

**MINUTES**  
**SPECIAL SELECTBOARD MEETING**  
**TOWN OF SWANTON**  
**VILLAGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
**Village Municipal Complex, 120 First Street, Swanton, VT**  
**Thursday, January 13, 2022 @ 7:00 p.m.**

Present: James Guilmette, Selectboard Chairman; Earl Fournier, Nicole Draper, Mark Rocheleau, Ed White, Selectboard Members; Brian Savage, Town Administrator; Joseph Cava, Administrative Assistant; Reg Beliveau, Village Manager; Neal Speer, Board of Village Trustees President; Dianne Day (Zoom user), Village Clerk; Adam Paxman, Eugene LaBombard, Christopher Leach, Village Trustee Members; Ron Kilburn; Darci Laroche; Lynn Paradis; iPhone; Gordon Winters; Michelle Nordberg

\*All motions carried unanimously unless otherwise specified.

A. Call to Order

Mr. Speer called the Board of Village Trustees meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Rocheleau consecutively called the Special Selectboard portion of the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

B. Pledge of Allegiance – Mr. Speer led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

C. Discuss Village and Town Mutual Interest

Mr. Beliveau opened by saying that the Town and the Village is united in providing transparent services to the community with an open-minded approach to moving forward with the goals for the greater Swanton community. Mr. Rocheleau added expressing a need for a United Swanton. In the age of social media, we see a lot of self-guided interest that strays from these goals of unification.

1. Infrastructure Improvements

a) Expansion in the Southern Growth District

Mr. Savage spoke about the Vermont League of Cities & Towns and the COVID funding that is available for community projects. This funding has an extended deadline of the mid 2020s so there is time to allocate funding.

Mr. Fournier spoke about a Selectboard meeting with St. Albans Town for the mutual goal of expanding water and sewer infrastructure off Exit 20 in the Southern Growth District in Swanton. He emphasized the mutual growth potential for the Town and the Village. Joint meetings like this are an excellent start to the process.

Mr. Speer added that business expansion in Swanton is good for the Village and the Town because it adds to the tax base and provides long-term incentives for residential taxpayers. Mr. Speer continued by saying that the consensus from the St. Albans Town Selectboard joint meeting is to begin the next step in the process. This includes completing a feasibility study through an engineer to link the connections.

Mr. Leach added that the electrical infrastructure is already built up in the area from the construction of Tractors Supply and Handy car dealership. Mr. Beliveau added that electric is supplied to Handy's is from Green Mountain Power (GMP) and recommended bringing them to the table in the future as well.

b) General Infrastructure

The hydro facility in Highgate is a good example of towns working together to meet mutual energy and infrastructure goals according to Mr. Beliveau. He also added that the upcoming expansions planned for the Highgate Airport are an excellent example of how one town's project is beneficial for surrounding communities.

Mr. Beliveau expanded that in addition to the Highgate Airport project there is a rise in the need for housing, which can spill over from Highgate into Swanton. An important mention is that Swanton has the second lowest energy rates in the State of Vermont, which is a huge selling point for Swanton. This is important when compared to other forms of renewable energy like solar power. Solar power fields have a limited life span, where hydro is still in continuous operation. The startup for hydro is more expensive, but its lifespan justifies the cost.

Mr. Savage raised a concern with 911 addressing. He will be working with the State, but Swanton has one of the worst systems in place in the State for structuring roads, buildings, and addresses. The process will involve renumbering properties along certain roads and renaming roads to prevent duplicate road names.

Mr. White asked about the new police budget and what the new chief of police's salary would be. Mr. Rocheleau responded that the salary hasn't changed from the previous chief of police. As part of the new budget there will be a greater police presence around Swanton.

c) Downtown Bridge Improvements

Mr. Beliveau made an important note that the Town has been fighting since 2011 to make necessary repairs to the bridge in the Downtown Village sector. This previous summer the damage to the expansion joints could be heard echoing down the river. Funding has finally been secured to fix the bridge, but it could cause significant disruption to traffic patterns.

Mr. Savage recommended coordinating the downtown bridge project with the Beebe Road Culvert project. Both projects will cause major traffic disruption.

d) MVU Sidewalk Project

The current update for the project according to Mr. Guilmette is securing easements along the state highway for the sidewalk and crosswalks. Ms. Draper recommended connecting it with sections of the rail trail down Waugh Farm Rd.

e) Merchants Row Streetscape Study

A streetscape study on Merchants Row and the Village Green has been completed and Ms. Nance is working on grant funding to implement project phases. Mr. Fournier recommended making the downtown more pedestrian friendly with expansions in small businesses within the area. According to Mr. Speer, architects have been contacted to redesign merchant's row. The Masonic Lodge for example is 3500 sq. ft. upstairs and down for a total of 7000 sq. ft. which is a lot for a small business retail space.

## 2. Planning for the 2023 Municipal Plan

a) Updates

Mr. Beliveau had a request from Mr. Daniel on the Planning Commission about having a joint meeting to discuss planning and zoning and the goals as

they relate to the 2023 Municipal Plan edits. Mr. Speer stressed the importance of local input from community residents.

Ms. Draper agreed that more community input is essential for understanding the needs of the communities Ms. Draper expanded on this community collaboration by talking about the relationships between the Recreation Department, Public Library and Book Mobile and how these services appeal to a variety of community groups. She expressed underutilized areas like the Fourth Street property and Marble Mill Park are up and coming areas and are assets for greater community use beyond Swanton.

Mr. Speer spoke about the Village's goals to update and expand water and sewer infrastructure while being good environmental stewards. Part of these goals also involve working closely with the State of Vermont and the Federal Government according to Mr. Savage.

Mr. Leach described the regional plan as an almanac laying out the groundwork for planning, but it does not specifically delve into what types of businesses or how many employees an employer hires for new businesses. He also stressed a need to do a study for Route 78 and how trucking can be rerouted, so it doesn't tear apart the road fabric through the Village of Swanton. He also emphasized that the Highgate Airport project is a big deal because the increased air traffic provides growth to the surrounding community.

#### D. Adjournment

Mr. Paxman made a motion to adjourn the Board of Village Trustees meeting at 8:31 p.m., seconded by Mr. Leach. Motion carried.

Ms. Draper made a motion to adjourn the Special Selectboard meeting at 8:32 p.m., seconded by Mr. White. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joseph Cava, Administrative Assistant

Received and filed by:

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Cathy Fournier, Town Clerk

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Date