

Draft Minutes
TOWN OF SWANTON
SELECTBOARD MEETING
Town Office Building
1 Academy Street, Swanton, VT 05488
In-Person & By Zoom
Tuesday, December 19, 2023 @ 6:00 p.m.

Present: Earl Fournier-Chair, Nicole Draper, Steve Bourgeois, Cody Hemenway-Members, Brian Savage-Town Administrator, Cathy Fournier-Town Clerk, Christina Candels-Administrative Assistant, Kevin Lapan-Road Forman, Kevin Daignault, Heather Lavoie, Nicholas Brosseau, Abigael Gaudette, David Winchester, Joel Clark, Josh Ramsdell, Damon Broderick, Kellie Utzell, Greg Lamoereaux

Zoom: Dillon Dupont, Lin, Chevon Cooper

A. Call to Order

Mr. Fournier called the meeting to order at 5:58 pm.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

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

C. Agenda Review

Mr. Savage requested to remove School District Orders under Expenditures from agenda that was added in error.

Mr. Savage requested to remove Swanton Recreation Budget under Old Town Business from the agenda they are not yet ready.

Mr. Savage would like to add Swanton Historical Society under New Town Business.

Mr. Savage would like to add to Request for Appropriations under New Town Business.

Ms. Cathy Fournier to add signing of Resolution for Line of Credit under Old Town Business.

D. Meeting Topics

1. Minutes

- a) December 4, 2023, Joint Meeting with Village Trustees & December 5, 2023 Regular Selectboard Meeting

Mr. Hemenway made a motion to approve December 4, 2023, Joint Meeting with Village Trustees draft minutes and December 5, 2023, Regular Meeting draft minutes as written, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois Motion carried.

2. Public Comments

None

3. Law Enforcement

a) Swanton Animal Control Report

The board reviewed the report. Mr. Hemenway suggested ACO review the ordinances for what we should respond to. In the report there is a report on a rooster. Mr. Savage has asked for clarification on this from ACO.

One incident with an unlicensed dog is a repeat and that animal owner as has previously been issued a warning for unlicensed dog and is still unlicensed.

Review the ordinance with this also, Mr. Savage will follow up with Mr. Benson (ACO) on this.

4. Expenditures

a) General Orders

Mr. Hemenway made a motion to approve General Orders for 11/22/23 to 12/19/23 in the amount of \$109,949.38, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

a) Highway Orders

Ms. Draper made a motion to approve the Highway Order for 11/22/23 to 12/19/23 in the amount of \$42,158.14, seconded by Mr. Hemenway. Motion carried.

b) ARPA Orders

Mr. Hemenway made a motion to approve ARPA Orders for 11/22/23 to 12/19/23 in the amount of \$4363.20, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

c) Library Orders

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to approve Library Orders for 11/22/23 to 12/19/23 in the amount of \$1,334.07, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

There was a discussion on Alliance Mechanical's bill, Ms. Cathy Fournier clarified this is for inspection and is completed twice annually and part of the maintenance contract required inspections.

d) Highway/General Payroll Orders

Mr. Hemenway made a motion to approve Highway/General Payroll Orders for 11/22/23 to 12/19/23 in the amount of \$45,108.59, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried.

e) Library Payroll Orders

Ms. Draper made a motion to approve Library Payroll Orders for 11/22/23 to 12/19/23 in the amount of \$8,221.00, seconded by Mr. Hemenway. Motion carried.

5. Highway Department

Mr. Lapan updated the board on the parking lot of the Highway Department, Ryan Jordan volunteered his time and materials to fix the ongoing pooling of water in the parking lot. This is very much appreciated by everyone.

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to have Mr. Savage draft a letter to Ryan Jordan for Mr. Fournier to sign in appreciation for his contribution in fixing the Town Highway Garage parking lot, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

Mr. Fournier and Ms. Cathy Fournier will start working on the Highway budget this week for January 2, 2024 Selectboard meeting. They will need to plan for the purchase of a new highway truck in 2024 that has been having money allocated for.

All trucks are currently running well.

Mr. Fournier asked with the flooding if there are any Swanton roads flooded? Mr. Lapan stated the only road underwater is Waugh Farm Road.

Mr. Hemenway mentioned to Mr. Lapan the complaint he has received about the Town plow backing off Bachand road, Mr. Lapan stated they are going to try something different but sometimes they have to back onto roads.

6. Old Town Business

a) Update on Small Business Saturday

Ms. Draper updated the board on what was done for Small Business Saturday in Swanton Village. Ms. Draper shared the hard work that local businesses did to market Small Business Saturday.

