

**CHARTER**  
**TOWN OF**  
**WARREN, RHODE ISLAND**

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Adopted November 7, 1996 by Order of the Town Council

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**municode**

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OFFICIALS

of the

TOWN OF

WARREN, RI

AT THE TIME OF THIS PUBLICATION

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Joseph DePasquale, President  
Keri M. Cronin, Vice President  
Christopher W. Stanley  
John W. Hanley  
Steven R. Thompson  
*Town Council*

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Jan H. Reitsm  
*Town Manager*

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Anthony DeSisto, Esquire  
*Town Solicitor*

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Julie A. Coelho  
*Town Clerk*



## PREFACE

Printed herein is the publication of the Charter of the Town of Warren, RI.

Source materials used in the preparation of the Charter were the 1996 Charter, as amended through Nov. 8, 2016, and ordinances subsequently adopted by the Town Council. The source of each section is included in the history note appearing in parentheses at the end thereof. The absence of such a note indicates that the section is new and was adopted for the first time with the adoption of the Charter. By use of the comparative table appearing in the back of this Charter, the reader can locate any section of the 1996 Charter, as supplemented, and any subsequent ordinance included herein.

### *Page Numbering System*

The page numbering system used in this Charter is a prefix system. The letters to the left of the colon are an abbreviation which represents a certain portion of the volume. The number to the right of the colon represents the number of the page in that portion. The following are typical parts of a Charter, which appear in this Charter at this time, and their corresponding prefixes:

CHARTER	CHT:1
CHARTER COMPARATIVE TABLE	CHTCT:1
CHARTER INDEX	CHTi:1

### *Index*

The index has been prepared with the greatest of care. Each particular item has been placed under several headings, some of which are couched in lay phraseology, others in legal terminology, and still others in language generally used by local government officials and employees. There are numerous cross references within the index itself which stand as guideposts to direct the user to the particular item in which the user is interested.

### *Looseleaf Supplements*

A special feature of this publication is the looseleaf system of binding and supplemental servicing of the publication. With this system, the

publication will be kept up to date. Subsequent amendatory legislation will be properly edited, and the affected page or pages will be reprinted. These new pages will be distributed to holders of copies of the publication, with instructions for the manner of inserting the new pages and deleting the obsolete pages.

Keeping this publication up to date at all times will depend largely upon the holder of the publication. As revised pages are received, it will then become the responsibility of the holder to have the amendments inserted according to the attached instructions. It is strongly recommended by the publisher that all such amendments be inserted immediately upon receipt to avoid misplacing them and, in addition, that all deleted pages be saved and filed for historical reference purposes.

#### *Acknowledgments*

This publication was under the direct supervision of Roger Merriam, Code Attorney, Alexis Legate, Editor, and Janet Cramer, Proofreader, of the Municipal Code Corporation, Tallahassee, Florida. Credit is gratefully given to the other members of the publisher's staff for their sincere interest and able assistance throughout the project.

The publisher is most grateful to Julie A. Coelho for her cooperation and assistance during the progress of the work on this publication. It is hoped that their efforts and those of the publisher have resulted in a Charter which will make the active law of the town readily accessible to all citizens and which will be a valuable tool in the day-to-day administration of the town's affairs.

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\***Editor's note**—Printed herein is the Charter of the town, as adopted by the Town Council on November 7, 1996, as amended through November 8, 2016. Amendments to this Charter are indicated by parenthetical history notes following amended provisions. The absence of a history note indicates that the provision remains unchanged from the original Charter. Obvious misspellings and punctuation errors have been corrected without notation. For stylistic purposes, headings and catchlines have been made uniform and the same system of capitalization, citation to state statutes, and expression of numbers in text as appears in the Code of Ordinances has been used. Additions made for clarity are indicated by brackets.

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**PREAMBLE**

We, the people of the Town of Warren, in order to secure the right of self-government in all local matters, pursuant to the provisions of Article XIII of the Constitution of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, do adopt and establish this Charter.

**ARTICLE I. BASIC PROVISIONS****Section 1.01 Incorporation**

The inhabitants of the Town of Warren in the State of Rhode Island, within the corporate limits as now established or as hereafter established in the manner provided by law, shall continue to be a municipal body politic and corporate, under the name of the Town of Warren in perpetuity, to be governed under the provisions of this Home Rule Charter as adopted and as it may be amended from time to time.

**Section 1.02 Form of Government**

The municipal government by this Charter shall be known as "Council-Manager" form of government.

**Section 1.03 Powers of the Town of Warren**

The Town of Warren shall have all the powers possible for a town to have, now or hereafter under the Constitution and laws of this State, fully and completely as though they were specifically enumerated in this Charter. Without limitation of the foregoing, the Town of Warren shall have all the powers now or hereafter granted to towns by the Constitution and General Laws of the State together with all the implied or incidental powers necessary to carry into execution the powers granted. The Town may acquire property within or without its corporate limits for any Town purpose, in fee simple or any lesser interest or estate, by purchase, gift, devise, lease, or condemnation, and may sell, lease, mortgage, hold, manage and control such property as its interest may require; and, except as prohibited by the Constitution of this State or restricted by this Charter, the Town shall and may exercise all municipal powers, functions, rights, privileges and immunities of every name and nature whatsoever. The enumeration of particular powers by this Charter shall not be deemed to be exclusive, and in addition to the powers enumerated herein or implied hereby, or appropriate to the exercise of such powers, it is intended that the Town of Warren shall have and may exercise all powers which, under the Constitution of this State, it would be competent for the Charter specifically to enumerate.

**Section 1.04 Intergovernmental Agreements**

The Town of Warren may, with the approval of the Town Council, enter into contracts or cooperative agreements with the Federal Government, with the State, or with any political subdivision thereof, for the performance of any service, the use of any facilities, for the combination of services and/or functions, and for the financing thereof.

**ARTICLE II. ELECTIONS****Section 2.01 General Town Elections**

A regular election of Town officers shall be held in even numbered years at the time provided by law for state elections.

**Section 2.02 Election Laws and Conduct of Elections**

The provisions of the Constitution and the General Laws of the State of Rhode Island now or hereafter in effect pertaining to elections, special, general and primary, and also all special acts pertaining to elections, in the Town of Warren now in effect shall govern all Town elections, special, general and primary, so far as they may be applicable, excepting those provisions which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Charter affecting the form of government.

**Section 2.03 Initiative and Referendum**

(a) The electors of the Town of Warren shall have the right to petition to initiate and repeal ordinances in the following manner:

- (1) Initiative: The electors of the Town of Warren shall have the power to propose ordinances to the Town Council and, if the Town Council fails to adopt an ordinance so proposed without any change in substance, to adopt such ordinance at a special or general election; provided, however, that such power shall not extend to the Budget or Capital Program or to any ordinance relating to the appropriation of money, levy of taxes or zoning.
- (2) Referendum: The electors of the Town of Warren shall have the power to require reconsideration by the Town Council of any adopted ordinance and, if the Town Council fails to repeal an ordinance so reconsidered, to repeal such ordinance at a special election; provided, however, that such power shall not extend to the Budget or Capital Program, to any emergency ordinance or to any ordinance relating to appropriation of money, levy of taxes or zoning.

(b) **Commencement of proceedings:** Any five (5) qualified electors of the Town of Warren may commence initiative or referendum proceedings by filing with the Town Clerk an affidavit stating that they will constitute the petitioners' committee and be responsible for circulating the petition and filing it in proper form. The affidavit shall state the names and addresses of said electors, specify the address to which all notices to the committee are to be sent, and set out in full the proposed initiative ordinance or

cite the ordinance sought to be reconsidered. Promptly after the affidavit of the petitioners' committee is filed, the Town Clerk shall issue the appropriate petition blanks to petitioners' committee.

**(c) Signing and filing of petitions and Town Council action on them:**

- (1) Initiative and referendum petitions to the Town Council must be signed by ten (10%) percent, but not less than five hundred (500) of the total number of electors registered at the most recent Town of Warren general election. The Board of Canvassers shall promptly determine the sufficiency of valid signatures on any such petition, and shall certify such petition to the Town Clerk when such a determination has been made.
- (2) When an initiative or referendum petition has been certified as sufficient, the Town Council shall promptly consider the proposed initiative ordinance or reconsider the referred ordinance, in either case, in the same manner as provided for adoption of an ordinance proposed by a member of the Town Council. If the Town Council fails to adopt a proposed initiative ordinance without any change in substance, or fails to repeal the referred ordinance, as the case may be, within sixty (60) days after the date the petition is certified, the Town Council shall submit the proposal or referred ordinance to the voters of the Town of Warren.

**(d) Submission to voters:** The vote of the Town of Warren on a proposed or referred ordinance shall be held at a regular or special election not less than sixty (60) days and not more than one hundred (100) days from the date the petition is certified by the Canvassers. The proposed or referred ordinance shall be published by the Town Clerk not less than twenty (20) days prior to the election.

**(e) Deadline for submission of petitions and withdrawal of petitions:**

- (1) If an initiative or referendum petition bearing the signatures of at least ten (10%) percent, but not less than five hundred (500) of the total number of the electors has not been submitted to the Town Clerk within one hundred twenty (120) days after the issuance of the petition blanks, then the initiative or referendum petition shall be considered as withdrawn and shall have no further force or effect and all proceedings thereon shall be terminated.
- (2) An initiative or referendum petition may be withdrawn at any time prior to the fifteenth (15<sup>th</sup>) day preceding the day scheduled for a vote of the Town of Warren by filing with the Town Clerk a request for withdrawal signed by at least

four (4) members of the petitioners' committee. Upon the filing of such request, the petition shall have no further force or effect and all proceedings thereon shall be terminated.

**(f) Results of vote on initiative or referendum questions:**

- (1) Initiative: If a majority of the qualified electors voting on a proposed initiative ordinance vote in its favor, it shall be considered adopted upon certification of election results, and it shall be treated in all respects in the same manner as ordinances of the same kind adopted by the Town Council, provided, however, that any ordinance enacted pursuant to subsection (c)(2) or (f)(1) of this section may not be repealed or amended as to substance less than one (1) year following its adoption. If conflicting ordinances are approved at the same election, the one receiving the greatest number of affirmative votes shall prevail to the extent of such conflict.
- (2) Referendum: If a majority of the qualified electors voting on a referred ordinance vote against it, it shall be considered repealed upon certification of the election results. No referred ordinance repealed pursuant to subsection (c) (2) or (f) (2) of this section shall be reenacted by the Town Council less than one (1) year following its repeal.

**Section 2.04 Recall**

Any elected official of the Town of Warren may be recalled or removed from office by the electors of the Town. Any elector of the Town of Warren may file with the Town Clerk, a statement of intent containing the name and title of the elected official whose removal is sought. The petition shall have the signatures of at least five hundred (500) electors and the notarized signature of each collector. Within seven (7) days after receipt of the petition, the Board of Canvassers having certified the petition, the Town Clerk shall notify the official involved by certified mail. The recall vote shall be taken no earlier than thirty (30) days and no later than forty-five (45) days after certification of the petition by the Board of Canvassers, but in no case shall a recall vote be taken within the last 180 days of a term. No such vote shall be taken if the elected official shall resign from office before the taking of such vote. Said recall election shall be called and conducted in the same manner as is provided in the General Laws of the State of Rhode Island for special Elections. The form of the question to be voted shall be substantially as follows: "Shall (here insert the name and title of the elected official whose recall is sought) be recalled?" A majority vote of the electors to recall such elected official shall not be effective unless a total of at least twenty-five (25%) percent of the number of

electors who voted in the last general election shall have voted on the recall question. If approved, the recall of such an elected official shall become effective upon certification of the results of the voting thereon. If any elected official shall be recalled, the vacancy created shall be filled in the manner provided in this Charter.

**ARTICLE III. TOWN COUNCIL****Section 3.01 Composition**

There shall be a Town Council that shall exercise the legislative powers of the Town of Warren.

**Section 3.02 Number, Election and Term**

The Town Council shall consist of five (5) members who shall be elected at large at the regular biennial elections as follows:

In 2018, the three (3) candidates who, among the five (5) winning candidates, receive the most votes, shall be elected to serve terms of four (4) years, and the two (2) candidates who, among the five (5) winning candidates, receive the fewest votes, shall be elected to serve for terms of two (2) years;

In 2020, and every fourth year thereafter, two (2) members shall be elected to serve terms of four (4) years (and thereafter until their successors are elected and qualified), and

In 2022, and every fourth year thereafter, three (3) members shall be elected to serve four (4) year terms (and thereafter until their successors are elected and qualified).

