

**Draft Minutes**  
**TOWN OF SWANTON**  
**SELECTBOARD MEETING**

**Town Office Building**  
**1 Academy Street, Swanton, VT 05488**

**In-Person & By Zoom**

**Tuesday, December 5, 2023 @ 6:00 p.m.**

Present: Earl Fournier-Chair, Nicole Draper, Steve Bourgeois, Cody Hemenway-Members, Cathy Fournier-Town Clerk, Brian Savage-Town Administrator, Mathew Sullivan-Swanton Village Police Chief, Christina Candels-Administrative Assistant, Betty Cheney, Damon Broderick, Joel Clark, Betsy Fournier, Jim Pratt, Hank Lambert, Alicia Bourdeau  
Zoom: Lin

A. Call to Order

Mr. Fournier called the meeting to order at 6:06 pm.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Fournier led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.

C. Agenda Review

**Mr. Fournier made an announcement that effective immediately Mr. Ed White Sr. has resigned from his Selectboard position.**

Mr. Fournier stated anyone whom is interested in filling the open position until Town Meeting Day should contact Brian Savage-Town Administrator, the deadline will be 12/28/23 with the intent to interview candidates at the 1/2/24 Selectboard meeting and appoint someone to fill the position, that person will then need to run for the remaining 1-year term. Interested persons will need a letter of intent and resume.

Mr. Fournier requested to add he has been invited to attend the Highgate Selectboard meeting 12/7/23 to see their interest in police coverage.

Mr. Fournier has an upcoming meeting with Representative Matt Walker 12/14 @2pm in Brian Savages' office. Mr. Fournier would like to discuss with Mr. Walker information on legislative approval of TIF, Mr. Fournier is interested to see if this can help in the Southern Growth District. Mr. Fournier would also like to bring up the issue of the state helping fund police protection if the State of Vermont cannot cover them.

Mr. Bourgeois would like to add under other business, the discussion of forming a steering committee for the Recreation, this could be made up of a couple members of the Selectboard, Recreation Committee & Community Members. This committee could also work on fundraising.

Ms. Cathy Fournier would like to add Any Necessary Business, the renewal of liquor license for the VFW 778.

## D. Meeting Topics

### 1. Minutes

a) November 21, 2023 - Regular Selectboard Meeting

**Mr. Hemenway made a motion to approve November 21, 2023, Draft Minutes as written, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried.**

### 2. Public Comments

Ms. Besty Fournier took a moment to thank Mr. Ed White Sr. for his service to the community, blessings to him on his next endeavor.

Mr. Joel Clark wanted to thank board members for listening at the previous nights joint meeting in regards to police coverage. Mr. Clark encourage the board to have a public hearing for Town residences in regards to putting 24/7 police coverage on the March agenda, and Swanton Village residence to hear that. Mr. Clark also spoke of the discussion of regional policing there needs to be more thought into this with such a long commitment.

### 3. Law Enforcement

a) Swanton Health Officer Report

Mr. Savage presented the Health Officer Report to the board, Swanton Health Officer listed one incident with a tenant/landlord.

b) Swanton Police Chief Report

Chief Sullivan came before the board to discuss November 2023 incident Analysis.

Officers responded to 54 incidents in the Town, those are as follows:

14-traffic stops, 8-property home/watch, 5-suspicious person/circumstance, 5-directed patrol, 3-search warrant, 2-crash injury, 2-citizen assist, 2-alarm, 2-theft, 2-family fight/domestic.

Of the 14 traffic stops 9-tickets, 11-warnings, 5-arrests for 3 individuals were issued.

Chief Sullivan also stated some data from the previous meeting of incidents the Town in 2022 had 731 incidents with 35 arrests. To date in 2023 the Town has had 832 incidents with 41 arrests. This does not dictate if the officers were on patrol in the Town at the time. Chief Sullivan would like to look into what VSP data is in the 2/3s of the time they are covering the Town. Chief Sullivan reviewed other data he has researched for crime, search warrants and investigative work they have seen the increases in.

### 4. Old Town Business

a) Boundary Line Adjustment with MVSD

Mr. Savage updated the board with his meeting with Julie Regimbal in regard to the adjacent property between MVU & Town owned property that they have an alternate

trail on currently. The school district would like to keep the trail access and in order to do that needs to be subdivided. In the mean time Mr. Savage suggests drafting a MOU. The school district indicates their current insurance covers anyone on the trail. They would like the have the boundary line be 25' from the access road. Mr. Fournier asked if the trail goes thru Rowell property also? Yes, it does.

