

Draft Minutes
TOWN OF SWANTON
SELECTBOARD MEETING
Town Office Building
1 Academy Street, Swanton, VT 05488
In-Person & By Zoom
Tuesday, January 16, 2024 @ 6:00 p.m.

Present: Earl Fournier-Chair, Nicole Draper, Joel Clark, Steve Bourgeois, Cody Hemenway-Members, Brian Savage-Town Administrator, Cathy Fournier-Town Clerk, Christina Candels-Administrative Assistant, Ed White Sr.

Zoom-Not working

A. Call to Order

Mr. Fournier called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

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

C. Recognition of Mr. Ed White

Mr. Fournier presented Mr. Ed White for his service for his time on the Swanton Selectboard and service to the Town of Swanton.

Mr. White thanked everyone present and shared how this was not an easy decision to make. Mr. White thanked everyone whom had reached out to him with well wishes. Mr. White thank Mr. Clark for stepping into fill his position.

D. Agenda Review

Add liquor license renewals under Any Other Necessary Business.

E. Meeting Topics

1. Minutes

a) January 2, 2024, Regular Meeting

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to approve January 2, 2024, Regular Selectboard Meeting, January 10, 2024 Public Hearing and January 11, 2024 Special Selectboard Meeting Draft Minutes as written, seconded by Mr. Hemenway. Motion carried.

2. Public Comments

None

3. Law Enforcement

a) Swanton Animal Control Report

Mr. Hemenway discussed with the board that he had a deceased rottweiler at his residence that had been hit by a car. Mr. Hemenway has it in a freezer and has been hoping the owner would come forward so it can be returned. Mr. Hemenway had made Facebook posts and shared around the community in hopes the owner could be found. Mr. Hemenway is now wondering what he should do next with the dog. The animal control office had also reached out trying to find the owner. Mr. Hemenway has had the animal in a freezer for a while now and is open to advise on the next step.

After discussing the board agreed to have Mr. Kevin Lapan the road foreman to contact Mr. Hemenway and bring it to the Town garage and bury it under one of the salt piles as the ground shouldn't be frozen.

4. Expenditures

a) General Orders

Mr. Hemenway made a motion to approve General Orders for 12/20/23 to 12/31/23 in the amount of \$43,698.52, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

b) Highway Orders

Mr. Clark made a motion to approve Highway Orders for 12/20/23 to 12/31/23 in the amount of \$447.72, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried.

c) ARPA Orders

Ms. Draper made a motion to approve ARPA Orders for 12/20/23 to 12/31/23 in the amount of \$8,976.97, seconded by Mr. Hemenway. Motion carried.

Mr. Clark stated this is the final bill for the archeological services for the LVRT trailhead.

b) Library Orders

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to approve Library Orders for 12/20/23 to 12/31/23 in the amount of \$4,529.45, seconded by Mr. Clark. Motion carried.

c) Highway/General Payroll Orders

Mr. Hemenway made a motion to approve Highway/General Payroll Orders for 12/20/23 to 12/31/23 in the amount of \$16,196.72, seconded by Mr. Clark. Motion carried.

f) Library Payroll Orders

Mr. Clark made a motion to approve Library Payroll Orders for 12/20/23 to 12/31/23 in the amount of \$4,960.24, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

4. Highway Department

Mr. Fournier discussed the proposed Highway Budget for 2024 with board members.

6. Old Town Business

a) Town Highway Department Budget (Tabled from 1/1/24)

The board members reviewed the proposed Highway Budget for 2024 prepared.

The largest part of the increase is the police coverage.

2023 Highway Budget has a carry over of \$269,854.97. The board discussed what to use this carry over on. The new truck that has previously been ordered needs to be paid for in 2024 also.

The proposed budget has a \$100,000 increase in paving and \$350,000 for Swanton Hill Road repairs.

Mr. Clark suggested splitting the Swanton Hill Road repairs in half and if it is not enough the Town can borrow the money and split it over a couple years to lower the tax rate.

After much discussion the board agreed to use the \$268,54.97 carry over as follows:

\$200,000 for new truck (currently there is \$106,000 saved for this)

\$32,354.97 in Contingency Fund Carryover

\$37,500 to lower to be raised by taxes

Ms. Cathy Fournier will fix the lines discussed during executive session and the board can approve after.

b) Town General Fund Budget (Tabled from 1/11/24)

Ms. Cathy Fournier reviewed with the board the proposed General Fund Budget for 2024.

2023 General Fund Budget has a carryover of \$42,105.74

Notable increases in 2024 proposed General Fund Budget are Health Insurance, New Child Care Tax, Election Expenses, Janitorial Supplies / Janitor, ZBS& PC Clerk (this is due to adjustment of admin assistant, this is a split position for one person) Zoning & Planning Supplies & Printing, Land Use & Dev Regs (By Law rewrite currently being done by Planning Commission)

Mr. Clark discussed the increase needed for the LVRT Trailhead project. The increase match needed from the Town is \$33,295. The Total match needed from the Town will now be \$123,295. (\$90,000 has already been allocated from ARPA funds) The State of Vermont will contribute \$460,000.

Mr. Clark made a motion to increase the Towns part of the grant an additional \$33,295 to come from ARPA funds, seconded by Mr. Hemenway. Motion carried.

The board discussed the use of remaining ARPA funds to fix the library building issues, there is still time to allocate the remaining \$460,000.