**Section 3.03 Term Limit**

As of December 2018, members of the Town Council shall serve no more than eight (8) consecutive years.

**Section 3.04 Eligibility**

Only qualified voters who, at all times during their term of office, shall be and remain residents of the Town of Warren, shall be eligible to hold the office of Town Council member.

**Section 3.05 Qualifications**

A. A member of the Town Council shall hold no other public town office or full time employment in the service of the Town of Warren. A member of the Town Council shall not be eligible for appointment to any office in the Town of Warren during the term for which s/he was elected to the Town Council or for one (1) year thereafter.

B. Only residents of Warren are eligible to be members of the Warren Town Council. A person shall be a resident of Warren if Warren is his or her fixed and established domicile. The determinant of one's domicile is that person's factual physical presence in

the Town of Warren on a regular basis incorporating an intention to reside in Warren for an indefinite period. Warren is the place to which, upon temporary absence, he or she has the intention of returning. A determination of whether an individual is a resident of Warren will be made with reference to the factors set forth in R.I. Gen. Laws 17-1-3.1, Residence for voting purposes.

C. A determination of whether an individual is a resident of Warren is to be made by the Warren Town Council, except that if the Warren residency of a particular Town Councilor is in question, then that person whose residency is challenged will not participate in any deliberation or vote regarding her or his residency.

D. Except as otherwise stated in this Charter, all members of any Board or Commission appointed by the Warren Town Council shall be subject to the same residency requirements as members of the Warren Town Council.

### **Section 3.06 Commencement of Term**

The term of a Town Council member shall begin at the first December meeting of the Town Council to be held after the issuance of a certificate of election.

### **Section 3.07 Regular Meetings**

The Town Council shall meet regularly at least once a month on the second Tuesday of the month at 7:00 PM in a public building in the Town of Warren. The Town Clerk shall post all meetings in accordance with the Open Meetings Laws of the State of Rhode Island.

### **Section 3.08 Special Meetings**

Special meetings may be held at the call of the President. The President must call a special meeting upon the written request of any three (3) or more members of the Town Council. Notice of a special meeting shall be delivered in writing to each member of the Town Council, the Town Manager and the Town Clerk, or left for him/her at his/her home or place of business at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the time fixed for the special meeting. Any member may waive his/her right to receive such written notice of a special meeting, and such waiver shall be entered in the record of the proceedings of such special meeting. The purpose of a special meeting shall be stated in the notice of the meeting and no business shall be transacted at any special meeting other than that stated in the notice. Special Town Council meetings shall be held in a public building in the Town of Warren.



**Section 3.09 Quorum and Procedures**

A quorum shall consist of three (3) or more members of the Town Council, and except as otherwise provided in this Charter, the affirmative vote of a minimum of three (3) Town Council members shall decide any issue.

A full, accurate, and up-to-date record of the proceedings of the Town Council shall be kept and shall be open to inspection by the public in accordance with the Open Meetings Law. Any correspondence addressed to the Town Council, or the President as head of the Council, shall be part of the next regular meeting agenda. Regular meetings of the Town Council shall provide for a period of public comment related to each item on the agenda, except that there may be a consent agenda which shall contain items of normal business which shall be taken up as one vote. The consent agenda items shall be marked as consent agenda items on the published agenda prior to the meeting. Consent agenda items may be taken off the consent agenda to allow for public discussion or for public comment by any member of the public. The presiding officer of the meeting shall regulate the period of public comment as he or she may deem appropriate, subject to a vote by the Town Council to overrule the presiding officer and extend the period of public comment. No official vote shall be taken at any meeting that is not open to the public.

**Section 3.10 Presiding Officer**

The Town Council shall annually in December elect from among its members a President and Vice President, each of whom will serve at the pleasure of the Town Council. The President shall preside at meetings of the Town Council and rule on matters of procedure. The President shall have the right to speak and vote as any other member. The Vice President shall act as President during the absence or temporary disability of the President. The Town Council President shall be recognized as head of the Town government for all ceremonial purposes and by the Governor for purposes of military law, but shall have no administrative duties except as otherwise authorized by law.

**Section 3.11 Declaration of State of Emergency**

The President of the Town Council shall have the power and authority to declare a state of emergency in the event of disaster, catastrophe, or other similar event, or in the imminent danger thereof which endangers the public peace, health, safety, welfare and the protection of property of the inhabitants of the Town of Warren and to take such lawful action as he or she deems necessary.

**Section 3.12 General Powers and Duties**

Except as otherwise provided by law or by the Charter, all powers of the Town of Warren shall be vested in the Town Council which shall provide for their exercise and for the performance of all duties and obligations imposed on the Town of Warren by law. The powers and duties of the Town Council shall include but not be limited to the following:

- (1) To hire the Town Manager and negotiate the terms of his/her employment contract;
- (2) To declare a vacancy of office;
- (3) To ratify the hiring of Department Heads by the Town Manager;
- (4) To appoint Boards and Commissions;
- (5) To ratify all contracts negotiated by the Town Manager;
- (6) To assume financial responsibility for the operation of the Town;
- (7) To ensure a procedure to review all invoices is established and followed so that Town expenditures are made in accordance with the approved budget;
- (8) To review on a monthly basis requests for non-budgeted or over-budget expenditures;
- (9) To authorize, by majority vote, over-expenditures of budgeted line items;
- (10) To serve as Licensing Board and as such to grant, suspend or revoke licenses and permits in accordance with the law; and
- (11) To investigate the affairs of the Town of Warren or any department or division thereof and hear complaints in relation to matters concerning the administration of the government of the Town of Warren.

**Section 3.13 Non-Interference by the Town Council**

The Town Council or any of its members shall not direct or request the appointment of any person to office or their removal from office by the Town Manager or by any of his/her subordinates. Except for the purpose of inquiry, the Town Council and its members shall deal with the administrative service solely through the Town Manager, and neither the Town Council nor any member thereof shall give orders to any subordinates of the Town Manager either publicly or privately. Regular discussions with subordinates of the Town Manager concerning day to day operations related to inquiries or suggestions by residents are permitted.

**Section 3.14 Compensation**

The Town Council may from time to time fix the annual salary of each Town Council member and of the President of the Town Council, subject to final budget approval, provided however, that no such ordinance changing the salary of the Town Council members or the President of the Town Council shall become effective during the current term of any Town Council member. No action changing the salary of the Town Council shall be taken within the thirty (30) days preceding an election.

A Town Council member shall not accept any money from the Town of Warren for services rendered except in his/her capacity as Town Council member.

**Section 3.15 Declaration of Vacancy**

The Town Council shall declare a vacancy on the Town Council according to Section 3.15 of this Charter.

**Section 3.16 Vacancy**

The office of Town Council member shall become vacant upon the following:

- (1) Death
- (2) Resignation in writing filed with the Town Clerk
- (3) Removal from office in any manner authorized by law
- (4) Forfeiture of office, as defined in Section 3.16 of this Charter
- (5) Vacancy of office as defined in Section 18.12 of this Charter

**Section 3.17 Forfeiture of Office**

A Town Council member shall forfeit his/her office if he/she:

- (1) Lacks, at any time during his/her term of office, any qualifications for the office prescribed by the Charter, or by law;
- (2) Is found to have violated any express provision of this Charter pursuant to Section 18.16 hereof;
- (3) Is convicted of any crime which would constitute a felony in any jurisdiction;
- (4) Is recalled by voters in accordance with this Charter;
- (6) Demonstrates any other intent to vacate such office.

**Section 3.18 Filling a Vacancy**

The vacancy of a seat on the Town Council shall be filled by special election if the unexpired term exceeds six (6) months. The special election shall be held no earlier than seventy (70) days and no later than ninety (90) days after the vacancy occurs. The replacement candidate shall be sworn into office upon certification of his/her election. If the unexpired term is less than six (6) months, the seat shall remain vacant until the next regular Town election. Should a candidate become unable to serve before being certified, the Board of Canvassers shall certify the next highest vote getter from the recent election as the elected official.

**Section 3.19 Adoption of Ordinances**

Except in the case of the Zoning Ordinances and other ordinances for which the procedure for adoption and publication is prescribed by State Law, the following procedure shall be followed by the Town Council in adopting ordinances of the Town of Warren:

- (1) Any ordinance may be introduced by any member of the Town Council at any regular or special meeting of the Town Council.
- (2) Upon introduction, the ordinance shall receive its first reading, verbatim, unless such reading is waived by the majority vote of the members of Town Council present.
- (3) The ordinance shall then be referred to the Town Solicitor for his/her review as to form and legality.
- (4) The proposed ordinance shall be delivered to the Town Clerk by the Town Solicitor, and the Town Clerk shall prepare a sufficient number of copies of the same so that one (1) copy thereof may be delivered by him/her to each member of the Town Council at or prior to the next regular meeting of the Town Council. The Town Clerk shall cause to be published the title of such ordinance and an informative summary thereof at least once in a newspaper having general circulation in the Town of Warren.
- (5) The proposed ordinance shall again be presented and read, which reading may be by title and informative summary only, at such next regular meeting of the Town Council at which the Town Council shall accept public comment. If adopted, unless otherwise expressly provided in such ordinance, it shall become effective fifteen (15) days thereafter.

- (6) If, in the opinion of the Town Council, an emergency exists, an ordinance pertinent to the emergency may be passed at the same meeting at which it is introduced, to become effective immediately upon publication of the title or an informative summary thereof in some newspaper having general circulation in the Town of Warren. An emergency ordinance shall contain a specific statement of the emergency upon which it is based.
- (7) In the case of zoning ordinances and other ordinances for which the procedure for adoption and publication is prescribed by State Law, such procedure prescribed by State Law shall be followed.
- (8) It shall be the duty of the Town Solicitor to draft any ordinance upon the request of any member of the Town Council.

### **Section 3.20 Annual Audit**

The Town Council shall provide for an independent annual audit of all Town of Warren accounts held by every department and entity by a Certified Public Accountant, who shall have experience in municipal finance, and may provide for such frequent audits as it deems necessary. The Town Council shall issue a Request for Professional Proposal at least every three (3) years for the services for such Certified Public Accountant. The audit shall cover all books, restricted and unrestricted accounts and other evidence of the financial transactions of the town, and shall conform to generally accepted auditing standards, including all procedures necessary for the auditors to express an informed opinion of financial conditions of the Town. A copy of the audit report each year shall be filed with the Town Clerk and shall be a public record. The Town Council shall require that the Town Manager review all findings of the management letter and report what actions are necessary to correct any deficiencies that are cited and implement corrective actions whenever possible.

### **Section 3.21 Automatic Provisions**

If the Town Council shall fail to provide for such an independent audit no later than three (3) months after the beginning of any fiscal year, the proper officers of the State of Rhode Island concerned with municipal audits shall have authority to conduct such audit and the Town Clerk shall notify the proper State officer in writing that such audit is authorized to be conducted under the provisions of this Charter.



**ARTICLE IV. TOWN MANAGER****Section 4.01 Selection**

The Town Council shall conduct a broad-based search to provide qualified applicants for the position of Town Manager. The search must include advertising in a nationally recognized professional trade publication for Municipal Government or Public Administration. The Town Council may enlist the assistance of professionals in the search process.

**Section 4.02 Appointment, Qualifications, Terms of Office**

The Town Council shall appoint a Town Manager by a majority vote of the entire membership of the Town Council. Since the Town Council bears ultimate responsibility for the management of the Town, the Town Manager will serve at the pleasure of the Council. The Town Manager shall be chosen mainly on the basis of his/her executive and administrative qualifications. The Town Manager shall:

- (1) Be a citizen of the United States; and shall not have been convicted of any crime which would constitute a felony in any jurisdiction;
- (2) Hold a Bachelor's or Master's degree in Public Administration or related field from an accredited college or university;
- (3) Have a minimum of three (3) years' experience as a City or Town Manager, or Assistant City or Town Manager, Acting Town Manager or have at least five (5) years successful managerial experience which would qualify him/her to perform the duties listed in Section 4.04;
- (4) At all times follow Section 19.04 of this Charter and abide by the principles of the code of conduct of the International City/County Management Association (ICMA);
- (5) Be able to perform the duties described in this Charter.