The local businesses are discussing creating a Business Association under the guidance of Darcy Benoit (Bees on Broadway) she is working with other towns on how this process works. This conversation will continue with Town, Village, Swanton Enhancement & Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Fournier requested Ms. Draper keep following up with this and let the board know. Mr. Bourgeois suggested this be merged with Chamber vs creating a new board/association. Enosburg & Barre Vermont have great business associations they can reach out to for input/model.

Mr. Brosseau stated on behalf of Chamber of Commerce is working in collaboration with Ms. Benoit on this.

b) Follow-up discussion on Joint Meeting of December 4, 2023 & Discussion on Public Hearing.

Mr. Fournier stated the received a fair amount of input at the joint meeting with Trustee's.

Mr. Fournier stated they have a tentative date of January 9th. This Public Hearing is designed for Town residents to voice their opinions if residents want full time police coverage, 70 hours vs 24/7.

The Selectboard want to hear what the residence of Swanton Town wants, that will come at a cost to taxpayer.

The planned Public Hearing will have no Village representation this is for Town residence to voice if they want 24/7 coverage not about the proposed facility.

Ms. Candels has worked with Spectrum Marketing Companies to provide a mass mailing to inform Town residents of Public Hearing. Ms. Draper has designed a post card for printing and the board approved the design.

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to approve Spectrum Marketing Companies estimate of \$1,255.20 to print & mail mass mailing, seconded by Mr. Hemenway. Motion carried.

This will also be posted on Swanton website, Facebook and St. Albans Messenger.

Mr. Fournier stated they have questions in regards to contracts, Mr. Clark stated in the past they had done contracts with extension years.

Mr. Clark encouraged people to go the Swanton Village public meetings about the proposed building and try to have the cost for police coverage for upcoming Public Hearing.

Mr. Daignault stated the Village meeting did provide some police coverage cost at there meetings. Mr. Savage will reach out for this info it has been very confusing for residents.

After discussion of Public Hearing details, it was decided that January 10th should be looked at because January 9th there is already two basketball games and will create parking issues to have a Public Hearing at the same time. Ms. Candels will inquire about MVU theatre or Central School Cafeteria availability January 10th.

c) Status update on Revolving Loan Fund

Mr. Savage updated that the Leader Evaporator Grant has been successfully closed out. This Grant is what will fund the Revolving Loan Find. Mr. Savage will keep track of this because there is one applicant thus far for a loan.

d) Swanton Public Library Budget update, if available

Ms. Gaudette presented an updated Swanton Public Library Budget. Mr. Fournier asked why the proposed budget does not show any income on the 2024 budget?

Ms. Gaudette stated they do not put that in because it varies and cannot rely on it.

Mr. Fournier asked if they take money out of the trusts to cover the differences.

Board members questioned the staff wage increases in the budget being 6.9% when Town employees only received 3.7%. Ms. Gaudette stated they have been trying to bring staff closer to comparable pay for other libraries.

Mr. Bourgeois asked for clarification of the amount of money that is in the trusts' and what the monies can be used for.

Mr. Fournier would like to see the budget be looked at again and if the Trustee's want to give this pay increase can they pay for other increases out of there trust accounts and explain where all the 2023 income was spent.

Ms. Draper recommended members forward questions to Mr. Savage so they can be answered to eliminate the back and forth.

- e) Swanton Rec. Commission Budget update, if available
Not available

- f) Resolution for Line of Credit
Ms. Cathy Fournier gave Mr. Fournier the Resolution for Line of Credit to sign that had previously been approved for the Selectboard members to sign.

7. New Town Business

- a) Missisquoi Valley Rescue 2024 Appropriation – Josh Ramsdell

Mr. Fournier asked about mutual aid calls, there has been a large increase in mutual aid calls for MVR. They are at 154 mutual aid calls to date for this year. Mr. Fournier asked if other communities are depending on MVR for mutual aid can they bill for them? Mr. Ramsdell said they are looking into this and keep the board updated with this.

Mr. Ramsdell came before the board to share Missisquoi Valley Rescue's 2024 budget. The budget is 15.3% increase vs 2023. Major points of the increase are from increased payroll costs due to paying \$15 hour from 12am-6am for sleep time and was not paid time previously, the Department of Labor has been questioning this so they will now be paid time. Other noted increases are from to switch dispatching back to St. Albans vs Middlebury but still at an increase. Another noting increase is the board has voted to outsource the billing vs inhouse billing.

The request from the Town of Swanton for 2024 is \$229,761 the 2023 request was \$199,245.

Mr. Ramsdell updated the board on the land purchase, there is no building plans for 2024.