Mr. Fournier discussed putting an article on the ballot for \$25,000 to start a Capital Reserve Account for Buildings. Mr. Savage stated part of the new financial policies include the Town doing this. This will need voter approval, to be reviewed each year.

Mr. Clark made a motion to remove \$25,000 for 4th Street Brownfield from proposed 2024 General Budget and take it out of ARPA funds, seconded by Mr. Hemenway. Motion carried.

Mr. Clark made a motion to approve the proposed 2024 General Budget as shown with 4th Street clean up removed and a separate line item for \$25,000 for Capital Reserve Account, Town Plan Expense decreased by \$8,000, seconded by Mr. Hemenway. Motion carried.

- c) Swanton Public Library Budget-Town Portion (Tabled from 1/11/24)
Ms. Cathy Fournier presented the board with the proposed 2024 Library Budget (Town Payroll Portion)

Mr. Clark made a motion to approve the proposed 2024 Library Budget-Town Portion, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried.

Mr. Fournier took a few minutes to thank Ms. Cathy Fournier for everything she does, she worked hard on these budgets with everyone to get them completed.

- d) Follow-Up discussion on Public Hearing of 1/10/24
Mr. Clark drafted a letter for the community to the community in regards to what the board took away from the Public Hearing.
Ms. Candels will post the signed letter on the Swanton website, Facebook and send to St. Albans Messenger letter to the editor.
The signed letter is attached.

Mr. Savage drafted a letter to the Swanton Village Trustee's in response to where the Selectboard stands with 24/7 police coverage.

- e) Swanton Library Basement Repair Work
Mr. Savage updated the board the Northern Basements has completed their part of the project. Mr. Savage plans to meet with the Village to see where the water drain can be tied into the storm drain that is in the parking lot.
Mr. Savage has met with one contractor to get an estimate to fix the sheetrock, paint and put down new flooring. Mr. Savage has another contractor to call for estimate. The library has programs scheduled for school vacation so it's important to get the work completed soon.
Mr. Savage has an estimate for flooring from A-1 Flooring.

Mr. Hemenway made a motion to approve Mr. Savage to purchase the flooring from A-1 Flooring not to exceed \$5,500, seconded by Mr. Clark. Motion carried.

The rest of the work will be decided on next week.

- f) Continue Fourth Street Property Discussion.
Mr. Clark discussed previous boards agreement to use the property for recreation. Mr. Fournier asked what was decided. The previous plans were to use the land for ball fields.

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to reaffirm the Selectboards commitment to utilize the Fourth Street property for community use in the best interest of the community, seconded by Mr. Hemenway. Motion carried.

7. New Town Business

- a) Testing on Fourth Street Property

Mr. Savage has been in contact with Atlas whom did the preliminary work on the testing in March 2023. When the presented the contract then they agreed to do the work for \$18,937. Mr. Savage has been in contact with them and they will honor that price now.

Mr. Clark made a motion to approve Mr. Savage to sign a contract with Atlas to complete the work in the amount of \$18,937, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried.

8. Community and Economic Development

None

9. Any Other Necessary Business

- a) Liquor Control License Renewals

Ms. Draper made to exit the regular Selectboard meeting and enter into Liquor Control Meeting at 7:39 pm, seconded by Mr. Hemenway. Motion carried.

Ms. Cathy Fournier has two renewals for Liquor Licenses Tabacco and Tabacco Substitute.

Jolley Associates LLC

R L Vallee Inc.

No violations for either.

Mr. Hemenway made a motion to approve the renewal of Liquor License, Tobacco and Tobacco Substitute Licenses for Jolley Associates LLC & R L Vallee Inc, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

Mr. Clark made a motion to exit Liquor Control Meeting and enter back in to regular Selectboard meeting at 7:40 pm, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

- b) Set Special Meeting to sign 2024 Annual Warning
This special meeting will be Monday January 22, 2024 at 12 noon for the board to sign the annual warning.
- c) Selection of Selectboard Chair, Pro-Tempore to serve 2/5/2024 to 2/12/2024
Mr. Fournier and Mr. Bourgeois will be out of town during this time.

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to nominate Mr. Clark to be Selectboard Chair during this time for the first meeting in February, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

10.. Correspondence
None

11. Public Comment (Reprise)
Ms. Draper thanked the Highway crew for the work they have been doing on the roads.

12. Upcoming Events
a) Wednesday January 24, 2024 6:30pm Planning Commission Meeting-Town Office
b) Thursday January 25, 2024 6:00pm DRB Meeting-Town Office
c) Monday January 22, 2024 12:00pm Special Selectboard Meeting-Town Office
d) Tuesday February 6, 2024 6:00pm Regular Selectboard Meeting-Town Office & Zoom

13. Executive Session (Legal)
Ms. Draper made a motion to enter into executive session at 7:44 pm, seconded by Mr. Hemenway. Motion carried.

Ms. Draper made a motion to exit executive session at 8:25 pm, seconded by Mr. Hemenway. Motion carried.

No Actions taken on executive session.

Ms. Cathy Fournier passed out to the board an updated proposed Highway Budget after earlier discussion.

Mr. Hemenway made a motion to approve the proposed Highway Budget for 2024 as revised, seconded by Mr. Clark. Motion carried.

F. Adjournment
Mr. Hemenway made a motion to adjourn at 8:35 pm, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted by
Christina Candels-Administrative Assistant