The Town Manager hired by the Town Council shall be given an initial employment contract not to exceed three years, renewable at the Town Council's discretion for terms not to exceed three (3) years.

The Town Manager shall devote his/her entire time and attention to his/her duties as Town Manager and shall not, during his/her appointment, be actively engaged in any employment, or business, or in the practice of any profession, or hold any elected or appointed public office other than the office of Town Manager of the Town of Warren.

The Town Manager need not be a resident of the Town of Warren or the State of Rhode Island at the time of appointment but shall establish residence in the Town of Warren or within a fifteen (15) mile radius of the Town within six (6) months following appointment.

#### **Section 4.03 Powers of Appointment**

The Town Manager shall hire, promote and dismiss, based upon merit and fitness alone, all department heads, officers, subordinates and employees for whom no other method of selection is provided in this Charter.

#### **Section 4.04 Powers and Duties**

The Town Manager shall be responsible to the Town Council for the proper day-to-day operation of the Town of Warren's affairs for which the Town Manager is given responsibility under this Charter. The powers, duties and responsibilities of the Town Manager shall include but are not intended to be limited to the following:

- (1) Ease the administrative burden of the Town Council;
- (2) Propose to the Town Council for adoption rules and regulations establishing a personnel system. The personnel system shall make use of modern concepts of personnel management and may include, but not be limited to, the following elements: a method of administration, personnel policies indicating the rights, obligations, job descriptions and benefits of employees; a compensation plan for non-union employees subject to final budget approval; a method of recruiting and selecting employees based upon merit principles; a centralized record keeping system; a performance evaluation system; disciplinary procedures; and other elements that are determined necessary. All Town of Warren agencies and positions shall be subject to the rules and regulations adopted under this section;
- (3) Supervise, direct and be responsible for the efficient administration of all officers appointed by the Town Manager and their respective departments and of all functions for which the Town Manager is given responsibility, authority or control by this Charter, by ordinance, or by vote of the Town Council;
- (4) Administer either directly or through a person or persons supervised by the Town Manager, in accordance with this Charter, all provisions of general or special laws applicable to the Town of Warren, all ordinances, and all regulations established by the Town Council;



- (5) Comply with the Code of Ethics of the State of Rhode Island as well as with the code of ethics as stipulated in this Charter;
- (6) Coordinate all activities of Town departments, offices, commissions, committees, councils, boards, agencies and authorities;
- (7) Attend all regular and special meetings of the Town Council, unless excused by a vote of the Town Council, and to answer all questions addressed to the Town Manager, which are related to matters under the general supervision of the Town Manager;
- (8) Keep the Town Council fully informed on a monthly basis as to the needs and financial condition of the Town of Warren, and to recommend to the Town Council for adoption such measures requiring action by them as the Town Manager deems necessary or expedient;
- (9) Ensure that complete and full records of the financial and administrative activity of the Town of Warren are maintained and to render reports, including budget overruns, to the Town Council as shall be required;
- (10) Be responsible for the rental, use, maintenance and repair of all facilities of the Town of Warren;
- (11) Negotiate all contracts on behalf of the Town of Warren subject to budgetary controls, ratification by the Town Council. and signature by the Town Council President;
- (12) Maintain a full and complete inventory of all property owned by the Town of Warren and oversee the disposal and sale of surplus equipment;
- (13) Administer personnel policies, practices, rules and regulations, as well as any compensation plan, collective bargaining agreements, and any related matters for all employees of the Town of Warren;
- (14) Prepare and submit an annual budget, a 5-year capital improvement program which shall be updated each year based on priorities and changing conditions and a long term financial forecast as provided in this Charter;
- (15) Delegate, authorize or direct, in writing, any subordinate or employee of the Town of Warren to exercise any power, duty or responsibility which the office of Town Manager is authorized to exercise provided that all acts that are performed under such delegation shall be considered to be the acts of the Town Manager;

- (16) Prepare and deliver by January 31, an annual State of the Town report to the Town Council at a public meeting;
- (17) Maintain a unified purchasing system, make purchasing rules and regulations, and act as Purchasing Agent for the Town of Warren, subject to State law and the provisions of this Charter;
- (18) Review all findings of the annual audit management letter, report to the Town Council all actions necessary to correct any cited deficiencies, and implement corrective action whenever possible;
- (19) Authorize all requisitions for payment after proper review by and signature of the appropriate Department Head or Board Chairperson and the Town Treasurer;
- (20) Perform such other duties as necessary or as may be assigned by this Charter, by ordinance, or by vote of the Town Council.

#### **Section 4.05 Purchasing Policies**

The Town Manager shall act as the Purchasing Agent and shall perform the work of buying for the Town of Warren pursuant to rules and regulations established by him/her, with the approval of the Town Council. The Purchasing Agent, or an officer appointed by him/her, shall purchase or contract for all supplies, materials and equipment required by any department, office, commission, committee, council, board, agency or authority of the Town of Warren excluding the School Department and establish and enforce specifications with respect to supplies, materials and equipment. The Purchasing Agent must adhere to the specifications submitted by the requesting department and cannot vary the specifications without written approval of the requesting department. The Purchasing Agent shall also be responsible for the inspection of deliveries of supplies, materials and equipment to determine their quality, quantity, and conformance with specifications; cause to be made and kept current, an inventory of all supplies, materials and equipment required by any department, office, commission, committee, council, board, agency or authority; to declare as surplus obsolete and unused supplies, materials and equipment; and subject to the approval of the Town Council, dispose of any such property, by sale, if possible.

#### **Section 4.06 Competitive Bidding**

Before the Town of Warren makes any purchase of, or contracts for, supplies, materials, equipment and professional services or work to be performed in excess of the amount specified in RIGL 45-55-9, opportunity shall be given for competitive bidding, after

public notice, under such rules and regulations, and with such exceptions as the Town Council may prescribe. No such transaction, which is essentially a unit, shall be divided into a series of orders for the purpose of circumventing the requirement of this Charter for competitive bidding.

All such purchases, or such contracts, for more than the amount specified in RIGL 45-55-9 shall be awarded to the lowest responsible bidder, except that the purchasing authority may be directed by the Town Council to reject any and all bids, and then to re-advertise for bids. Bids, specifications and all factors being equal, preference shall be given to the bidder whose place of business is located in the Town of Warren. The Town Council President and/or the Town Manager shall be permitted to waive the competitive bidding requirements for emergency expenditures. Such action is to be ratified by the Town Council at the first Town Council meeting following such action by the Town Council President or Town Manager. A written determination of the basis for the emergency, and for the selection of the particular contractor, shall be included in the contract file.

In the alternative, any State Master Price Agreement may be used if beneficial to the Town.

#### **Section 4.07 Prohibition against Independent Purchases**

Whenever any department, office, commission, committee, council, board, agency or authority of the Town of Warren shall purchase or contract for any supplies, materials or equipment, or contractual services, independently and contrary to the provisions of this Charter and rules and regulations made hereunder; such order or contract shall be voidable by the Town Council. This statement shall be printed on all Town of Warren purchase orders and all purchases shall be executed by written purchase order. Signature of the respective department head, chairperson of a board should be one of at least two signatures on all purchase orders.

#### **Section 4.08 Vacancy of Office**

The Town Council shall declare a vacancy in the office of Town Manager in accordance with Section 18.12.

#### **Section 4.09 Temporary Absence**

By letter filed with the Town Clerk, the Town Manager shall designate, subject to the approval of the Town Council, a qualified town administrative officer to exercise the powers and perform the duties of Town Manager during his/her temporary absence or

disability. During such absence or disability the Town Council may revoke such designation at any time and appoint another officer of the Town of Warren to serve until the Town Manager shall return or his/her disability shall cease.

**Section 4.10 Annual Review of Town Manager**

Annually, the Town Council shall prepare and deliver to the Town Manager a written evaluation of the Town Manager's performance.

**Section 4.11 Removal of Town Manager**

Since the Town Manager serves at the pleasure of the Town Council, the Town Manager's contract shall not include any language or provisions that limit the rights and authority of the Town Council. The Town Council shall have the power at any time to remove the Manager from office in accordance with the following procedures:

- (1) The Town Council shall adopt by affirmative vote of a majority of its members a preliminary resolution of removal, which shall contain the following:
  - a) The reasons for the removal;
  - b) Whether the Town Manager is suspended from duty pending final Council action and whether the suspension is with or without pay;
  - c) The date of the Town Council meeting for a hearing on the Town Manager's removal. The date of the hearing shall be no later than thirty (30) days, and no earlier than (20) days from the date of the adoption of said preliminary resolution;
  - d) The procedures to be used at hearing.
- (2) Said resolution shall be delivered to the Town Manager within twenty-four (24) hours of its adoption. The Town Manager shall file with the Town Council a written response to the preliminary resolution which shall contain a list of witnesses, if any, the Town Manager intends to call as well as a request for a public or private hearing.
- (3) After said hearing, the Town Council may adopt a final resolution of removal by an affirmative vote of a majority of the full Town Council.

**ARTICLE V. DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE****Section 5.01 Function**

The function of the department shall be the supervision and direction of all matters pertaining to the financial operation of the Town of Warren including, but not limited to, accounting and budgeting, control of expenditures, assessment and collection of taxes, and other administration of trust funds, and such other duties as shall be required by this Charter, ordinance, or by State law.

**Section 5.02 Town Treasurer/Tax Collector**

There shall be a Department of Finance, the director of which shall be the Town Treasurer/Tax Collector, who shall be hired by the Town Manager.

**Section 5.03 Qualifications**

The Town Treasurer/Tax Collector shall have at least a Bachelor's degree from an accredited four-year college or university and knowledge of, and experience in, municipal accounting, finance, taxation, data processing, budgeting and financial control.

**Section 5.04 Duties**

The Treasurer/Tax Collector shall have all powers and duties prescribed by the General Laws of the State of Rhode Island.

- A. In his/her capacity as Treasurer, the Town Treasurer/Tax Collector shall:
- (1) Pre-audit all bills, invoices, payrolls or other evidence of claims or charges against the Town of Warren, and see that budget appropriations are not exceeded by any disbursements in any department, office, commission, committee, council, board, agency, or authority of the Town of Warren. Should any expenditure exceed budget, the Town Manager and the Town Council shall be notified prior to payment of any invoices. Over-expenditures shall not be incurred without the approval of the Town Council;
  - (2) Establish and maintain a unified accounting system for the Town of Warren with accounts, procedures, controls and forms to be used by all departments, offices, commissions, committees, councils, boards, agencies and authorities of the Town of Warren that are subject to this Charter, and ensure accurate and transparent documentation of the amounts of all appropriations, the amounts

paid from each, the person or entity to whom and the purpose for which the payments were made, the unpaid obligations against each appropriation, and the encumbered balance;

- (3) Prepare a monthly statement of all receipts and disbursements, in sufficient detail to show the financial condition of the Town of Warren, for submission to the Town Manager, the Town Council, and the Department Heads prior to the monthly Town council meeting;
- (4) Prepare as soon as possible after, and as of the end of each fiscal year, a complete financial statement and report in accordance with State law for submission to the Town Manager, the Town Council and the electors of the Town of Warren. A copy thereof shall be filed in the Town Clerk's office and shall become a public record;
- (5) Cooperate with the Town Manager and the Town Council in compiling the expenditure and revenue estimates for the budget;
- (6) Receive all license fees, rents, funds, money receivable by the Town of Warren from the State or Federal Government, the courts, and any department, office, commission, committee, council, board, agency, or authority of the Town of Warren except as provided by law;
- (7) Have custody of all public funds belonging to or under the control of the Town of Warren or of any department, office, commission, committee, council, board, agency or authority of the Town of Warren including the School District; and deposit all funds coming into his/her hands in such depositories as may be designated by the Town Council; or, if no such designation shall be made, in such depositories as he/she may choose as provided by the General Laws of the State of Rhode Island, provided however, that such depositories are insured or registered by an agency of the United States. All interest received on deposits shall be the property of the Town of Warren and shall be accounted for and credited to the proper accounts;
- (8) Have custody of all investments and invested funds of the Town of Warren or in the possession of the Town of Warren in a fiduciary capacity;
- (9) Pay out funds by check, such payments being made only after proper review by and signature of department head, board chairperson, etc. and authorization by Town Manager;
- (10) To participate with the Grant Administrator in preparation of all grant financial reports.

