chief Spiewakowski informing the Board that his office received the \$25,000.00 check from the Stanton Foundation related to the K-9 Program. *Noted*
5. The office received an email from Senator Gobi's office informing us that the Warren Fire Department has been awarded \$4,237.00 through the FY16 S.A.F.E. Grant. *Chief Lavoie stated the funding allows for the programs to continue at the schools along with the items/supplies for the kids.*
6. The office received notification from the Department of Conservation & Recreation that the Warren Fire Department has been awarded \$600.00 for funding under the 2015 Volunteer Fire Assistance Program. *Noted*
7. Chief Lavoie provided his monthly report for December 2015. *Noted*

7:15 PM – FY 2016 CDBG Public Hearing, presenter: Christopher Dunphy

Mr. Nardi opened the hearing at 7:15 and turned it over to Chris Dunphy.

Mr. Dunphy began by stating the purpose of the CDBG program and outlining typical projects funded by its grants. Tonight's hearing, which is on the proposed application for FY 2016 for Warren in conjunction with the towns of Ware & Hardwick (Ware River Valley) and current grant funded activities, was advertised in the local news publications and publicized via local cable access and flyers. The hearing notice was also posted in each community.

Mr. Dunphy recognized the members of the town's Community Development Advisory Committee and explained their role in developing the proposed projects to be discussed tonight. He encouraged community members to contact the committee members and attend committee meetings.

Mr. Dunphy noted the Community Development Block Grant was authorized by Congress, and is funded under Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has designated the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) as the state's administering agency for CDBG funding. The primary objective is: *"...to develop viable, urban communities by providing decent housing and suitable living environment and expanding economic opportunities principally for low- and moderate-income persons."* DHCD will fund eligible projects designed to meet this objective. In Warren, the Community Development Advisory Committee has targeted activities to Warren Center, West Warren, and vicinity.

For fiscal year 2016 the towns, with Warren as the lead community, are applying for approximately \$855,000.00. If funded, a Regional Housing Rehabilitation program \$406,000. will enable low to moderate income homeowners to make repairs to their homes, correct code violations and provide safe and healthy living environments. Financial Assistance will be made available to eligible homeowners for the rehabilitation of approximately 14 or more households throughout the towns of Warren, Ware and Hardwick. Up to \$35,000 will be made available for housing units with special considerations (Ex. Lead paint) and up to \$30,000 for all other units. Investor-owners can also take advantage of the program, but property owners will be required to provide a 25% match of the project cost or enter into a 0% loan for 50% of the total project cost payable over 15 years. Mr. Dunphy said that there are over many homeowners from the three towns that are currently on the waiting list for housing rehabilitation services. He indicated that the grant will only be able to help a small percentage of these. However, it is hopeful that emergencies can be identified and addressed. Also, PVPC staff can often direct people to other resources that may be able to provide assistance while a client waits for more comprehensive housing rehabilitation services.

In Warren, the Quaboag/School Street area Engineering Design Project at approximately (\$162,000.) Design engineering services will be sought to prepare plans and specifications for the future improvements of Quaboag Street, Lombard Street and Moore Avenue. The streets were part of a FY 2011 planning study which identified significant deficiencies to the public works systems throughout the area including potable water, storm water drainage, sanitary sewer, and streets and sidewalks. Completed engineering design will allow for shovel ready plans and specifications for future physical improvement efforts

Mr. Dunphy said additional funds may also be sought to support area public social services including assistance for Domestic Violence Prevention services, Adult Learning and Case Management services.

Adult Learning and Basic Education at the Ware Adult Learning Center - \$81,000

This is a social service project intended to provide adult literacy and basic education services to Warren, Ware and Hardwick residents. The primary location will be at the Ware Adult Learning Center, Main Street, Ware, MA. The project is to be carried out by staff of The Literacy Project and Ware Adult Learning Center.

Planned Approach to Community Health (PATCH) - \$51,000

Valley Human Services (VHS), a division of The Behavioral Health Network (BHN) will provide comprehensive support services to low and moderate income families within Warren, Ware and Hardwick to include but not be limited to counseling, case management, domestic violence advocacy (as part of the proposed DV task force), child care and transportation services.

Domestic Violence Prevention (PATCH) - \$35,000

Prevention services include support, advocacy, awareness, community education outreach and professional training. The project is to be carried out by a Regional Domestic Violence Task Force under the direction of the PVPC.

And an additional \$120,000 in the grant application would be for administration.

