

WARREN BOARD OF SELECTMEN
PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES
Tuesday, August 26, 2025

Select Board Members Present: Chairwoman Shirley McCartin, Charles Sackett, Jeremy Hair. Town Administrator, Austin Albro was also present.

Public Present: Don Bagley, Donald Bagley, Tom Mantz, Lisa Mantz, Karen Youngman, Donna Campbell, Sheila Foote, Bryan Flagg, Sue Flagg, Jayne McCulloch, Victoria Berger, Christine Hytenin, Samantha Catterall, Sylvia Heath, Charlie Chandler, Cindy Hope, Maria Sanders, Peter Tompkins, Judy Tompkins, Kelli Shepherd, Dan Barker, John Eilas, Aileen Elias, Donna Borgess, Ashley Clark, Preston Clark, Ted Asselin, Jeffrey Spencer, Tom Babbit, Heather Sackett and others.

Chairwoman McCartin thanked the residents for attending the public hearing regarding the potential purchase of 446 Route 25 and led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Selectman Sackett moved to open the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Chairwoman McCartin. Vote: McCartin – yes, Hair – yes, Sackett – yes. The motion passed unanimously, 3-0-0.

Chairwoman McCartin declared the public hearing open at 5:15 PM and reviewed the informational packet.

Fire Chief Arthur Heath clarified that approval at a potential special town meeting would require a two-thirds majority vote. The Administrator confirmed that a two-thirds ballot vote is required under state budget law, as the total bond exceeds \$100,000.

Tori Berger stated that this was potentially the worst decision brought forward for consideration since her arrival in Town. She expressed that the building did not meet the needs of the Fire Department and would not address its long-term challenges without an addition.

Bryan Flagg inquired as to the disposition of the Fire Department/Public Safety Building Fund should the property be purchased. The Administrator clarified that the funds could not be used for purchase but could be used for repairs, and that any change in the purpose of the trust fund would require approval at Town Meeting.

Tom Babbitt suggested that a building inspection be conducted if the Town were to move forward.

John Alias expressed concerns that \$165,000 may not be sufficient to remodel 446 Route 25 and raised additional issues.

Fire Chief Heath provided an overview of current deficiencies in the Fire Department building, including inadequate space to move around trucks and doors with low clearance. He also shared ideas regarding the future of the Fire Department's facility.

Ashley Clark, a volunteer at the Food Pantry, emphasized the importance of the organization to many residents and families in Town and expressed a strong desire to ensure its continued presence. Selectman Sackett reported that the Board had recently met with Ed Shanshala, CEO of Ammonoosuc Community Health Services, the fiduciary agent for the Food Pantry, and that options for the Pantry and potential funding opportunities are being explored.

Aileen Elias inquired whether the storage containers were part of the sale. It was clarified that they were not included and would be removed.

Tom Mantz suggested that the Town gather information on the overall needs of the community before proceeding.

Jeffrey Spencer expressed his support and appreciation for the Fire Department.

Maria Sanders asked whether costs incurred for bond counsel would depend upon Town Meeting approval or whether such costs would begin immediately. The Administrator indicated that he believed costs would be incurred at the outset of the process.

Tom Babbitt asked whether the KP Hall had been considered as a potential location for the Food Pantry. Further discussion included mention of the Town Hall, Church, Moose Scoops, the school, and other possible sites.

Selectman Sackett reiterated that maintaining the Food Pantry for residents was a priority, though no turnkey solution was readily available. He noted that ACHS CEO Shanshala has been in contact with Senator Shaheen regarding long-term funding options and immediate, short-term solutions, including the potential procurement of a FEMA emergency trailer if needed.

John Alias asked Fire Chief Heath whether the ambulance offered to the Town was necessary. Chief Heath discussed the advantages of having a suitable

rescue vehicle as the department works toward EMR and non-transport licensure. He noted that firefighters currently respond to medical emergencies in their personal vehicles.

Charlie Chandler acknowledged that productive discussion had taken place on several important issues facing the Town. He expressed appreciation to the Board of Selectmen for bringing the potential purchase before the residents, stating that such openness exemplifies good government. He believed the sentiment of the residents was not to move forward with the purchase but reiterated his appreciation to the Board for seeking public input and conducting the hearing. He also acknowledged the Board's frugality and care.

Don Bagley, member of the Warren Wentworth Ambulance Service Board of Directors, provided information regarding the organization's total debt.

Donna Campbell expressed concerns about the proposed purchase.

Peter Boncek agreed that the building should be inspected if the Town moved forward and sought clarification regarding the trust funds. Treasurer Sheila Foote explained that the fund's language permitted expenditures for "construction" and "reconstruction," but not for purchase.