B. In his/her capacity as Tax Collector, the Town of Warren Treasurer/Tax Collector shall collect all taxes and special assessments for the collection of which the Town of Warren is responsible.

**Section 5.05 Receipt of Funds**

All monies from taxes, licenses, fees, rents, donations, fines or any receivables accruing to the Town of Warren shall be forwarded to the Treasurer's office on a timely basis to be deposited in the General Fund. Donations and grant monies given for special projects shall be kept in separate accounts. There shall be a single system of transaction receipts for all departments, offices, commissions, committees, councils, boards, agencies, agents and authorities of the Town of Warren.

**Section 5.06 Disbursement of Funds**

There shall be four (4) persons authorized to sign checks. The primary signature on expenditures below Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000.00) shall be that of the Treasurer/Tax Collector. For expenditures equal to or over Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000.00), two (2) signatures shall be required. Any two of the following four (4) are authorized to sign jointly: 1) Treasurer/Tax Collector, 2) Town Manager, 3) President of the Town Council, and 4) Town Clerk. No funds shall be disbursed, either by check or by any other means, for expenditures equal to or over Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000.00) without the written authorization of any two of the following three individuals: the Town Manager, the Treasurer/Tax Collector and/or the Town Council President.





**ARTICLE VI. OFFICE OF TAX ASSESSMENT****Section 6.01 Tax Assessor**

There shall be an Office of Tax Assessment the head of which shall be the Tax Assessor, who shall be hired by the Town Manager.

**Section 6.02 Qualifications**

The Tax Assessor shall have an Associate's or Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university and shall have prior experience with valuation and taxation of real and personal property. He or she shall either hold a certificate from the Rhode Island Association of Assessing Officers or the equivalent thereof, or acquire such a certificate within three (3) years of being appointed. The Tax Assessor shall hold no other public office, appointment or employment with the Town of Warren.

**Section 6.03 Powers and Duties**

The Tax Assessor shall have and perform all the powers and duties which are now or may hereafter be vested in Tax Assessors of towns by the General laws of the State of Rhode Island. The Tax Assessor shall be responsible for fixing an assessed valuation of all taxable, real and personal property in the Town of Warren, and for preparing an assessment and tax roll on the basis of such valuation, in the manner provided by law and ordinance.

**Section 6.04 Board of Assessment Review**

There shall be a Board of Assessment Review consisting of five (5) resident taxpayers appointed by the Town Council for a term of three (3) years. The members shall be appointed so that no more than two terms expire in any one year. Any vacancy shall be filled by the Town Council for the unexpired term.

**Section 6.05 Duties of Board of Assessment Review**

The Board of Assessment Review shall hear and consider the appeal of any property owner concerning the amount of his/her assessed valuation as determined by the Town Tax Assessor. The Board shall keep an accurate record of its proceedings which shall be available for public inspection. The Tax Assessor shall attend all hearings of the Board but shall have no vote.

**Section 6.06 Correction in Assessment**

If it shall appear that the valuation of any property has been erroneously or incorrectly assessed, the Board of Assessment Review shall have authority to order a correction. Such determination shall be certified by the Board to the Town Tax Assessor whose duty shall be to make such correction in valuation as the Board may determine. If the tax roll has been certified by the Town Tax Assessor, he or she shall transmit the findings of the Board to the Town Council which may cancel in whole or in part the tax based on such valuation in order to effect a correction.

**Section 6.07 Right of Appeal**

The taking of an appeal to the Board of Assessment Review or any action thereon shall not be construed to limit or restrict the right of any taxpayer to apply to a court of competent jurisdiction for relief from any assessed valuation or tax originally determined by the Tax Assessor.

**ARTICLE VII. TOWN CLERK****Section 7.01 Town Clerk**

There shall be a Town Clerk who shall be hired by the Town Manager.

**Section 7.02 Qualifications**

The Town Clerk shall have a business school diploma or an Associate's degree in a business related field. He or she shall have at least two (2) years' experience as an assistant or deputy town clerk and five (5) years' experience in office management or as an administrative assistant or executive secretary. Experience with legislative and legal procedures is preferred. The Town Clerk must attain certification as Certified Municipal Clerk (CMC) within four (4) years following appointment and continue to maintain certification annually.

**Section 7.03 Powers and Duties**

The Town Clerk shall be the Clerk of the Financial Town Meeting, Clerk of the Town Council, Clerk of the Probate Court, Clerk of the Board of Canvassers, and Recorder of Deeds. It shall be the duty of the Town Clerk to:

- (1) Make a permanent record of all proceedings and certify by signature all actions of the aforesaid bodies;
- (2) Be custodian of the Seal of the Town of Warren and of the official documents and records of the Town of Warren;
- (3) Direct and supervise the recordings of deeds, mortgages, vital statistics, licenses and permits and such other records as shall by ordinance and law be required to be kept by the Town Clerk;
- (4) Issue birth certificates, marriage licenses, burial permits, and such other licenses and permits as are required by ordinance and law to be issued by the Town Clerk;
- (5) Prepare and post the agenda for the Town Council meetings;
- (6) Be responsible for the proper care and storage of Town records of historic significance;
- (7) Perform such other duties as may be prescribed by this Charter or by law pertaining to town clerks and such other duties appropriate to the office as the Town Manager and Town Council may require;

- (7) Be responsible for the advertising, issuing, accepting, opening and recording of all job applications and bid applications before delivering them to other department(s) in town government;
- (8) Co-sign checks for payments of Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000) or more when necessary.

**Section 7.04 Deputy Town Clerk**

There shall be a Deputy Town Clerk, hired by the Town Manager, with qualifications equivalent to those for the Town Clerk, except that prior experience as assistant or deputy town clerk shall not be required. When the Town Clerk is not available, the Deputy Town Clerk shall have the powers to perform all the duties of the office of the Town Clerk and such other duties as may be required.

**ARTICLE VIII. PROBATE COURT****Section 8.01 Judge**

There shall be a Judge of Probate who shall exercise and perform the powers and duties of a Probate Court for the Town of Warren.

**Section 8.02 Appointment and Term**

The Judge of Probate shall be appointed by the Town Council to serve for a two-year term of office or until his/her successor is appointed and qualified.

**Section 8.03 Qualifications**

The Judge of Probate shall be an attorney-at-law in good standing who has been admitted to the practice of law in the State of Rhode Island and has five (5) years' experience as a practicing attorney. Probate experience is preferred. He or she need not be a resident of the Town of Warren.

**Section 8.04 Absence of Disability**

In the absence, disability, or disqualification of the Judge of Probate so that he/she is unable to fulfill his/her duties, or there is a vacancy in such office, the duties of the Judge of Probate shall be performed by the Town Solicitor; and when so serving, the acting Judge of Probate shall have and exercise all the powers and duties of the Judge of Probate.

**Section 8.05 Clerk**

The Town Clerk shall be the Clerk of the Probate Court.

**Section 8.06 Fees**

All fees assessed by the Clerk of the Probate Court shall inure to the benefit of the Town of Warren and shall be paid to the Town Treasury unless otherwise directed by the laws of the State.



**ARTICLE IX. TOWN SOLICITOR****Section 9.01 Appointment and Term**

There shall be a Town Solicitor who shall be appointed by the Town Council to serve at the pleasure of the Town Council. The Town Council, at its discretion, may retain the services of a law firm to provide the legal services of a Town Solicitor.

**Section 9.02 Qualifications**

The Town Solicitor and any Assistant Town Solicitor shall be an attorney-at-law in good standing who has been admitted to the practice of law in the State of Rhode Island and has five (5) years' experience as a practicing attorney. He/she need not be a resident of the Town of Warren. The Town Solicitor and any Assistant Town Solicitor shall not hold any other office in the Town government, except that of acting Judge of Probate when so necessary.

**Section 9.03 Duties**

The Town Solicitor shall advise all departments, offices, commissions, committees, councils, boards, agencies, or authorities including the Town Council, and the Town Manager. The Town Solicitor shall appear for and protect the rights of the Town of Warren in all actions, suits, or proceedings, civil or criminal, in law or equity, brought by or against it, or for or against any of its departments, offices, commissions, committees, councils, boards, agencies, or authorities including the Town Council and the Town Manager. The Town Solicitor shall also perform such other duties, appropriate to his/her office, as the Town Council and the Town Manager may require. The Town Solicitor shall examine and recommend the form of all ordinances and resolutions, of all invitations to bid, contracts, and other legal documents issued by any department, office, commission, committee, council, board, agency or authority of the Town of Warren.





**ARTICLE X. DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT**

**Section 10.01 Appointment**

There shall be a Director of Planning and Community Development who shall be hired by the Town Manager.

**Section 10.02 Qualifications**

The Director of Planning and Community Development shall have a Master's degree in Urban Planning or a related field and at least two (2) years of professional planning experience, or an equivalent combination of education and professional planning experience. Membership in the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) is preferred. Professional experience must include professional training in planning, urban design, urban planning, community development, as well as a proven record of success in seeking and administering grants.

**Section 10.03 Duties**

The duties and responsibilities of the Director of Planning and Community Development shall include but not be limited to the following:

Oversight of the Planning and Community Development Office;

- (1) overseeing, and serving as point of contact for, programs and projects relating to land use, community development, economic development and management of cultural and natural resources;
- (2) providing technical planning information to the Town Council, Town Manager, Planning Board, and other town departments;
- (3) overseeing the preparation and administration of grants;
- (4) assisting with the development, maintenance and improvement of tools to enhance public awareness and access to public information; and coordination with other town boards, commissions and community organizations, and with Federal and State agencies as necessary.



**ARTICLE XI. DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS****Section 11.01 Organization**

There shall be a Department of Public Works, the head of which shall be the Director of Public Works. The Town Manager may further organize the Department into separate divisions or offices with the approval of the Town Council.

**Section 11.02 Director of Public Works**

The Director of Public Works shall be hired by the Town Manager and shall be responsible for the efficient operation of all aspects of the Department of Public Works.

**Section 11.03 Qualifications**

The Director of Public Works shall have a Bachelor's Degree and a minimum of (3) years' successful experience as a manager or supervisor in municipal public works or in a related, public or private sector, position; or an equivalent combination of education and professional experience. A degree in Civil Engineering is preferred.

The Director of Public Works shall not, during his/her appointment, be actively engaged in any other employment, business or profession, or hold any elected or appointed public office in the Town of Warren, with the exception of appointments by the Town Council that relate to public safety, emergency management or the tree warden, provided, however, that the Town Manager may grant an exception if s/he determines that the requested exception will not interfere with the Director's ability to perform his or her duties.

**Section 11.04 Powers and Duties**

The Director of Public Works shall:

- (1) Supervise, operate, and maintain all public works of the Town of Warren, except as otherwise provided herein, including but not limited to: roads and highway structures, storm systems, public buildings and lands, docks, parks and playgrounds, street lighting, sidewalks and historic cemeteries;
- (2) Supervise solid waste disposal and recycling;
- (3) Supervise the performance, or perform the duties of, the Tree Warden;
- (4) Support the operation of the Senior Shuttle;
- (5) Provide engineering assistance for the Town of Warren;

- (6) Perform such other duties as shall be required by this Charter or by law or ordinance;
- (7) Serve as Superintendent of Parks and Recreational Facilities and as such be responsible for the upkeep, repair and maintenance of parks, playgrounds, beaches, and other recreational facilities of the Town of Warren, in coordination with the Director of Parks and Recreation;

**Section 11.05 Tree Warden**

There shall be a Tree Warden who shall be appointed by the Town Council at its regular meeting in January each year. The qualifications, functions, and duties of the Tree Warden shall be those as prescribed by the General Laws of the State of Rhode Island. The Director of Public Works may serve as the Tree Warden.

**ARTICLE XII. PUBLIC SAFETY****Section 12.01 Police Department**

There shall be a Police Department, the head of which shall be the Chief of Police. In addition to the Chief of Police, there shall be such other subordinate officers and patrolmen as shall from time to time be determined by the Town Manager. Said Chief, subordinate officers and patrolmen, subject to such probationary requirements as may hereinafter be set forth, shall constitute the permanent Police Department of the Town of Warren. Said department may be organized into such divisions as shall be from time to time required by the Town Council.