Mr. Savage stated the school district is willing to pay for the engineering fees and legal fees needed.

The boundary line adjustment will cover the land they are currently using.

**Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to approve the boundary line adjustment in accordance with the map provided, as well as giving Mr. Savage authority to sign any documents needed on behalf of the Town of Swanton, seconded by Mr. Hemenway. Motion carried.**

This is pending the outcome of the discussion with Mr. Rowell adjacent property owner.

b) Discussion on School Bus Stops on Highgate Road

Mr. Savage updated about his discussion with Ms. Regimbal in regards to school buses going on to Glen Ridge & Ceres Circle to pick up children, rather than having children meet at the end of the street on VT Route 207 as requested by the homeowners' associations of those developments.

Ms. Regimbal is going to talk with the bus company to see if this is something they can accommodate. Mr. Savage has checked there is not state statute or commissioners' rules for school buses on private roads that he can find. Both of the developments in discussion have turn arounds large enough to turn a fire truck around there for there should be room for a school bus. But ultimately, they cannot force the bus company to do this. Mr. Savage will follow up with Ms. Regimbal to see what the bus company said.

5. New Town Business

a) Swanton Beautification Project Request – Mr. Hank Lambert

Mr. Lambert thanked the Town for their support and reviewed what the Beautification Committee has completed in 2023 as well as plans for 2024.

**Mr. Hemenway made a motion to appropriate \$3,000 in 2024 for Swanton Beautification, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.**

b) Missisquoi Valley Rescue – 2024 Appropriation  
POSTPONED

c) Swanton Recreation Commission – 2024 Budget

Ms. Betsy Fournier came before the board to present Swanton Recreations 2024 Budget.

Mr. Bourgeois stated he has reviewed the budget and had some questions. He thinks the Rec programs are important and have a lot of good, made tremendous progress with proceeding with a new building. Mr. Bourgeois has a dozen or more

questions and would like to propose he sends his questions to Mr. Savage and they be presented to the Recreation Commission and they respond with answers, these questions are about him learning. Ms. Betsy Fournier stated there is an upcoming meeting with her board and she will work with them to get the questions answered for him.

Ms. Betsy Fournier stated the Recreation budget was put together by the Nicole 7 Nick and the board reviewed it.

Ms. Betsy Fournier stated most of the increase they were seeing in salary increases are due to the Notch pulling out of their summer day camp program at the Recreation center and they will pick that program up to fill that gap. Therefore, this caused an increase in salary to hire the staff and training. Last year the ask was \$123,422.77 for 2023, the anticipated ask for 2024 is \$152,670.00. in 2023 they had a \$34,000 rollover and in 2024 they are anticipating \$15,000.

Ms. Betsy Fournier and Ms. Draper stated they are working on grants to help cover the cost of covering the program from the Notch to help with the cost as well as working with the supervisory union to ensure they do not duplicate programing.

Ms. Betsy Fournier stated they are also going to look at more fundraising to try and offset costs.

Mr. Fournier asked how much the Recreation Commission has in their capital reserve. There will be \$35,000 after they move this year's allotted \$5,000. Mr. Fournier spoke about the need of fundraising again; he does not believe with everything else asking taxpayers for a bond will not work right now. Mr. Fournier would like to see grants to cover as much of the project as possible to possibly not ask the taxpayers for money for this.

Mr. Bourgeois spoke about a grant writer; the RFP is ready to proceed for this.

d) Mass mailings

Ms. Cathy Fournier stated this is something we can do; the mailing is the most expensive. We can print the mailings here. Post cards are .51 each.

To have them printed at the UPS store is \$950 for the cards plus \$765 postage.

Ms. Candels has been in touch with a mass mailing company whom can print, address, stamp and mail them, but he has not replied yet. Ms. Draper asked if they had looked into mass mailing companies whom send to the entire zip code?

Mass mailings for a zip code are easier and cheaper but Mr. Fournier would like them send to residential homeowners in the Town.

Mr. Fournier said that may need to be changed for example renters, the landlords cannot just eat this cost.

Ms. Cathy Fournier stated we could send them to all registered voters. That would increase the amount of mailing from 1500 to about 3000. Ms. Draper stated that would be such a duplication for example her house has two registered voters. This can be looked at so only one goes to each household. Mr. Savage stated there is also homes with 05478 address. Ms. Cathy Fournier stated they can look at the

reports to see if there is a way to print one per household. If we print them in house, we can eliminate duplicates also.

