

**SWANTON VILLAGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
SWANTON TOWN SELECTBOARD
SWANTON VILLAGE MUNICIPAL COMPLEX
120 FIRST STREET
SWANTON, VT 05488**

**INFORMATIONAL MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING
Monday, February 26, 2024
7:00 PM**

PRESENT: Neal Speer, Village President; Chris Leach, Village Trustee; Adam Paxman, Trustee; Eugene LaBombard, Village Trustee; William “Bill” Sheets, Village Manager; Lynn Paradis, Assistant Village Manager; Dianne Day, Village Clerk; Matthew Sullivan, Chief of Police; Daniel Chevalier, Hydro Plant Supervisor and Fire Chief; Dean Ryan, Highway Foreman; Duane Couture, Electric Foreman; Dillon Dupont, Wastewater Operator; Tod Jones, Water Plant Chief Operator; Brian Savage, Town Moderator and Administrator; Nicole Draper, Selectwoman; Steve Bourgeois, Selectman; Earl Fournier, Selectman Chair; Joel Clark, Selectman; Cody Hemenway, Selectman; Cathy Fournier, Town Clerk; Betty Cheney, Delinquent Tax Collector; Suzie Kelleher, Sayne Mott, Rich Kelley, Sandy & Ron Kilburn, Marie Speer, Suzanne & Christopher Washburn, Karen Bratland, Dee Krzynski, Hannah Mott, Tom Oliver, Damon Broderick, Karen McDonald, Henry & Molly Lambert, Betsy Fournier, Avery Mitchinson, Chevon Cooper, Alexis & Sandy Dubois, Susan Hunter, Allen Letourneau, Lynn Savage, Michele Bombardier, Shawn Cheney, James Guilmette, Mark Rocheleau, Sally Greeno, Dawn Edwards, Brandon Lamphere, Megan Santillo and Ch. 16. Via Teams: Sarah Parker, Chris, Ashley Rox, Guest, Nicholas Brosseau, Guest, Tina Nichols, Guest, Nick, Chris, Dan, Anna D’Ullissis, Nick D., Trish, Michael, David Winchester and Darla Blondo.

1. Call to Order:

Neal Speer, Village President, called the Village Informational Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Earl Fournier, Town Selectman Chair, called the Town Informational Meeting to order at 7 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance/Moment of Silence:

All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Agenda Review:

None.

4. Reading of Town of Swanton’s Annual Warning – Brian Savage, Town Administrator:

Brian Savage, Town Administrator and Moderator, read aloud the 2024 Annual Town Warning.

The legal voters of the Town of Swanton, who are legal voters in Town Meeting, are hereby notified and warned to meet at the Swanton Village Municipal Complex, First and Elm Streets, Swanton on Tuesday, March 5, 2024, at 7:00 a.m. to vote on the articles herein set forth. All articles are to be voted by the Australian Ballot system. The polls open at 7:00 a.m. and close at 7:00 p.m.

Article 1: To elect from the legal voters of said Town the following officers:

- Moderator, Town for a 1-year term
- One Selectperson for a 3-year term
- One Selectperson for a 2-year term
- One Selectperson for a 1-year unexpired term
- One Lister for a 3-year term
- One Lister for a 1-year unexpired term
- One Auditor for a 3-year term
- One Trustee of Public Money for a 3-year term
- One Library Trustee for a 5-year term
- One Cemetery Commissioner for a 5-year term
- One Cemetery Commissioner for a 4-year unexpired term
- Collector of Delinquent Taxes

Article 2: Shall the Town appropriate \$ 1,285,363.02 for the operation and maintenance of the

Town Highway Department?

Article 3: Shall the Town appropriate \$ 296,216.00 for fire protection?

Article 4: Shall the Town appropriate \$ 475,057.00 to provide police protection to the residents of the Town of Swanton?

Article 5: Shall the Town appropriate \$ 814,927.61 for the Town General expenses?

Article 6: Shall the Town appropriate \$ 212,502.88 towards the maintenance & employee benefits of the Swanton Public Library?

Article 7: Shall the Town appropriate \$ 70,900.00 towards the operating budget of the Swanton Public Library?