**Section 12.02 Appointment of the Chief of Police**

The Chief of Police shall be hired by the Town Manager.

**Section 12.03 Qualifications of the Chief of Police**

The Chief of Police shall have a minimum of a Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice, Law Enforcement or similar education; and at least five (5) years' experience above the rank of patrolman in any organized police department; and have expertise in the organization, administration, management and direction of police personnel; and shall possess such other qualifications as the Town Council may prescribe by ordinance.

The Chief of Police shall not, during his/her appointment, be actively engaged in any other employment, business or profession, or hold any elected or appointed public office in the Town of Warren, with the exception of appointments by the Town Council that relate to public safety or emergency management, provided, however, that the Town Manager may grant an exception if s/he determines that the requested exception will not interfere with the Police Chief's ability to perform his or her duties.

**Section 12.04 Appointment and Promotion of Subordinate Officers and Patrolmen**

All Police Officers in the Warren Police Department below the rank of Chief of Police shall be hired or promoted, as the case may be, by the Town Manager upon the recommendation of the Chief of Police, provided they shall have satisfactorily passed such qualifying tests as prescribed.

**Section 12.05 Interference with the Chief of Police**

No member of the Town Council and no member of the Administrative Department of the Town of Warren shall interfere or attempt to interfere directly or indirectly with the performance of duties by the Chief of Police in any investigation or prosecution of crimes.

**Section 12.06 Animal Control Division, Officer**

There shall be an Animal Control Division within the Police Department, the head of which shall be the Animal Control Officer. The Animal Control Officer shall be hired by the Town Manager and work under the direction of the Chief of Police or designee. In addition, there shall be such subordinates as shall from time to time be determined by the Town Manager in consultation with the Chief of Police. Both the Animal Control Officer and the subordinates shall have a working knowledge of the laws of the State of Rhode Island and the ordinances of the Town of Warren pertaining to the licensing and control of dogs and the care for other animals.

**Section 12.07 Fire and Rescue Department**

There shall be a Fire and Rescue Department, the head of which shall be the Fire Chief.

**Section 12.08 Appointment of Fire Chief**

The Fire Chief shall be appointed by the Town Manager.

**Section 12.09 Qualifications of the Fire Chief**

The Fire Chief shall be a member in good standing of the Warren Fire and Rescue Department with a minimum of seven (7) years' experience as a line officer; hold an Associate Degree in Fire Sciences or other fire-related field; hold a current Rhode Island EMT certification as determined by the level of care provided by the Town of Warren; hold a current certification in the Rhode Island Fire Laws and Rules and Life Safety Code (NFPA 101) as issued by the Rhode Island State Fire Marshall's Office, or acquire such a certification within one year of being appointed Fire Chief; and, demonstrate comprehensive working knowledge of the Warren Fire and Rescue Department.

The Fire Chief shall not, during his/her appointment, be actively engaged in any other employment, business or profession, or hold any elected or appointed office in the Town of Warren, with the exception of appointments by the Town Council that relate to public safety or emergency management, provided, however, that the Town Manager may grant an exception if s/he determines that the requested exception will not interfere with the Fire Chief's ability to perform his or her duties.

**Section 12.10 Duties**

The Fire Chief shall be the administrative and technical head of the Fire and Rescue Department of the Town of Warren and shall have the following duties:

- (1) Control and supervise all activities and operations of the Fire and Rescue Department, including but not limited to fire extinguishment, fire prevention, inspection of buildings for compliance with fire codes, and have a working knowledge of hazardous materials;

- (2) Establish, maintain, and enforce Fire and Rescue Department operations and procedures;
- (3) Schedule, conduct, and supervise fire drills and fire department training with primary regard for the protection of life and property and the safety of department personnel;
- (4) Supervise the Rescue Squad, ensuring compliance with Rhode Island protocols and the Policies and Procedures of the Warren Fire and Rescue Department;
- (5) Participate in training as deemed appropriate by the Town Manager.

#### **Section 12.11 Assistant Fire Chiefs**

There shall be one (1) Deputy Fire Chief and a maximum of three (3) Assistant Fire Chiefs to be appointed by the Fire Chief. A Deputy Fire Chief and/or Assistant Fire Chief shall have been a member in good standing of the Warren Fire and Rescue Department for a minimum of ten (10) years, have held the rank of Lieutenant or higher for a minimum of four (4) years, and meet the training requirements of the Warren Fire and Rescue Department. If a Deputy Fire Chief and/or Assistant Fire Chief resigns, the Fire Chief shall appoint a successor from a pool of candidates recommended by each company's membership, excluding the Rescue Squad.

#### **Section 12.12 Board of Fire Engineers**

There shall be a Board of Fire Engineers, the head of which shall be the Fire Chief or his/her designee. The Board of Fire Engineers shall consist of the Fire Chief, Deputy Fire Chief, Assistant Chiefs and Captains of each company, and shall assist the Fire Chief in carrying out the policies and procedures of the Warren Fire and Rescue Department as necessary. If a member of the Board of Fire Engineers is unable to attend a meeting, his or her company shall appoint an alternate member.

#### **Section 12.13 Director of Emergency Management**

There shall be a Director of Emergency Management appointed by the Town Council. The Fire Chief may serve in this capacity.

#### **Section 12.14 Powers and Duties**

The Director of Emergency Management shall:

- (1) Prepare a comprehensive plan for the utilization of facilities, equipment and personnel of the Town of Warren during an emergency;

- (2) Prepare a plan and protocols for internal and external communications in an emergency, and equip and maintain an emergency communications center;
- (3) Assist the Town Council President in any declared emergency;
- (4) Be the liaison with the State Office of Emergency Management;
- (5) Perform any other duties or functions as the Town Council may direct by ordinance or during any emergency as the Town Council President may direct.



**ARTICLE XIII. DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING AND ZONING****Section 13.01 Building Official/Zoning Officer**

There shall be a Building Official/Zoning Officer hired by the Town Manager who shall be the head of the Department of Building and Zoning.

**Section 13.02 Qualifications**

The qualifications for the Building Official/Zoning Officer shall be those as outlined by the General Laws of the State of Rhode Island. He or she must be certified by the Building Commissioner via the Building Code Standards Committee of the State of Rhode Island.

**Section 13.03 Duties**

The duties of the Building Official /Zoning Officer shall include, but not be limited to, interpreting and enforcing all applicable requirements set forth in the Warren Town Code, State laws related to construction codes and zoning laws, and the Warren Zoning Ordinance.

The Building Official/Zoning Officer shall supervise the Electrical Inspector and the Plumbing/Mechanical Inspector. He or she shall also be the Minimum Housing Inspector and the Floodplain Coordinator for the Town., and serve on the Technical Review Committee advising the Planning Board.



**ARTICLE XIV. DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION****Section 14.01 Organization**

There shall be a Department of Parks and Recreation which shall be responsible for overseeing, promoting and regulating public use of the parks and recreational facilities of the Town of Warren, There shall be a Director of Parks and Recreation who shall be the head of the Department and be responsible for programmatic and administrative management. The Director shall work closely with the Director of Public Works who, in his/her capacity as Superintendent of Parks and Recreation, shall be responsible for construction, maintenance and care of recreational facilities. The Directors shall coordinate with the Director of Planning and Community Development for the purpose of developing master planning and project planning, including budgeting and pursuit of supplemental funding for parks and recreational projects. There shall be a Parks and Recreation Board which shall assist the Director in developing and carrying out her duties and the responsibilities of the Department.

**Section 14.02 Director of Parks and Recreation**

The Director of Parks and Recreation shall be hired by, and work under the supervision of, the Town Manager. The position shall be part-time, provided that the Town Manager may increase the number of hours, up to full-time, during certain times of the year, subject to availability of funds in the approved budget.

**Section 14.03 Qualifications**

The Director of Parks and Recreation shall have demonstrated organizational, administrative and supervisory experience with recreational programs and projects, interdepartmental coordination and community outreach.

**Section 14.04 Duties**

The Director of Parks and Recreation, with assistance from the Parks and Recreation Board, shall:

- (1) Develop and implement a comprehensive recreation program for the Town of Warren, as well as a permitting program for public use of the parks and recreational facilities of the Town, in accordance with the provisions of this Charter and all applicable Town policies, ordinances, State laws and regulations, and grant agreements, subject to approval by the Town Council;

- (2) Develop master plans, a capital improvement plan, annual budgets, and pursue technical and financial assistance from public and private sources;
- (3) Establish such administrative policies and rules as necessary for the efficient and effective operation of the Department, subject to approval by the Town Manager;
- (4) Hire and supervise seasonal program staff as needed, subject to availability of funding in the approved budget;
- (5) Ensure the public has easy and timely access to up to date information about facilities, programs, events and schedules,
- (6) Direct applicants for facility use permits who also need Town Council approval(s) to apply for such approvals, and provide the Town Council with relevant information and recommendations, in a timely manner.

#### **Section 14.05 Parks & Recreation Board**

The Parks and Recreation Board shall consist of five (5) members appointed by the Town Council for three (3) year terms, staggered so that no more than two (2) terms will expire in any one year. No voting member shall be an elected official or employee of the Town of Warren. Vacancies shall be filled by the Town Council for the remainder of unexpired terms. The Board shall annually elect a chair person, a secretary and such other officers as it deems appropriate. The Town Council shall appoint a member of the school committee and the Director of Public Works as ex-officio members of the board. Ex-officio members shall have no right to vote and shall not be counted in determining a quorum.

The Parks and Recreation Board shall serve the Town Council and Town Manager in an advisory role and shall assist the Director of Parks and Recreation in carrying out his/her duties and responsibilities, as stated above. In addition, the Board shall monitor the condition and usage of facilities and recommend policy changes to enhance the public's ability to use and enjoy facilities and programs, while safeguarding and preserving public property and minimizing risk to public safety.

**ARTICLE XV. DEPARTMENT OF WASTE WATER MANAGEMENT****Section 15.01 Management of Sewers, Sewage Treatment, On Site Waste Water Treatment and Storm Water Drainage**

(1) All duties and powers previously vested in the Warren Sewer Commission are currently vested in the Town Council. The Town Council is responsible for the management, maintenance and improvement of the Town's sewer plant, sewers and storm drainage systems.

(2) With the approval of the Town Council, the Town Manager may hire a Superintendent of Sewers. The Town Council may by ordinance prescribe the duties and qualifications of the Superintendent of Sewers.

(3) The Town Council and Town Manager may organize a Department of Waste Water Management to be responsible for the integrated management of the Town's sewer system, sewage treatment facility, on-site wastewater treatment systems in non-sewered areas, storm water drainage systems, storm water discharge to surface waters and recharge to the ground, and the effects on drinking water and other natural resources, consistent with the Waste Water Management District and Plan of the Town of Warren. Alternatively, the Town Council and Town Manager may organize, in accordance with Section 11.01 of this Charter, a Division of Waste Water Management within the Department of Public Works that shall have the same responsibilities, and the head of which shall be a Director or Assistant Director instead of the Superintendent of Sewers mentioned in the preceding section. The Department or Division shall at least initially rely on existing consulting contracts instead of hiring additional employees, until the Town Manager has submitted, and the Town Council has approved, an organizational plan and budget that shall be based in part on a cost-benefit analysis of implementing an integrated waste water management plan with Town employees, instead of, or in addition to, contracting for needed services.



**ARTICLE XVI. OTHER TOWN OFFICIALS****Section 16.01 Town Sergeant**

The Town Council shall appoint an elector of the Town of Warren as Town Sergeant.

**Section 16.02 Duties**

The Town of Warren Sergeant shall perform all of the duties and have all of the powers and authority of a Town Sergeant as provided by the General Laws of the State of Rhode Island, and as may be provided by the Town Council by ordinance. Such duties may include, but not be limited to, service and execution in any town of Bristol county, of all writs, summons and other processes directed to him/her or and which by law may or ought to be served by Town Sergeants; and posting of the Town Clerk's notice of warrant to electors to meet in a Town Meeting.

