

**MINUTES
TOWN OF SWANTON
SELECTBOARD MEETING
In-Person & By Zoom
Town Office Building
1 Academy Street, Swanton, VT 05488
Tuesday, April 5, 2022 @ 7:00 p.m.**

Present: Mark Rocheleau (ZOOM user); Earl Fournier, Acting Chair; Nicole Draper, Ed White, Members; Brian Savage, Town Administrator; Cathy Fournier, Town Clerk; Joseph Cava, Administrative Assistant; Amy Giroux, Zoning Administrator; Ed Daniel, Planning Commission Chair; Andy LaRocque, Planning Commission Member; Matthew Sullivan, Swanton Chief of Police; Patrick Parah, Swanton Constable; Cody Hemenway; Joel Clark; Jim Hubbard; lin (ZOOM user); Bethany Remmers, Northwest Regional Planning Commission (ZOOM user); Reg Beliveau (ZOOM user); Gordon Winters (ZOOM user)

*All motions carried unanimously unless specified otherwise.

- A. Call to Order – Mr. Fournier called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
- B. Pledge of Allegiance – Mr. Fournier led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- C. Agenda Review
- D. Meeting Topics:

1. Minutes

- a) March 10, 2022, Special and Zoom Selectboard Meeting with Village Trustees
- b) March 15, 2022, Regular and Zoom Selectboard Meeting
- c) March 18, 2022, Special Selectboard Meeting

Mr. White made a motion to approve the Draft Minutes of the 3/10/2022, 3/15/2022, and 3/18/2022 Special and Regular Selectboard meetings, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

2. Public Comments (None)

3. Law Enforcement

- a) SW Police Chief Report

Chief Sullivan led in a summary of events and occurrences including 31 incidents and traffic stops. Breaking down the incidents, most of the vehicles were driving 11-20 miles over the posted speed limit. Two new police officers have been hired from the Burlington police force and are working between Swanton. The suspect who has been dumping trash along the side Beebe Road has been identified and Chief Sullivan is dealing with it.

Ms. Draper asked why there an increased police presence in Alburgh? Chief Sullivan responded that this was due to the Stone Garden detail. Stone Garden places a higher police presence at the northern border regions to look out for potential human/drug trafficking operations. Mr. Rocheleau asked whether this was accounted for in Swanton's budget. Chief Sullivan responded that this operation if funded through the federal government.

- b) SW Health Officer Report

No Health Officer report was submitted.

4. New Town Business

- a) Presentation to Jim Hubbard acknowledging his years of service on the Swanton Planning Commission

Mr. Fournier introduced Mr. Hubbard and commended him for serving the Swanton community for over 25 years. Mr. Hubbard responded with his thanks and expanded on what it means to be a part of such a tight knit community like Swanton.

- b) Letter of Support for Franklin County Field Days

The expansion project planned for the Highgate Airport has led to Franklin County Field Days needing a new home to host the annual festivities. The organizers are looking for a location with sandy soil to facilitate operations in the event the Field Days experiences a heavy downpour.

Ms. Draper made a motion to sign a letter of support for the Franklin County Field Days, seconded by Mr. White. Motion carried.

- c) Letter of Support for the Friends of the Missisquoi Valley Wildlife Refuge

The Friends of the Missisquoi Valley Wildlife Refuge have been adapting a trail to assist individuals who classify under the Americans with Disabilities Act to make the wildlife refuge more accessible.

Ms. Draper made motion to sign a letter of support for the Friends of the Missisquoi Valley Wildlife Refuge, seconded by Mr. White. Motion carried.

- d) Village Green Electric Sign

There are issues with the display on the electric sign in the park and Mr. Savage is exploring cost effective alternatives to repair the sign rather than to initially have a service come from Boston, MA or Syracuse, NY.

- e) Retail Cannabis Sales Vote

Mr. Fournier stressed the importance of getting people to the informational meeting for the vote on legalizing the sale of cannabis in Swanton. Ms. Draper added that she is putting together a memo to put out on social media in an attempt to reach out to more voters. Mr. Fournier added that this was a good idea, but asked how the Selectboard intended to reach out to audiences that aren't connected on social media?

Mr. White raised the concern from comments within the community that misinformation is spreading fear and misconception on what this vote means for the community. Ms. Draper expanded saying that this type of venture opens the door for many opportunities in Swanton. Mr. Fournier cited this lack of information and recommended putting something out in the local papers including the St. Albans Messenger, the Courier and the Islander.

Mr. Clark asked whether the Vermont League of Cities and Towns was involved with this controversial topic. He stressed the importance of needing an impartial party to deliver the facts on what retail cannabis can do for the community. Mr. Winters added on to Mr. Clark's comments about business market research and how this could impact the facts versus perceived misinformation.

5. Old Town Business

a) 2019 Audit Report of A. N. Peisch & Co.