Selectman Sackett emphasized that the purpose of the hearing was to gather residents' opinions and information to assist in deciding whether to proceed. He expressed appreciation for the input and reminded residents that the Board makes decisions based on the will of the people.

Chairwoman McCartin polled the audience, and the overwhelming majority were not in favor of moving forward with a special town meeting

Tori Berger stated that she appreciated the Board seeking residents' input.

Charlie Chandler reiterated his appreciation and thanked the Board of Selectmen for their efforts.

Selectman Hair moved to close the public hearing at 6:02 PM. The motion was seconded by Chairwoman McCartin. Vote: McCartin – yes, Hair – yes, Sackett – yes. The motion passed unanimously, 3-0-0.



Selectman, Chuck Sackett Jr. Selectman, Jeremy Hair Chairwoman, Shirley McCartin

Public Hearing: Potential Purchase of 446 NH Route 25, Warren, NH 03279

Thank you for attending! This public hearing was scheduled in response to resident interest in the Town purchasing 446 NH Route 25 following the closure of the Warren Wentworth Ambulance Service (WWAS).

Tonight, we will gather community input on whether the Town should proceed with the steps required to hold a Special Town Meeting to fund this potential purchase.



(446 NH Route 25, Zillow)

Property Offer:

- The building was offered to the Town by members of the WWAS Board for \$450,000, a figure estimated to represent the organization's total debt.
- While the Town anticipates that WWAS leadership will provide the "bottom dollar" cost to the taxpayers representing the organization's actual debt, the Town has drafted language for a potential warrant article, should residents support moving forward at the offered price.
- Exclusions from the sale:
 - No ambulances or emergency medical equipment
 - No storage containers currently located on the property
 - No equipment owned or used by the Warren Food Pantry, which currently occupies a portion of the building's basement rent-free

Funding (If Residents Support Proceeding to a Special Town Meeting):

If the Town proceeds with the Special Town Meeting, residents will be asked to vote on an article similar to this:

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Four Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$450,000) for the purchase of property located at 446 NH Route 25, Warren, NH (Tax Map 140, Lot 015), for municipal purposes, and to authorize the issuance of not more than Four Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$450,000) of bonds or notes in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA 33) and to authorize the Select Board to negotiate and execute such agreements, contracts, and other instruments as may be necessary to accomplish this purchase, including applying for, accepting, and expending any available state or federal grants or other aid to reduce the amount to be borrowed; further to authorize the Select Board to determine the terms, conditions, and manner of such borrowing, pursuant to RSA 33:3. Two-thirds (2/3) ballot vote required.

The Fire Department/Public Safety Building Capital Reserve Fund has a balance of \$164,187 as of July 31. Based on how the fund was established in 2013, this money appears to be available for construction but not the purchase of a building or property.

A 30-year fixed rate (5.5%) loan with a purchase price of \$450,000 creates an annual payment of \$30,660. Over the life of the loan, the Town would repay a total of \$919,818, including interest. This does not include additional funds for regular expenses such as maintenance, utilities, and insurance.

A 15-year fixed rate (4.5%) loan with a purchase price of \$450,000 creates an annual payment of \$41,309. Over the life of the loan, the Town would repay a total of \$619,644, including interest.

This does not include additional funds for regular expenses such as maintenance, utilities, and insurance.

Municipal Tax Rate Calculation			
Jurisdiction	Tax Effort	Valuation	Tax Rate
Municipal	\$654,389	\$110,571,497	\$5.92
County	\$142,850	\$110,571,497	\$1.29
Local Education	\$1,533,650	\$110,571,497	\$13.87
State Education	\$159,306	\$95,417,897	\$1.67
Total	\$2,490,195		\$22.75

(2024 Tax Rate, NH DRA)

Tax Rate Implications:

For every \$110,000 raised through taxation, the tax rate increases by approximately \$1.00 per \$1,000 of assessed value.

30 Year: The annual payment of \$30,660 equates to an annual cost of \$0.278 per \$1000 of assessed property value. A home valued at \$300,000 could expect to see an increase of \$81 to cover the annual payment.

15 Year: The annual payment of \$41,309 equates to an annual cost of \$0.375 per \$1000 of assessed property value. A home valued at \$300,000 could expect to see an increase of \$112.50 to cover the annual payment.

For reference: If voters were asked to raise and appropriate the funds one time from taxation, the tax rate impact would be \$4.09 per \$1000 of assessed property value. A home valued at \$300,000 could expect to see an increase of \$1,227.27 to cover the one-time payment.

Alternatively, if the property were sold to a taxable entity and returned to the tax rolls, the Town would expect to receive approximately \$6,736 annually in property tax revenue, based on the current tax rate and assessed value.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Update:

This information is provided so residents understand current EMS capacity in Warren. Regardless of whether the Town purchases 446 NH Route 25, EMS training and licensing efforts will continue.