**Section 16.03 Harbormaster**

The Harbormaster shall be hired by the Town Manager with recommendation from the Harbor Commission. The Harbor Master shall work under the supervision of the Town Manager. The Harbormaster shall obtain and maintain certification in CPR and basic first aid. Compensation for the Harbormaster shall be recommended by the Town Manager, approved by the Town Council and subject to final budget approval. The Harbormaster shall enforce the Warren Harbor Management Plan and applicable Federal, State and local laws, ordinances and regulations; and shall implement policies adopted by the Harbor Management Commission, subject to Town Council approval.

**Section 16.04 Public Assistance Agent**

There shall be a Public Assistance Agent who shall be appointed and serve at the pleasure of the Town Council and who shall be the Town of Warren's agent for disbursement of state and Federal Public Assistance Funds.

**Section 16.05 Senior Center Director**

There shall be a Senior Center Director hired by the Town Manager. The Senior Center Director shall plan, organize and coordinate a community recreation program for senior adults, including, but not limited to, cultural arts, physical activities, health related activities, human services and special interest classes and programs. The Senior Center Director will supervise the senior meal site, volunteers, seasonal employees if assigned, special instructors and any part-time recreation staff and provide referral to social service agencies.





**ARTICLE XVII. BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS****All Boards/Commissions**

The Town Council shall appoint members for, and shall fill vacancies on boards and commissions in accordance with this Charter and/or as prescribed by the General Laws of the State of Rhode Island. All appointees shall be residents of the Town of Warren. Elected officials shall not serve as members of any Town board or commission. The Town Council may, however, designate liaisons to boards and commissions, who shall have no voting rights. Each board and commission shall annually elect a chair person and a secretary; shall keep records of meetings and attendance; and shall submit an annual report to the Town Council or, at the Council's discretion, make a presentation, providing an overview of its work over the past year, presenting relevant data, and discussing future goals and priorities.

**Section 17.01 Planning Board**

A. The Planning Board shall consist of nine (9) members appointed by the Town Council from among electors of the Town of Warren for a term of three (3) years. Said terms will be staggered so that no more than three terms will expire in any given year. No member of the Planning Board shall be an elected official or employee of the Town of Warren. The Town Council shall appoint replacements to fill vacancies on the Board in accordance with this Charter. The Board shall annually elect a Chairperson and such other officers, as it may deem appropriate from among its membership.

B. The Planning Board shall have the duties and responsibilities provided for in State law and such additional duties and responsibilities as may be prescribed by the Town Council not in conflict with the State law. The Planning Board shall act in an advisory capacity to the Town Council in all matters concerning the Comprehensive Plan, land use, Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations, physical growth and development of the Town of Warren.

C. There shall be a committee to assist the Planning Board to be known as the Technical Review Committee (TRC), which is established in accordance with R.I.G.L. 45-23-56 to conduct technical reviews of all applicants subject to the jurisdiction of the Planning Board. The Warren Building Official shall be a member of the Technical Review Committee. The remaining membership of the TRC will be determined by the Planning Board. However, no more than one (1) member of the Planning Board may serve on the TRC with regard to a specific application.

**Section 17.02 Zoning Board**

A. The Town Council shall appoint members of the Zoning Board in accordance with the General Laws of the State of Rhode Island.

B. The duties of the Zoning Board shall be those as outlined in the General Laws of the State of Rhode Island.

C. No member of the Zoning Board shall be an elected official or employee of the Town of Warren.

**Section 17.03 Conservation Commission**

A. The Conservation Commission shall consist of seven (7) members appointed by the Town Council for three (3) year terms, staggered so that no more than three (3) terms expire in any one year. Vacancies shall be filled by the Town Council for the remainder of the unexpired term in accordance with this Charter. The Conservation Commission shall annually elect a Chairperson and such other officers as they deem appropriate.

B. The Conservation Commission shall report to the Town Council and act as an advisory body to all the Town of Warren agencies on conservation matters including: Fresh and salt water surface and groundwater protection, watershed protection, flood plain protection, compliance with Freshwater Wetlands Acts, storm water runoff and other non-point source pollution, compliance with soil erosion and sediment control regulations, underground storage tanks, compliance with RI individual sewage disposal system regulations, environmental impact of the Town landfill and solid waste management, compliance with regulations that protect coastal areas including salt marshes, bogs, ponds, beaches, shores, cliffs, banks, and wetlands, protection of environmentally sensitive or unique areas, protection of conservation, recreation, and open space areas, protection of rights-of-way, easements, and other public access areas, protection of shellfish and finfish resources, protection of agricultural and soil resources, protection of wildlife and its habitat, protection of air quality, protection of trees, roadsides and woodlands, protection of the rural integrity, scenic, cultural and historic character of the Town of Warren as well as any other powers and duties granted by law or by ordinance.

**Section 17.04 Board of Canvassers**

There shall be a bipartisan canvassing authority of which the members shall be selected by the Town Council as provided by the Constitution and General Laws of the State of Rhode Island. Said Canvassing Authority shall be known as the "Board of Canvassers

and Registration", and shall be vested with all the powers and duties now or hereafter vested by law in such canvassing authority. The Town Council shall fill vacancies on the Board in accordance with applicable State law.

#### **Section 17.05 Harbor Management Commission**

The Harbor Management Commission shall consist of seven (7) members appointed by the Town Council for three (3) year terms, staggered so that no more than three (3) terms expire in any one year. The Commission shall serve the Town Council in an advisory capacity with respect to matters relating to the conditions, uses, management, maintenance and improvements of harbor and other water and waterfront infrastructure, facilities, resources and related programs, projects and services; shall assist the Harbor Master in carrying out his duties and responsibilities; and shall make recommendations to the Town Manager as requested or as it deems appropriate.

#### **Section 17.06 Juvenile Hearing Board**

There shall be a five (5) member Juvenile Hearing Board with two (2) alternate members who shall be appointed by the Town Council for a term of three (3) years in accordance with the General Laws of the State of Rhode Island and ordinances of the Town of Warren. The powers of the Juvenile Hearing Board shall be as prescribed by law or by ordinance.

#### **Section 17.07 Bristol County Water Authority**

The Bristol County Water Authority was established by RI Public Law in 1981, Chapter 102, as amended, to provide adequate, clean water to Bristol County. The legislation provides for a nine (9) person Board of Directors comprised of three (3) directors from each town of Bristol, Warren and Barrington.

Directors from each town are appointed for a period of three (3) years, with staggered terms. The Warren Town Council, therefore, shall appoint one (1) director each year. Appointed directors shall report quarterly to the Warren Town Council or as requested.

#### **Section 17.08 Tree Commission**

There shall be a Tree Commission consisting of five (5) members appointed by the Town Council from among the electors of the Town of Warren for a term of three (3) years. Said terms shall be staggered so that no more than two (2) members' terms expire each calendar year. The Tree Commission is an advisory board to the Town Council and the Technical Review Committee.

The Commission shall:

- (1) Advise the Tree Warden on removal of trees and on appropriate trees to be planted on Town property;
- (2) Work with the Tree warden to develop and maintain an inventory of the trees of the Town as well as a long term plan for the protection, care, removal, replacement and addition of trees in the Town, taking into account the importance of trees to environmental quality and public health, energy conservation and community character, and the need to carefully coordinate tree planting and management with infrastructure planning, construction and maintenance, and with proposed development;
- (3) Develop guidance for the Department of Public Works, the Planning Board and property owners, regarding proper selection, planting and care of trees; implement tree programs and educational activities; and
- (4) Review appeals by applicants whose applications for removal of trees have been denied by the Tree Warden, or by persons otherwise aggrieved or affected by the application process.

**ARTICLE XVIII. BUDGET****Section 18.01 The Budget**

The budget of the Town of Warren shall have four (4) components:

- 1) Operating Budget which includes salaries and wages
- 2) Capital Budget
- 3) Grants and Contributions
- 4) Debt Service and Professional Contract Services

**Section 18.02 Fiscal Year**

The fiscal year of the Town of Warren's government shall begin on the first day of July and shall end on the last day of June of each calendar year. Such fiscal year shall also constitute the budget and accounting year.

**Section 18.03 Unexpended Appropriations and Unanticipated Revenues**

Except as hereinafter specifically provided, any unexpended appropriations and/or unanticipated revenues remaining in a budget of any department, office, commission, committee, council, board, agency, or authority at the end of the fiscal year shall become part of the general working capital of the Town of Warren, and may not thereafter be expended without approval by the Town Council. For purposes of this section the term "general working capital" shall mean the aggregate amount of all unappropriated revenue and unspent or unencumbered appropriations not otherwise set aside pursuant to the provisions of Section 15.04 thereof. Amounts contained in the general working capital fund may be expended in anticipation of the receipt of taxes and other revenues; provided, however, that at the end of any fiscal year the balance in the general working capital fund shall be no less than the balance at the close of the preceding fiscal year together with all additions thereto and interest which shall have been earned thereon, reduced by approved appropriations therefrom for such fiscal year.

**Section 18.04 Capital Reserve Accounts**

Except as may otherwise be specifically provided in the enabling legislation authorizing the borrowing of money by the Town of Warren, the Town Council may establish special capital reserve accounts for the specific purposes set forth in the resolution to be comprised of the proceeds of any borrowings for construction or acquisition of any facilities or equipment which remain unexpended at the conclusion of such construc-

tion or acquisition, or funds from current appropriations. Upon adoption of such resolution, the funds set aside in each such account shall be considered a capital reserve account. To the extent any sums deposited in each such account are from the current year's appropriations, the amount so deposited within any fiscal year shall be considered an expenditure within that fiscal year. The monies contained in any such capital reserve account may, however, be used as general working capital in anticipation of taxes or other revenues; provided, however, that at the close of any fiscal year the balance in each such account shall be no less than the balance at the close of the preceding fiscal year together with all additions thereto during such fiscal year, and all interest which shall have been earned reduced by all expenditures made therefrom. The Town Council may authorize expenditures from each such capital reserve account for the purposes and on the conditions contained in the resolution establishing such account.

#### **Section 18.05 Expenditures**

Line item appropriations shall be adhered to and there shall be no transfer of funds from one line item to another to cover over-expenditures except with Town Council approval pursuant to Section 3.11 of this Charter.

The Town Council shall not make contributions in excess of one hundred fifty (\$150.00) dollars from any Town account to any private person or entity except as authorized in the approved budget.

#### **Section 18.06 Allowance for Doubtful Accounts**

There shall be a required line item for an allowance for doubtful accounts. This figure shall be based on historical data of uncollected taxes.

#### **Section 18.07 Budget Schedule**

- (1) The budget procedure as set forth in this section shall consist of:
  - (a) An initial public hearing
  - (b) Preparation of a proposed budget by the Town Manager;
  - (c) Presentation to the Town Council;
  - (d) Public workshops on the proposed budget
  - (e) Approval of a preliminary budget by the Town Council;
  - (f) Petitions to modify the budget, if any;

- (g) Public workshop on the preliminary budget and modifications approved by the Council, if any; and
- (h) Final budget approval by the Town Council.

(2) **Publication of budget schedule.** Prior to December 31<sup>st</sup> of each year, a summary of the budget process, together with a tentative schedule of dates of the various hearings shall be prepared for public distribution by the town clerk and the town clerk shall arrange for the publication of a notice thereof in at least one newspaper of general circulation in the town as directed by the town council and post copies in the town hall, on the town web site, and as otherwise directed by the Town Council.

### **Section 18.08 Notice of Public Hearings**

Public hearings shall take place no less than ten (10) calendar days following publication of the proposed and preliminary budgets, which publication shall include notice of the time and place of the hearings. The form of notice shall conform to applicable requirements under the General Laws of the State of Rhode Island.

### **Section 18.09 Initial Budget Hearing**

The Town Council shall schedule a public hearing no later than January 15 for the purpose of discussing and soliciting comments from the residents relating to the general goals and objectives of the budget for the next fiscal year, prior to the preparation and presentation of a proposed budget by the Town Manager. Matters for discussion and consideration may include, without limitation, any increase or decrease in taxes, proposed new projects, contractual obligations and other items affecting the budget. Notice of the hearing shall be published no less than ten (10) calendar days prior to the hearing.

### **Section 18.10 Budget Requests**

The heads of all departments, offices, boards, commissions, councils, authorities and other Town agencies shall submit requests for funding of their respective operations during the next fiscal year to the Town Manager prior to February 1. Said requests shall be accompanied by estimates of revenues and expenditures and such other supporting materials as the Town Manager shall direct.