Article 8: Shall the Town collect its real and personal property taxes to defray the expenses of the Town

for the fiscal year commencing January 1, 2024, and annually thereafter, by its actual receipt of payment (postmarks will not be accepted) at the Town Offices by 5 p.m. on October 15th, or if the 15th shall fall on a weekend or holiday, the following business day by 5 p.m., with an eight percent (8%) penalty and one percent (1%) interest per month (or portion thereof) due thereon for the first three months, and one and one half (1.5%) per month (or portion thereof) thereafter, to be charged for late payment of any installment?

Article 9: Shall the Town appropriate \$ 229,761.00 to provide rescue services to the residents of the Town of Swanton?

Article 10: Shall the Town appropriate \$ 149,562.97 towards the Operating and Maintenance Budget of the Recreation Department?

Article 11: Shall the Town establish a Capital Reserve Fund in the amount of \$25,000.00 annually for the future construction and maintenance of Town owned assets?

The legal voters of the Town of Swanton are further notified that an Informational Meeting will be held at the Swanton Village Complex, 120 First Street, Swanton, VT on Monday, February 26, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. in person and via Teams for the purpose of explaining all budget items to the voters. Anyone desiring to participate and listen in on the meeting, join on your computer, mobile app or room device with Teams.

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 259 095 769 866

Passcode: TWmERr

5. Reading of Village of Swanton's Annual Warning – Neal Speer, Village President:

Neal Speer, Village President, read aloud the 2024 Annual Village Warning.

The legal voters of the Village of Swanton are hereby warned and notified to meet at the Swanton Village Complex, 120 First Street, Swanton, Vermont on Tuesday, March 5, 2024, at 7:00 a.m. to vote on the articles set forth. All articles are to be voted by Australian Ballot. The polls open at 7:00 a.m. and close at 7:00 p.m.

Article 1: To elect from the legal voters of said Village the following officers:
President for a 1-year term
Trustee for a 3-year term
Clerk for a 1-year term
Collector of Delinquent Taxes for a 1-year term

Article 2: Shall the voters of the Village of Swanton appropriate \$173,825 for the operation and maintenance of the General Fund for 2024?

Article 3: Shall the voters of the Village of Swanton appropriate \$691,290 for the operation and maintenance of the Highway Department for 2024?

Article 4: Shall the voters of the Village of Swanton appropriate \$88,480 for the operation and maintenance of the Fire Department for 2024?

Article 5: Shall the voters of the Village of Swanton appropriate \$998,967 for the operation and maintenance of the Police Department for 2024?

Article 6: Shall general obligation bonds or notes of the Village of Swanton in an amount not to exceed Fourteen Million Eight Hundred Thirty-Three Thousand Six Hundred Thirteen

Dollars (\$14,833,613), subject to reduction from the application of available state and federal grants-in-aid and reserves, be issued for the purpose of financing the cost of constructing a new public safety facility for the Swanton Village Police Department and the Swanton Fire Department, the cost of such improvements estimated to be Fourteen Million Eight Hundred Thirty-Three Thousand Six Hundred Thirteen Dollars (\$14,833,613)?

The legal voters of the Village of Swanton are further notified that an Informational Meeting will be held on Monday, February 26, 2024, at 7:00 PM in person and via Teams for the purpose of explaining all the Budget items to the voters. There is also Teams Meeting access for this meeting. Anyone desiring to participate & listen in on the meeting can do so by going to the Village's website at swantonvt.gov, click on Village, Village Trustees and find the meeting by date. Open the agenda and click on the meeting link.

6. Power Point Presentation and Discussion of Town of Swanton's Proposed 2024 Budget:

After Brian read the Warning, he presented the Town's Power Point showing some highlights for 2023:

- After the 2023 Annual Town Meeting, your Selectboard consisted of Chair Earl Fournier, Vice Chair Edward White Sr., Nicole Draper, Steve Bourgeois and Cody Hemenway who won election filling the seat of James Guilmette who decided not to seek re-election after serving many years on the Selectboard. Cody has grown into his new role very well and we wish to thank James for his many years of service on the Selectboard.
- In December, Mr. White resigned from the Board due to personal reasons. He served our community well and we appreciate his contributions to the Selectboard.
- Joel Clark, a former member of the Selectboard was appointed to fill the vacant seat until Town Meeting, 2024. We welcome Joel back to the Board!