Mr. Fournier stated we also need to look at what these will say as well.

Mr. Bourgeois discussed the idea of having a meeting with Town residents. This could provide tremendous turnout. The plan is to have a public hearing in January. Ms. Draper also looked online at Vista Print that is an option as well.

e) 2024 Town Employee Salary Increase

Mr. Savage stated for budgeting purposing it's time to discuss salary increases for Town employees. Mr. Savage stated CPI (cost of living) is currently 3.2%. The CPI was higher in September at 3.7% and has come down. Swanton Village is increasing staff 3.2%.

Mr. Bourgeois would like to see an average of the CPI that is more reflective of what's going on. The average is 3.45%.

Mr. Pratt asked what social security was giving for increases?

Mr. Fournier asked what was given last year? 8%. But CPI was much higher then.

Mr. Bourgeois asked if employees were given annual reviews? Mr. Fournier asked if that is the job of the Town Administrator? Ms. Draper & Mr. Fournier agreed it was in the policy. Mr. Savage stated that the Town Administrator only oversees one employee, and at some point, the Selectboard dropped doing merit raised and went to cost of living increases across the board.

Mr. Fournier asked Ms. Cathy Fournier if she knew the rate of increase of insurance. Ms. Cathy Fournier stated 11%. This will also be higher with the new people taking the insurance.

**Mr. Hemenway made a motion to give Town employees a 3.7% salary increase for 2024, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried.**

f) 2023 Employee Christmas Appreciation

Mr. Fournier asked what was done last year. Mr. Savage stated last year they gave all employees received at \$100 visa gift card. This year there is 15 employees general and highway. Mr. Bourgeois stated last year the members of the board forfeited there's and spread it across to employees. That makes good sense, that would increase it for the employees.

**Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to give town employees a \$150 gift card as Christmas Appreciation, seconded by Mr. Hemenway. Motion carried.**

6. Community and Economic Development

Mr. Fournier asked if the money for the revolving loan fund is ready? No this has been ongoing for over a year. Mr. Savage has sent them what they need twice and has done everything they've been asked to do.

**Mr. Hemenway made a motion for Mr. Savage to draft a letter for Mr. Fournier to sight and send to the Governor and Agency of Commerce and Community, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.**

7. Highway Department

Mr. Hemenway stated he has heard another complaint about a Town truck while plowing backing off Bachand road. Mr. Hemenway will discuss with Mr. Lapan Highway Forman again to discuss.

8. Any Other Necessary Business

Ms. Cathy Fournier added discussion for Liquor license renewal for 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> class license for the VFW 778.

**Ms. Draper Made a motion to exit regular selectboard meeting and enter Liquor Control Board Meeting, seconded by Mr. Hemenway. Motion carried.**

**Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to approve the renewal of VFW 778 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> class license, seconded by Mr. Hemenway. Motion carried.**

**Ms. Draper made a motion to adjourn Liquor Control Board Meeting and enter regular Selectboard Meeting, seconded by Mr. Hemenway. Motion carried.**

9. Public Comment (Reprise)

Mr. Pratt shared with the board an email he received on the future of reappraisals. There is a lot of change /ideas they are looking at.

Mr. Fournier asked if they have enough money set aside for a reappraisal? Yes, right now they do.

Mr. Clark asked the board members to take the time to look at the 4 Welcome to Swanton signs. Mr. Clark feels someone should champion the replacing of these signs. If you want to be welcoming maybe should look at spending some money to replace these. These were initially put in by the Chamber of Commerce, and sponsored by a business.

Mr. Hemenway will bring this to the tribal council as well see if they can help. Mr. Savage will contact the Chamber of Commerce and let them know this is something they want to look at.

10. Upcoming Events

- a) Wednesday – December 13, 2023 – Planning Commission – 6:30 pm  
Town Offices
- b) Tuesday – December 19, 2023 – Regular Selectboard Meeting – 6:00 pm  
Town Offices
- c) Monday – December 25, 2023, and Tuesday – December 26, 2023 –Christmas Holiday – Town Office and Operations Closed.
- d) Friday – December 29, 2023, and Monday, January 1, 2024 – New Years Day Holiday – Town Office and Operations Closed

11. Executive Session (If needed)

Not Needed

E. Adjournment

**Mr. Hemenway made a motion to adjourn at 7:37 pm, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.**

Respectfully Submitted By,

Christina Candels-Administrative Assistant