### **Section 18.11 Proposed Budget**

The Town Manager shall submit to the Town Council, no later than March 1, a proposed budget of receipts and expenditures, and an explanatory budget message. The

proposed budget shall show receipts and expenditures for both the current and the new fiscal years. In preparing the proposed budget, the Town Manager shall show all anticipated revenues and all proposed expenditures and the total of proposed expenditures shall not be greater than the total of anticipated revenues. For budgeting purposes, anticipated revenues shall include:

- (1) Miscellaneous revenues
- (2) Amount to be raised by property taxes
- (3) Unexpended capital reserve appropriations

Upon acceptance by the Town Council, the proposed budget shall be made public, posted on the Town web site, and available upon request in the office of the Town Clerk.

#### **Section 18.12 Public Budget Workshops**

The Town Council shall schedule, during the month of March, two public workshops to discuss the proposed budget and any changes thereto. Residents of the Town shall have the opportunity to comment during the workshops.

#### **Section 18.13 Preliminary Budget**

The Council shall, no later than April 1, approve a preliminary budget, which shall show both the recommendations made by the Town Manager and any changes made by the Town Council. If the preliminary budget proposes an increase in the total of expenditures as proposed by the Town Manager, it also shall provide for increasing the total anticipated revenues, and shall indicate the revenues necessary to maintain a balance between revenues and expenditures. No revenue from any source other than the tax levy shall be included in the preliminary budget approved by the Town Council unless the facts clearly warrant the expectation that such amount actually will be realized in cash during the budget year.

#### **Section 18.14 Publication of Preliminary Budget and Tax Rate**

Upon approval of the preliminary budget, the Town Council shall, in consultation with the Town Manager and in the manner prescribed in the Property Tax and Fiscal Disclosure Act (RIGL 44-35), publish a summary of the preliminary budget, and the "proposed property tax rate" as well as the "adjusted current property tax rate" for the Town. The budget summary shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the Town, posted on the Town website, and available upon request in the office of the Town Clerk.



**Section 18.15 Petitions to the Town Council**

Following approval of the preliminary budget by the Town Council, any qualified elector of the Town of Warren may circulate a petition requesting the Town Council to increase or decrease any item of expenditure in said budget, or to insert a new item of expenditure, excluding debt service and expenditures governed by contracts the Town has entered into. Such petition shall specify the item and amount thereof, must be approved by the Town Clerk as to form prior to circulation, and must be returned to the Town Clerk no later than April 10. Upon receipt of such petition, the Town Clerk shall cause the signatures thereon to be verified by the Board of Canvassers within four (4) business days; and, if it contains not less than fifty (50) valid signatures of qualified electors of the Town of Warren, shall transmit the same to the Town Council. The Town Council, before final approval and adoption of the budget, shall consider and vote upon each such petition by roll call. A petition shall only pass with the approval of at least three (3) members of the Town Council.

**Section 18.16 Public Budget Workshop**

The Town Council shall schedule a public workshop no later than the third Monday in April on the preliminary budget, changes proposed by petition, if any, and the proposed tax rate.

**Section 18.17 Final Budget**

Following the public hearing, the Town Council shall, no later than May 1, complete its deliberations on the budget for the next fiscal year, make any final changes in the budget it may deem advisable, and give final approval to said budget by a vote of a majority of all the members of the Town Council. Following such approval, and no later than May 8, the Town Clerk shall cause sufficient copies of the budget to be prepared for public distribution, post the budget on the Town web site, and arrange for publication of the budget in a newspaper of general circulation in the Town of Warren. The budget so adopted shall be the Budget for the Town of Warren for the ensuing fiscal year subject only to change pursuant to Sections 18.18—18.21.

**Section 18.18 Vote by Referendum**

Following final budget approval, the Town Council shall schedule a vote by referendum if:

- (1) A bond issue or promissory note exceeding two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000) is proposed as part of the budget for the next fiscal year;

- (2) A petition has been filed and certified in accordance with Section 18.19 to decrease or increase any line item in the final budget by at least fifty-thousand dollars \$50,000, excluding line items pertaining to debt service and/or contracts executed by the Town; or
- (3) Any public land or building is proposed to be sold, donated or destroyed.

### **Section 18.19 Petition for Budget Referendum**

Within seven (7) days following final budget approval by the Town Council, any five (5) qualified electors of the Town of Warren may commence referendum proceedings by filing an affidavit with the Town Clerk identifying the five (5) electors and certifying that they will be responsible for circulating and filing the petition in accordance with the requirements of this section. The petition must be approved as to form by the Town Clerk prior to circulation and shall specify each line item to be reduced, increased, removed or inserted, as well as the amount approved for that line item by the Town Council. For any proposed increase in expenditures the petition shall propose a corresponding increase in revenue, and identify a source of such revenue.

A petition for a budget referendum must be returned to the Town Clerk within 10 days after the form of petition has been approved. Upon receipt of such petition, the Town Clerk shall cause the signatures thereon to be verified by the Board of Canvassers within four (4) business days; and, if it contains not less than three hundred and seventy-five (375) valid signatures of qualified electors of the Town of Warren, shall transmit the same to the Town Council.

### **Section 18.20 Budget Referendum**

The Town Council shall schedule a referendum by ballot to be held no later than June 1, allowing for not less than ten (10) calendar days following public notice in a newspaper of general circulation in the Town, and on the Town web site. The notice shall include a summary of proposed reductions or increases in budget line items, as well as the date, time and location of the referendum vote. The Town Clerk shall prepare the ballot to be used at the referendum in such manner as to specify each proposed reduction or increase separately, together with the original, approved amount, for each line item. The qualified electors shall be instructed to vote either for the original, approved amount or for one (1) of the proposed reductions or increases thereof. In the case of more than one increase or reduction for the same line item, the amount receiving the most votes shall be declared to have been adopted. The polls at such referendum shall be open at 8:00 a.m. and shall remain open until 8:00 p.m.

**Section 18.21 Publication of budget**

A copy of the budget as finally adopted by the town council with or without amendment(s) as determined by a budget referendum shall be certified by the Town Clerk and filed in the office of the Town Treasurer/Tax Collector. Sufficient copies thereof shall be made available by the Town Clerk for the use of all offices, departments and agencies and for the use of interested persons.

**Section 18.22 Failure to Adopt Budget**

In the event that no budget shall have been adopted by the end of the fiscal year for the departments, offices, commissions, committees, councils, boards, agencies or authorities, the Town of Warren shall have the authorization to continue making expenditures at the rates authorized in the budget of the previous fiscal year until such time as a new budget shall have been approved.



**ARTICLE XIX. GENERAL PROVISIONS****Section 19.01 Effect on Existing Laws**

Upon the effective date of this Charter, all laws and ordinances or parts thereof inconsistent with its provisions shall be superseded insofar as they relate to the Town of Warren. All ordinances and special acts of the General Assembly applicable to the Town of Warren in force at the time when this Charter takes effect and which are not inconsistent with its provisions shall continue in force until amended or repealed.

**Section 19.02 Public Records**

All records and accounts of every department, office, commission, committee, council, board, agency and authority of the Town of Warren shall be public records as defined in the laws of the State of Rhode Island, and shall be open to inspection by any person so requesting in accordance with the provisions of State law.

**Section 19.03 Open Meetings**

The Town Council, School Committee and all other departments, offices, commissions, committees, councils, boards, agencies, and authorities and all subdivisions thereof of the Town of Warren, shall conduct all business in accordance with the provisions of the Open Meetings Legislation of the State of Rhode Island, General Laws Title 42, Chapter 46, as amended from time to time. This section applies to all Town meetings.

**Section 19.04 Ethics**

All elected, appointed and hired officials of the Town of Warren, as the same are defined in State Law, shall be subject to the ethics legislation of the State of Rhode Island, General Laws Title 36, Chapter 14, as amended from time to time, and to the rules and regulations made by the Ethics Commission pursuant thereto.

**Section 19.05 Amendments to the Charter**

The Charter may be amended or a new Charter adopted at any time in the manner provided by the Constitution of the State of Rhode Island. All proposed amendments shall have a public hearing. Should two (2) or more amendments adopted at the same time have conflicting provisions, the one receiving the largest affirmative vote shall prevail. The sections of any amendments added to this Charter shall be appropriately numbered by the Town Clerk and inserted in their appropriate places. It shall not be necessary for the full text of the Charter or of amendments to the Charter to be printed on the ballot. Any digest or description thereof or any question or statement which

substantially expresses the purpose, or identifies the subject matter to be voted upon shall be sufficient. When any question is to be submitted to the voters, the Town Council shall approve the statement of the question, as it shall appear on the ballot. A copy of the full text of the Charter or amendments shall be posted in each polling place and such other places as may be designated by the Board of Canvassers. This Charter shall not be replaced or amended for a period of at least two (2) years following adoption.

#### **Section 19.06 Charter Review Commission**

At least every six (6) years, a nine (9) member nonpartisan Charter Review Commission shall be elected at a general election. The duty of this Commission shall be to review the Charter and recommend to the Town Council any amendments or revisions which it believes the Town Council should consider for presentation to the electors of the Town of Warren. The Commission must report to the Town Council by the first (1st) of June prior to the next general election. The Town Council shall budget sufficient funds for the Commission to carry out its duties.

#### **Section 19.07 Printing the Charter**

The Town Council shall provide for the printing, publication and distribution of the Charter and may, at its discretion, require that a reasonable charge be made for copies thereof, provided, however, the Town Council shall provide a copy of the Charter to every Town officer without charge.

#### **Section 19.08 Separability**

If any article, section of provision of this Charter is held invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction; the remainder of the Charter shall not be affected thereby. All provisions of this Charter shall be interpreted in a manner most favorable to the Town of Warren, and least restrictive of its powers and prerogatives.

#### **Section 19.09 Oath of Office**

Every officer of the Town of Warren shall, before entering upon the duties of their office, take and subscribe to the following oath of affirmation, to be filed and kept in the office of the Town Clerk: "I solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support the Constitution and obey the laws of the United States of America and of the State of Rhode Island; that I will, in all respects, observe the provisions of the Charter and ordinances of the Town of Warren and will faithfully discharge the duties of the office of....."

**Section 19.10 Forfeiture of Office**

Any candidate shall be disqualified for elective or appointive office in the Town of Warren or from holding such office if such elector has been convicted of or plead nolo contendere to a felony in any jurisdiction or if such elector has been convicted of or plead nolo contendere to a misdemeanor in any jurisdiction, resulting in a jail sentence of six (6) months or more, either suspended or to be served.

**Section 19.11 Dual Office**

No employee of the Town of Warren shall hold appointed office in the Town government which would create a conflict of interest for that employee.

**Section 19.12 Vacancy for Public Officials**

For purposes of a vacancy, a public official shall be defined as any elected or appointed official or any employee of the Town of Warren not covered by a collective bargaining agreement. Department heads shall not be union members.

A vacancy shall occur in any office by:

- (1) Death
- (2) No longer resident/elector of Warren
- (3) Resignation
- (4) Neglect or refusal to qualify
- (5) Abandonment of the office, by the holder of the office thereof
- (6) Removal from office in any manner authorized by law

**Section 19.13 Filling of Vacancies**

(1) All appointments shall be at the pleasure of the Town Council. When filling vacancies of any appointed department, office, commission, committee, council, board, agency or authority, the Town Council shall be required to give notice in a newspaper of general circulation in the Town of Warren, at least once, of the availability of such vacant positions. Advertisement shall include the application process and dates of interviews. The Council shall hold selection interviews for candidates and make the selection of appointees at a posted public meeting. The Town Council, at its discretion, shall retain the right to rescind any and all of their appointments.

(2) Vacancies in elected office, not elsewhere provided for in this Charter, shall be filled by the Town Council, except that in case of recall the Town Council shall not appoint the person whose recall created the vacancy.

#### **Section 19.14 Absenteeism**

Any member of an appointed department, office, commission, committee, council, board, agency or authority, or any person who has been appointed who does not attend at least sixty-six and two-thirds ( $66\frac{2}{3}\%$ ) percent of regularly scheduled meetings, or misses three (3) consecutive meetings actually convened, of said department, office, commission, committee, council, board, agency or authority during any one (1) year period from November 1 to October 31), unless a reason for the absence is submitted in writing, prior to the meeting, to the chairperson or secretary, shall be considered removed from such department, office, commission, committee, council, board, agency or authority, and their place thereon shall be considered vacant. It shall be the duty of the Chairperson of that department, office, commission, committee, council, board, agency or authority to give prompt written notice of such vacancy to the Town Manager, and to the Town Council.