Mr. Savage asked the Board if they had any questions on the Audit of 2019 that was distributed to them at the prior meeting. There were no questions.

b) Fourth Street Property Status

Mr. Savage gave an update on the current status of the Fourth Street property indicating the area of contamination that measures roughly 35-foot by 35-foot square. The rules for Brownfield testing and remediation changed in 2019. The new rules require that a shallow layer of topsoil be removed across the entirety of the parcel in addition to the area of contamination. Mr. Winters recommended reevaluating uses for the lot that do not disturb the soil.

c) RTP Grant

Mr. Clark spoke about grants in addition to the RTP Grant for the trail head. He stated that he is working with Mr. Savage on the grant but in order to proceed with the grant application there has to be a completed signed lease from the State of Vermont to the Town of Swanton on the property. Vtrans is working on getting this lease done and Mr. Clark said he would get an update from Vtrans on Wednesday. The total grant under the RTP is only \$30,000.00 but it would allow for enough funds to have our Highway Department clear the property and lay in crushed stone for a parking area. Mr. Fournier countered with waiting until Mr. Guilmette or Mr. Lapan could get involved as representatives of the Highway Department.

d) MVU Sidewalk

Ms. Remmers was present as a representative from the Northwest Regional Planning Commission to deliver an update on where the project is at. Plans are continuing to permit the sidewalk and the next step is to secure easements from private property owners to construct the sidewalk. VTrans is requiring additional engineering for storm water management and is quantifying a cost proposal for the project. In addition, the engineering firm that we have had working on this project will be going out of business.

Mr. Rocheleau expressed concerns over what these additional costs will do for a small municipality like Swanton? Ms. Remmers said she doesn't have all the answers at this time, but that Swanton can apply for supplemental grants to make up the difference in project costs. Ms. Remmers requested to be on the Agenda of the May 3rd meeting along with the engineers on the project to discuss in detail.

6. Community & Economic Development

a) Report from Elisabeth Nance

Ms. Nance was not present to deliver an update. Mr. Savage delivered good news that Swanton has been awarded \$17,640.00 to assist with the 2023 Municipal Plan with a match of \$1960.00.

Mr. Draper made a motion to accept the State's proposal of \$17,640.00 to assist with the 2023 Municipal Plan, seconded by Mr. White. Motion carried.

b) Report from Brian Savage

Mr. Savage led in an update on the latest ARPA updates stating that the Selectboard could approve a standard deduction of \$10 million. This standard deduction amount would open the door for all sorts of funding opportunities. Ms. Draper expanded upon Mr. Savage's summary stating that the funding could be used to pay back on lost revenue, but could not be used to pay previous debts. Mr. Fournier also added that the funding could not be used to lower the community tax rate.

Mr. White made a motion to approve the adoption of the \$10 million standard ARPA deduction, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

c) Visit from Sec. of Ag. on April 8, 2022 – 11:00 am

Mr. Savage reminded the Selectboard and those present at the meeting that the Secretary of Agriculture would be visiting Swanton on April 8, 2022 to conduct a site visit at the former Swann plant in the industrial park.

7. Highway Department

a) 2022 Highway Grants

Mr. White made a motion to adopt and sign the Town Road and Bridge Standards, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

Mr. Rocheleau made a motion to approve the certification of compliance for the Town Roads and Bridge Inventory, seconded by Mr. White. Motion carried.

Mr. White made a motion to accept the annual financial plan for the town highways, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

b) New Truck

Mr. Guilmette was absent from delivering an update, but Mr. Savage has seen the new truck and recommended including it in the 2022 Memorial Day parade in Swanton.

8. Any Other Necessary Business

Recess Selectboard Meeting and Convene Liquor Control Board

Ms. Draper made a motion to recess the Selectboard meeting and convene the Liquor Control Board meeting, seconded by Mr. White. Motion carried.

1. Liquor License Renewals for 2022

- Hog Island Market
- Caitlin's Creations LLC d/b/a Mother Hubbard's Bakery

None of these businesses had any outstanding violations.

Ms. Draper made a motion to approve the liquor license renewals, seconded by Mr. White. Motion carried.

Adjourn Liquor Control Board Meeting and re-enter Selectboard Meeting

Ms. Draper made a motion to adjourn the Liquor Control Board meeting, seconded by Mr. White. Motion carried.

9. Correspondence - None

10. Public Comments (Reprise) - None

11. Upcoming Events

- a) Monday – 4/11/2022 – Swanton Cemetery Commission – 7:00 pm
Swanton Town Offices, 1 Academy Street
- b) Friday - 4/15/2022 – Good Friday – Town Offices and Operations
closed
- c) Tuesday – 4/19/2022 – Regular & Zoom Selectboard Meeting – 7:00
pm – Swanton Town Offices, 1 Academy Street
- d) Thursday – 4/21/2022 – Joint Town and Village Information Meeting
for Special Town and Village Vote – 7:00 pm – Village Complex
- e) Tuesday – 4/26/2022 – Special Town Vote, Special Village Vote, and
Missisquoi Valley School District Vote – polls open from 7:00 am to
7:00 pm – Swanton Village Complex – 120 First street
- f) Wednesday – 4/27/2022 – Planning Commission – 6:00 pm – Swanton
Town Offices – 1 Academy Street
- g) Thursday – 4/28/2022 – DRB – 6:00 pm – Swanton Town Offices –
1 Academy Street

12. Executive Session (Real Estate & Personnel)

Ms. Draper made a motion to enter executive session at 8:56 p.m., seconded by Mr. White. Motion carried.

Ms. Draper made a motion to exit executive session at 9:52 p.m., seconded by Mr. White. Motion carried.

No motions taken.

E. Adjournment – Mrs. Draper made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:53 p.m., seconded by Mr. White. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joseph Cava
Administrative Assistant

Received and filed by:

Cathy Fournier, Town Clerk

Date