

**MINUTES
TOWN OF SWANTON
SPECIAL SELECTBOARD MEETING
In-Person & By Zoom
Town Office Building
1 Academy Street, Swanton, VT 05488
Tuesday, June 14, 2022 @ 7:00 p.m.**

Present: James Guilmette, Chair; Mark Rocheleau, Vice Chair; Earl Fournier, Nicole Draper, Ed White, Members; Cathy Fournier, Town Clerk; Brian Savage, Town Administrator; Joseph Cava, Administrative Assistant; Ed Daniel, Planning Commission Chair; Jenn Yandow, DRB Member; Ryan Schuller; James Schuller; Julia Tinganelli; Joel Clark; Betsy Fournier; Henry Lambert; Sophie Vibert; Allen Letourneau; Patrick Parah; Gordon Winters; Debbie Winters (ZOOM User); Reg Beliveau, Village Manager (ZOOM User); Roger George (ZOOM User); Alicia Bourdeau (ZOOM User); 18023093715 (ZOOM User); Chevon Cooper (ZOOM User); Nick's iPhone (ZOOM User)

*All motions carried unanimously unless specified otherwise.

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

- 1. Discussion and take public comments on the possible permitted uses for funds received by the Town of Swanton under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

Members of the Town Selectboard opened the discussion by discussing their thoughts on potential ways to spend the ARPA funds. Mr. Fournier expressed a need to overhaul the Town of Swanton's website. In addition to getting news out to the community it could be a beneficial resource for future marketing opportunities. Ms. Draper echoed Mr. Fournier's point on redesigning the website and addressed communication and how the website could address how community members receive news and updates concerning the community. Mr. Rocheleau and Mr. White agreed that updating the website should be given high priority.

In addition to the website, Mr. Guilmette added the importance of adding funding to existing infrastructure like Town buildings. Mr. Fournier also spoke on the importance of improving Swanton's Downtown. He added that the growth and development of the area around Exit 20 in the Southern Growth District can create future jobs and housing. Mr. Fournier added that future long-term planning for feasibility studies could help improve and implement projects. Mr. Fournier concluded by asking if the Selectboard has sole control over how the funds are spent? Mr. Savage responded yes.

Before opening public comment, Mr. Savage stressed the importance of updating the Town website. In addition to the website, Mr. Savage added that the existing email address platform needs to be updated as well. Mr. Savage also put forward ideas like renovating the windows on the second floor of the Town Hall to match the recent renovation of the first-floor windows. Lastly, Mr. Savage called for an update of E911 addresses to improve accessibility to emergency services. Ms. Yandow recommended utilizing the services of a summer intern to assist in the venture.

- E. Public Comment

Mr. Clark asked how much funding is available? Mr. Guilmette responded that the current amount is around \$1.24 million. Mr. Clark remarked that an updated website

would be helpful for expanding communication goals in Swanton. Ms. Winters echoed these goals around communication repeating Swanton Enhancement Project's letter to assist the Town with its ventures and exploring other funding opportunities like grants. Ms. Winters continued by raising awareness to the deadlines for utilizing the ARPA funds including the identification of projects by 2024 with spending completed by 2026.

Mr. Winters said the recreation fields are a jewel for the community of Swanton and recommended crafting a master plan for the rec fields and tying it in with the Fourth Street property. We need to talk less/fixate on what could be and craft a plan for a long-term future. In addition to the recreation fields, this also raised the importance of other feasibility studies for long-term planning. This includes water and sewer infrastructure in the Southern Growth District and expanded walkability around Swanton. This sparked member of the community to raise their voices in favor of existing infrastructure and better ways to utilize it.

Ms. Fournier put a focus on community assets that includes the rail trail, Swanton Recreation and other youth programming that remained open during the COVID-19 pandemic. She stressed the importance of building a community center at the rec fields with a tentative deadline of 2025 to meet ARPA deadlines. To finish, Ms. Fournier also mentioned access to broadband and infilling vacant community storefronts. Ms. Tinganelli added that it would be great to see more restaurants in the community with an emphasis on farm to table enterprises to support the larger agricultural community.

Ms. Yandow added support to Ms. Fournier's points about expanding recreational opportunities in Swanton. Ms. Tinganelli agreed that more recreational opportunities would allow teenagers in the community to engage in healthier lifestyles. Ms. Yandow added other types of community improvements including an EV charger for travelers and a methane digester to offset pollutants and improve the quality of fields, the Missisquoi River and Lake Champlain.

Mr. George demanded a resolution for the water quality issues in Maquam Bay. He described how the water quality issues have created unpleasant conditions for residents of Maquam Shore Rd. Mr. George expanded saying he was curious and surprised why the Selectboard hasn't developed a more comprehensive list of ways to spend the ARPA funds and is disappointed that the \$10,000.00 needed to fund a plan for a Maquam Bay Lake Study isn't being considered this year. Mr. George then went on to explain the underutilization of Swanton Beach and what a huge attraction it could be for families of all ages. To conclude, Mr. George asked if the minutes being recorded would be accurate? Mr. Guilmette responded yes.

Ms. Cooper expressed the need to grow a diverse, happy, and healthy community by encouraging more opportunities through the rec department and its associated properties. She also recognized the need for a long-term planner to apply for grants on behalf of the Town of Swanton. Community engagement is business development and its only when the community comes together that it can grow and supports its long-term goals.

F. Any Other Necessary Business - None

G. Adjournment – Mr. Rocheleau made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:18 p.m., seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joseph Cava
Administrative Assistant

Received and filed by:

Cathy Fournier, Town Clerk

Date