Mr. Bourgeois made amotion to include the MVR proposed budget in the Town Report and be voted on, seconded by Mr. Hemenway. Motin carried.

- b) Discussion of Date of Town Meeting Informational Meeting

Mr. Savage and Ms. Cathy Fournier will discuss the time line needed for this meeting. This will be a joint meeting with Swanton Village before Town Meeting. There are statutory rules for this.

- c) Discussion of Positions to be elected on 2024 Town Meeting Day
All 2024 Elected Positions up for Re-Election.

MODERATOR, TOWN	1 YEAR TERM
SELECTPERSON	3 YEAR TERM
SELECTPERSON	2 YEAR TERM
SELECTPERSON	1 YEAR UNEXP. TERM
LISTER	3 YEAR TERM
LISTER	1 YEAR UNEXP
AUDITOR	3 YEAR TERM
TRUSTEE OF PUBLIC MONEY	3 YEAR TERM
LIBRARY TRUSTEE	5 YEAR TERM
CEMETERY COMMISSIONER	5 YEAR TERM
CEMETERY COMMISSIONER	4 YEAR UNEXP TERM
COLLECTOR OF DELINQUENT TAXES	1 YEAR TERM

Please contact the Town Clerk's office for a petition to run for any of these positions.

d) Swanton Historical Society

Ms. Lavoie came before the board to discuss Swanton Historical Society buying 21 Merchants Row (Roy's Insurance Building). The Swanton Historical Society has been actively looking for a new location they are currently located in the basement of Swanton Public Library.

21 Merchants Row is currently owned by Mr. David Horton, Mr. Horton has agreed to sell the property for \$124,000. This is half the appraised value. This building is a significantly historic building, this would be great to asset to the community.

Ms. Lavoie stated there is no grants for the purchase of the building but there are grants for restoration, bringing to code, security and the roof.

Ms. Lavoie discussed the parking concerns for the building currently. They are looking into leasing spaces from Ace Hardware. There is also a lot behind the building that is being used by the apartments behind, but there is another way to access those apartments. The Chamber of Commerce also has parking spaces. There have been discussions of bringing the Chamber of Commerce into this building as well.

Mr. Bourgeois asked if they have looked into the cost of bringing this building to ADA compliance? They have not but will, they have been waiting for the building inspection report which they now have. Nichols Home Inspection has preformed the inspection and provided the report so they know what needs to be done.

Ms. Lavoie also presented last years operating costs of the building equaling \$3274. (VT Gas & Swanton Electric) The property taxes were \$5080, but a Town owned building would be tax exempt.

Mr. Fournier asked for more information as to how realistic grant funding is to cover the costs of updating and bringing the building to code. Therefore, only the purchase and annual operating costs would be needed by the Town of Swanton. Ms. Lavoie will come back with more information.

Swanton Historical Society is looking to the Town of Swanton to purchase this building. Any land/building purchases would need taxpayers' approval.

- 8. Community and Economic Development
 - Mr. Fournier, Mr. Bourgeois and Mr. Savage spoke with Matt Walker to discuss the Southern Growth District. They also had the discussion about creating a TIF district in this area. This is something that takes other partners. Mr. Fournier and Mr. Bourgeois will work with FCIDC for help with this. Mr. Bourgeois would like to meet with the landowners as well.

- 9. Any Other Necessary Business
 - a) Selection of Selectboard Vice Chairman to serve until March 5, 2024
Mr. Hemenway made a motion to nominate Mr. Bourgeois as Vice Chair, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

 - b) New Request for Appropriations
Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi is requesting \$3,000.
Ms. Draper made a motion to allocate \$3,000 to Abenaki Nation of the Missisquoi, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried. Mr. Hemenway abstained.

Franklin County Field Days is requesting \$5,000.
Mr. Hemenway made a motion to pass on this allocation, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried. Mr. Savage will draft a letter in response.

- 10.. Correspondence
 - None

- 11. Public Comment (Reprise)
 - None

- 12. Upcoming Events
 - a) Monday – December 25, 2023, and Tuesday – December 26, 2023 – Christmas Holiday – Town Office and Operations Closed.
 - b) Friday – December 29, 2023, and Monday, January 1, 2024 – New Years Day Holiday – Town Office and Operations Closed
 - c) Tuesday – January 2, 2024 – Selectboard Regular Meeting – 6:00 pm – Town Office and Zoom

- 13. Executive Session (if needed)
 - Not needed

E. Adjournment

**Ms. Draper made a motion to adjourn at 8:53 pm, seconded by Mr. Hemenway.
Motion carried.**

Respectfully Submitted by
Christina Candels-Administrative Assistant