Mr. Dunphy noted that there were persons from Ware, Hardwick and members from Valley Human Services in attendance tonight in support of the proposed strategies in the application. For instance, Ms. JAC Patrissi of Valley Human Services spoke to the various public social services offered. She highlighted several of the complementary programs and their benefits to the residents of the communities they service. This grant funding helps greatly in subsidizing their outreach; support and advocacy programs. Further information on Valley Human Services and their programs can be found online or by contacting them at 413-967-6241.

Mr. Dunphy noted there is strong regional support from not only the Warren Selectboard but other Town departments and the other communities. Selectboard Chairman's from each community have provided a signed Joint Participation Form to show their support and approval of the application.

Mr. Nardi asked for any additional comments or questions from those in attendance. A question was raised as to the selection process regarding the Housing Rehab. Mr. Dunphy stated that it is on a 1st come 1st served basis. PVPC is entrusted with managing the list and evaluating the applicants based on eligibility. There are provisions for emergency situations and health/safety issues that may move an applicant up the list to address those specific needs.

The hearing closed at 7:40

A motion, that the town approves the submission of the proposed FY 2016 grant application and their respective activities to the DHCD, and furthermore authorizes the CEO and CFO to sign required forms when prepared. The town also acknowledges and accepts the recommendation of the Community Development Advisory Committee to include a request for funding for the Ware Adult Learning Center, a program of The Literacy Project; PATCH services, a program of the Valley Human Services and BHN; and Domestic Violence Prevention, a program of the Regional Domestic Violence Task Force managed by the PVPC, made by Mr. Nardi; second: Mr. Lavash - unanimous.

The Select board thanked Mr. Dunphy for his continuing efforts for the Town and with this year's application

Conflict of Interest Law – Town Clerk Request for Exemptions from Edu. & Training requirements for Poll Worker Positions, discussion, vote expected

There was a brief discussion on the request, following which a motion to exempt the appointed election officers from the distribution of summaries and the online training requirements as outlined in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts conflict of interest law, made by Mr. Nardi; second: Mr. Lavash – unanimous (listing of election officers attached at end of this document)

Senior Tax Abatement Program for 2016, discussion, vote expected

There was a brief discussion as to the number of current applicants (16) versus that of previous years (avg. 10-11) and the impact on the overlay account. A motion to accept the current 16 applicants for the 2016 program made by Mr. Gagner; second: Mr. Lavash – unanimous.

Warrant for Presidential Primary March 1, 2016, vote expected

Motion to accept and sign the Warrant, made by Mr. Lavash; second: Mr. Gagner – unanimous.

Ratify: Chairman Signature- on Signatory Listing for FY 2016 State 911 Dept. Training Grant & EMD Grant

Motion to Ratify Chairman’s signature on FY2016 grant documents, made by Mr. Lavash; second: Mr. Gagner – unanimous.

FY 2017 Budget Discussion(s)

Mr. Barry Mongeon, Finance Committee Chairman asked the Board to confirm, that they have called for a “level funded budget” from Town Departments. (Affirmed) He further stated that his FinCom was finalizing liaison assignments and would be providing departments with a fill-able excel spreadsheet with formulas completed in areas of the “salary-line items” that would assist them in completing their budgets. Furthermore, they intend to start meeting weekly the 1st of February.

There was discussion as to upgrading the wage classification plan, Mr. Nardi feels it is dated and that employees should have some type of an increase on a different schedule than the every 3 years, which is what is currently in place. There were changes last year; there is a consensus of the Board to move forward and update the WCP.

Treasury Warrants and Invoices

Motion to approve the following warrants made by Mr. Gagner; second: Mr. Lavash – unanimous

<u>Date</u>	<u>Warrant #</u>	<u>Amount</u>
01/18/2016	98	46,050.89
	100	38,676.69

Motion to approve the following warrants made by Mr. Nardi; second: Mr. Gagner – 1 abstention

<u>Date</u>	<u>Warrant #</u>	<u>Amount</u>
01/18/2016	99	254.41

New Business

Mr. Gagner stated he had attending the recent meeting held by Mary Lane Hospital over their proposed consolidation plan. There is indication that the in-patient portion of the hospital will be closing, however there is no timeline at this point. Chief Lavoie stated he had received notice that the Occupational Business office would be closing February 1st and that the Town would be impacted by this closure.

Mr. Nardi stated he had attended a recent planning meeting where the both the Green Communities and Community Compact programs were discussed and decided to invite Mr. Barry to attend a supplemental meeting.

Next Meeting Date: January 26, 2016 @ 7:00 PM

Motion to Adjourn made by Mr. Lavash; second: Mr. Gagner – unanimous at 8:12 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Lorena Prokop
Administrative Secretary

James Gagner, Clerk