- The Warren Volunteer Fire Department is actively recruiting community members to serve as emergency medical responders.
- The department is also working to obtain a non-transport license, allowing local trained responders to provide care until a transport ambulance from Plymouth Fire & Rescue arrives.
- The Town is committed to supporting residents who join the department and seek emergency medical response and related licensure.
- At present, the department does not have the equipment, certifications, or manpower needed to provide transport ambulance services.
- The department held two informational opportunities for Emergency Medical Responder training (August 12 & August 14) and no new volunteers attended. Five firefighters and our Chief of Police are enrolled in the upcoming EMR training.

Residents interested in becoming an emergency medical responder are encouraged to contact Fire Chief Arthur Heath for details.

Process Overview (If Public Input Supports Moving Forward):

- If the outcome of this hearing supports moving forward, the Town will petition the Court for approval to hold a Special Town Meeting and proceed with securing bond counsel.
- The process from submitting a petition to the Court to Special Town Meeting Day will take approximately 8 weeks.
- Estimated costs: \$4,000 – \$6,000 to secure bond counsel and \$1,600 for meeting day expenses.

Public Hearing → Court Petition → Bond Hearing → Post Warrant → Special Town Meeting

Additional Considerations

2025 Town Meeting Funds:

- The Town raised and appropriated \$325,000 at Town Meeting 2025.
- Of that amount, \$110,000 was paid to WWAS for coverage through July. When service ended on July 9, this left an estimated \$19,000–\$20,000 of service owed to the Town.
- The Town then entered into an agreement with Plymouth Fire and Rescue and will pay \$1,500 per call through Town Meeting 2026.
- Any remaining funds from the 2025 appropriation will, if available:
 - Be applied to reduce the final tax rate, or
 - Be used to offset future warrant article expenditures from fund balance, or
 - If necessary, be retained in the unassigned fund balance.

Outstanding Balance of WWAS Funds:

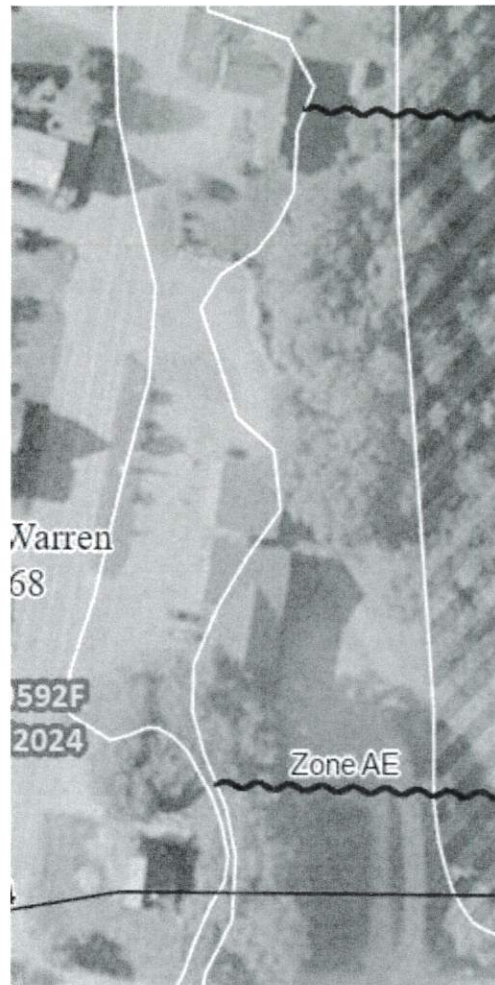
- A member of the WWAS Board of Directors indicated that the IRS granted WWAS permission to give the Town their newly acquired 2003 Ford Ambulance in exchange for the monies owed to the Town. The Town is currently working to schedule an inspection and review of the vehicle's condition.
- If acquired, the ambulance would provide a rescue vehicle for members of the Fire Department to respond to emergency medical calls. Currently, department members are responding in their personal vehicles.

Food Pantry:

- A member of the WWAS Board of Directors indicated a 90-day clause will be put in place to allow the Food Pantry to find a new location.
- The Town is exploring possible locations and solutions.

Location:

- A portion of 446 NH Route 25 lies within FEMA's Special Flood Hazard Area (Zone AE), which may require compliance with federal floodplain management standards for certain improvements.



(446 NH Route 25, FEMA)

We are grateful you attended and are relying on your input to determine our next steps. Please share your questions, concerns, and suggestions.

Should the Town proceed with the steps to hold a Special Town Meeting so voters can decide whether to borrow funds to purchase 446 NH Route 25?