#### **Section 19.15 Conviction of a Crime**

Any elected or appointed officer of the Town of Warren convicted of a crime which is a felony in any jurisdiction or involving malfeasance, misfeasance or nonfeasance in office shall be deemed to have vacated his/her office.

#### **Section 19.16 Enforcement of the Charter**

(1) **Complaints by Citizens.** Any qualified elector of the Town may file a sworn statement in the office of the Town Clerk Charging that:

- (a) An elected or appointed official or member of a board or commission of the Town is serving in office in violation of the provisions of this Charter, or
- (b) That any elected or appointed official or member of any board or commission, or that any official body, board or commission in its corporate capacity, or any Town employee, has knowingly taken any action or failed to take any action in his or her official capacity in violation of any of the terms or provisions of this Charter, or of any ordinance, rule, or regulation adopted under the authority thereof.



- (c) Any such statement shall set forth the particulars as to the charges made. A "sufficiently set forth" complaint shall specify (i) the section or sections of the Charter which are charged to have been violated, (ii) the nature of the violation, and (iii) the person, persons, or body charged with having committed the violation.
  - (d) If the Town Clerk determines that the charges are "sufficiently set forth," he or she shall schedule a public hearing before the Town Council acting in its capacity as the Charter Monitoring and Complaint Review Board, such hearing to be held no later than thirty (30) days from the date on which the charges were filed. If the Town Clerk fails to find that the charges are "sufficiently set forth," he or she shall so notify the complainant in writing, providing the reason(s) for dismissal.
  - (e) In the event that a "sufficiently set forth" complaint is against a majority of the Town Council members, the Town Clerk, within ten days (10) from the date on which the charges were filed, shall file the complaint in the Municipal Court.
  - (f) If the complaint is against the Town Clerk, the Town Manager shall fulfill the duties of the Town Clerk regarding review of the charges and scheduling of the public hearing as presented above.
- (2) Action by the Town.**
- (a) At the public hearing, the Review Board shall receive testimony from the complainant and from the official, board, or commission, or members of the official body against whom or which the charges were made and from such witnesses as either party may bring forward. In the event that the complaint is against a member of the Town Council, such member shall not take part in the review of the complaint.
  - (b) If, following the hearing, the Review Board, by no fewer than four (4) affirmative votes, concludes that the charges have been supported by the testimony and evidence presented, it shall direct the Town Manager to cause a complaint to be filed within ten (10) days of the hearing against the alleged violator(s) in Municipal Court.
  - (c) The Municipal Court shall have jurisdiction to determine violations of this Charter, Town ordinances and rules and regulations adopted under authority hereof and to enter appropriate orders, decrees, or judgments with respect to such violations.

- (d) A violation of this Charter shall be punishable by a fine not to exceed the limit set by State Law. Upon a finding of a violation by the Municipal Court, if the violator is an officer or employee of the Town, such violator may be removed from office or immediately dismissed.
- (e) Every expenditure or obligation incurred in violation of this Charter or the rules and regulations made pursuant thereto shall be deemed illegal, and, in addition to any other penalties provided by law for such violations, every official authorizing such payment or any part thereof, knowing the same to be in violation, shall be jointly and severally liable to the Town for the full amount so paid or received. If any appointed official or employee of the Town shall knowingly incur any obligation, or authorize or make any expenditure in violation of this Charter, it shall be grounds for his or her removal.
- (f) Appeals of the decisions of the Municipal Court relating to Charter enforcement can be taken to District Court.

(3) **Protection against reprisals.** In the event that charges are filed pursuant to the terms of this Section by any employee of the Town as defined in Section 36-15-2 (1) of the General Laws, that employee shall be deemed to enjoy the protection afforded by the Rhode Island Whistleblowers' Protection Act, Chapter 15 of Title 36 of the General Laws, as amended.

#### **Section 19.17 Codification**

The Town Council, within two (2) years following the effective date of this Charter, and every fifth year thereafter, shall cause to be prepared a revision or codification of ordinances of the Town of Warren which are appropriate for continuation as local laws of the Town of Warren. Such revision shall be prepared under the supervision of the Town Solicitor, but the Town Council may authorize the Solicitor to contract for the services of persons or organizations experienced in the revision and codification of ordinances and statutes.

#### **Section 19.18 Contractual Agreements**

All contractual agreements ratified by the Town of Warren including, but not limited to, contracts relating to personnel, management, School Department, union, services, and materials, shall be on file in the Town Clerk's office.

**ARTICLE XX. SUCCESSION IN GOVERNMENT****Section 20.01 Effective Date**

This Charter shall become effective upon certification by the Board of Canvassers that the Charter was approved by the electors voting thereon, and ratification by the General Assembly of the State of Rhode Island.

**Section 20.02 Continuation of Laws and Ordinances**

All ordinances, resolutions, orders and regulations of the Town of Warren which are in force when this Charter becomes effective are repealed to the extent that they are inconsistent with or interfere with the effective operation of this Charter, or of ordinances, resolutions, orders and regulations adopted pursuant thereto. To the extent that the Constitution and laws of the State permit, all general laws or special acts relating to or affecting the Town of Warren or its agencies, officers or employees which are in effect when this Charter becomes effective, are superseded to the extent they are inconsistent with or interfere with the effective operation of this Charter, or of ordinances, resolutions, orders and regulations adopted pursuant thereto. The Town Council shall proceed to enact or adopt as promptly as possible any ordinances, rules, resolutions and orders which may be necessary to implement provisions of this Charter, including requesting State legislative actions to repeal General Laws which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Charter.

**Section 20.03 Continuation of Tax Obligations**

All taxes levied or assessed by the Town of Warren prior to the effective date of this Charter, which have not been collected by the Town of Warren, shall be collected with any penalties and interest thereon by the Town of Warren government hereby established, in accordance with this Charter.

**Section 20.04 Continuation of Government**

All departments, offices, commissions, committees, councils, boards, agencies, authorities, or officers, whether elected or appointed, shall continue in the performance of their powers, duties and functions until their successors have been elected or appointed as provided in this Charter to perform their respective powers, duties and functions.

**Section 20.05 Continuation of Office**

All elected and appointed officials of the Town of Warren, except the Town Treasurer/Tax Collector and the Town Clerk, who are in office at the time of the taking of effect

of this Charter shall continue to hold their offices until their respective terms have expired and their successors have been elected or appointed and qualified. Offices that were elected but have become appointed by enacting this Charter must be filled by the Town Manager as soon as possible, but no later than December 31, 1995.

**Section 20.06 Continuation of Present Personnel**

All persons employed in the service of the Town of Warren on the effective date of this Charter shall continue in such employment until promoted, demoted or removed in accordance with the provisions of this Charter, or ordinances enacted pursuant thereto.

**Section 20.07 Transfer of Records and Property**

All records, property and equipment of any department, office, commission, committee, council, board, agency or authority or part thereof, the powers and duties of which are assigned in whole or in part to another department, office, commission, committee, council, board, agency or authority shall be transferred and delivered forthwith to the department, office, commission, committee, council, board, agency or authority to which such powers and duties are so assigned. In the event of a disagreement over transfer, the Town Manager shall make the final decision.

**Section 20.08 Existing Contracts**

All contracts, leases, franchises and other obligations entered into by the Town of Warren, or for its benefit, prior to the effective date of this Charter, shall continue in force and effect.

**Section 20.09 Pending Actions and Proceedings**

No action or proceeding, civil or criminal, in law or in equity pending at the time when this Charter shall take effect, brought by or against any department, office, commission, committee, council, board, agency or authority or officer thereof, shall be affected or abated by the adoption of this Charter or by anything in this Charter.

**AMENDMENTS MADE TO THE TOWN CHARTER**

**NOVEMBER 3, 1998**

SECTION 11.11 FIRE DEPARTMENT

WARREN SEWER DEPARTMENT: SECTION (DELETE SUB-SECTION (14) OF SECTION 4.04 AND LAST LINE OF SECTION 19.04

**APRIL 13, 1999**

SEWER COMMISSION-CHANGE FROM ELECTED TO APPOINTED BY TOWN COUNCIL VOTE REJECTED.

**JUNE 6, 2000**

SECTION 3.12 TOWN COUNCIL

SECTION 4.02, 4.03, 4.04, 4.07, 5.02 TOWN MANAGER

SECTION 5.04, 5.07 (1) FINANCE DEPARTMENT

SECTION 6.03 TOWN CLERK

**NOVEMBER 6, 2001**

SECTION 2.01 GENERAL TOWN ELECTIONS

SECTION 2.04 RECALL

SECTION 3.02 NUMBER, ELECTION AND TERM

SECTION 3.07, 3.08, 3.09, 3.11, 3.14 AND 18.13 TOWN COUNCIL

SECTION 3.16 AND 3.17 TOWN COUNCIL

SECTION 3.18 TOWN COUNCIL

SECTION 3.14 AND 4.02 TOWN COUNCIL AND TOWN MANAGER

SECTION 4.04 AND 4.06 TOWN MANAGER

SECTION 4.11 TOWN MANAGER

SECTION 5.04, 5.06 AND 5.11 DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE

SECTION 9.02 AND 9.03 TOWN PLANNER

WARREN TOWN CODE

**NOVEMBER 2, 2004**

SECTION 14.11 TREE COMMISSION MEMBERS

SECTION 5.09 TAX ASSESSOR JOB REQUIREMENT CHANGE

SECTION 14.05 RECREATION DIRECTOR

SECTION 11.09 FIRE CHIEF JOB REQUIREMENTS

**NOVEMBER 4, 2008**

SECTION 3.02, 3.04, & 3.11 TOWN COUNCIL

SECTION 4.06 COMPETITIVE BIDDING

SECTION 5.04, 5.06, & 5.07 DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE

SECTION 9.02 & 9.03 DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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SECTION 11.06, 11.10 & 11.11 PUBLIC SAFETY

SECTION 12.01, 12.02, 12.03 DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING AND ZONING

SECTION 13.04, 13.06 OTHER TOWN OFFICIALS

SECTION 14.01, 14.02, 14.05, 14.10 BOARDS & COMMISSIONS

SECTION 15.05 BUDGET

SECTION 16.12 FINANCIAL TOWN MEETING

**NOVEMBER 8, 2016**

SECTION 3.02, 3.03, 3.06, 3.10, 3.12(1)(5)(7)(9), 3.14 TOWN COUNCIL

SECTION 4.02, 4.02(4), 4.04(2),(11),(14),(17),(19), 4.06 TOWN MANAGER

SECTION 5.04(A)(2), (B), 5.06 FINANCE DEPARTMENT

SECTION 6.02, 6.03 OFFICE OF TAX ASSESSOR

SECTION 7.02, 7.03(6)(8), 7.04 TOWN CLERK

SECTION 8.03 PROBATE COURT

SECTION 10.01, 10.02, 10.03(1)(2)(3)(4) DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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SECTION 12.03, 12.06, 12.07, 12.09, 12.10(1)(2)(4), 12.11, 12.12, 12.14(2) FIRE AND RECUE DEPARTMENT

SECTION 14.01, 14.02, 14.03, 14.04, 14.05 DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

SECTION 15.01(3) DEPARTMENT OF WASTE WATER MANAGEMENT

SECTION 16 OTHER TOWN OFFICIALS (SEALER OF WEIGHTS AND MEASURES DELETED) 16.03 HARBORMASTER

SECTION 17, 17.02, 17.05, 17.07, 17.08(2)(3)(4) BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

SECTION 18.03, 18.04, 18.05, 18.07(1)(2), 18.08 - 18.21 BUDGET (FINANCIAL TOWN MEETING DELETED ALL REFERENCES AND PROCESS) (MODERATOR DELETED)

SECTION 19.12(2) VACANCY FOR PUBLIC OFFICIALS, 19.14 ABSENTEEISM

SECTION 20.01 EFFECTIVE DATE

Beginnning with Supplement 1, this table will be replaced with the "Charter Comparative Table."





## **CHARTER COMPARATIVE TABLE**

This table shows the location of the sections of the basic Charter and any amendments thereto.

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