2023 Highlights: After several months of planning and design work, a new JOINT website for the Town and Village of Swanton was launched. If you have not done so already, please check it out at www.swantonvt.gov. In addition, we have an "official" Facebook page, Town of Swanton Vermont.

More 2023 Highlights:

- The Selectboard wishes to compliment Gordan and Deborah Winters on the work they have done in restoring the old Champlain Theater building on Canada Street.
- with the rehabbing of the former Memorial Auditorium has provided a much needed "re-birth" to the downtown area.
- This re-development project shows what a public-private partnership can get accomplished.
- Future development will likely need to take a similar course going forward.

2023 Highlights: In 2023 our Town Plan was updated as required by state law. This was accomplished with many hours put in by the Planning Commission. The Town did apply for and received a grant from the State of Vermont to assist with this task. Corey Parent of Leonine Associates worked with the Planning Commission in developing and writing the plan.

Several public hearings were held and the Selectboard adopted the plan, and it is now in place for the next 8 years.

The next project will be to update our Zoning By-laws to be "in sync" with the Town Plan. This process will continue throughout 2024.

- The Selectboard has spent considerable time addressing other major issues.
- The financial policies of the Town are in the process of being updated.
- As part of this update, you will notice an article establishing a Capital Reserve Fund for future construction and maintenance of Town owned assets with an initial payment of \$25,000.00.
- These policies and funds are a requirement for future federal grants that the Town may apply for.
- Planning and fund-raising activities are in process for the proposed Community Center by Swanton Recreation.
- A contract has been awarded for a site assessment of the Fourth Street property. This work will be conducted this spring to determine if there are any hazmat issues.
- A new HVAC system was installed in the library building last summer.
- Arnold and Scangas, Architects are working on addressing the library's icing issues on the roof. Unfortunately, there is not a simple solution.
- In the Highway Department, the following roads had resurfacing work done on them, Lakewood Drive, Campbell Bay Road, and Viens Road. Culverts replaced on Campbell Bay Road, Viens Road, and Champlain Street.
- The rising cost of asphalt is a challenge, and we were not able to resurface all of the roads that we planned in 2023, placing behind in our schedule.
- Work is continuing on having the storm water permits renewed on Robin Hood Drive and Country Club Estates. This is a lengthy process due to the change in the regulations of the State of Vermont.
- In June of 2023 discussions were held, including a public hearing, as to whether to continue work on the proposed sidewalk from the Village line to the entrance of MUVHS on First St.

- After careful consideration of the question and given the fact that the school district was no longer in the position to finish the sidewalk from First Street to the building, the Selectboard voted to discontinue the project on June 20th.
- The Town does own the plans for possible future use but had to pay back \$70,287.60 to the State of Vermont.
- As the duties of the Town Administrator and Zoning Administrator have grown, it was decided by the Selectboard to hire a full-time Administrative Assistant.
- In April, Christina Candels was hired to fill this roll and has worked out very well.
- Our longtime Lister, Jim Pratt decided to retire after many, many years of devoted service to the community. We thank Jim, who has stayed on to train his replacement and wish him all the best.
- The Selectboard appointed Kevin Nichols to fill the vacancy until this year’s Town Meeting.
- Swanton’s Animal Control Officer is Jim Benson. He can be reached by cell phone at 802-238-3246 or by email at swantonaco@gmail.com. The ACO only deals with dog issues. The ACO does not accept dogs that are no longer wanted by their owners. Cats and other animals are not handled by the ACO.
- The Town Health Officer is Amber LaFountain, she can be reached at 802-324-7674 or via email swantonho@gmail.com

Swanton Projects for 2024

- Continue the design and construction of the LVRT Trail Head
- Install a culvert on Brooklyn Street to replace the present storm drain that is improperly installed.
- A long overdue project, to correct and straighten Swanton Hill Road. To keep costs down, our Highway Department employees will do much of the work, however engineering and blasting needs to be done.
- There is an allocation of \$162,500. for this year and the intent of the Selectboard is to pay for the project over two years.
- There is an allocation of \$450,000. for resurfacing of roads which is \$100,000. more than last year.

**2024 BUDGET REQUESTS SUMMARY
(If All Voted Articles Are Approved)**

- Total General Budget.....\$1,407,629.32
To Be Raised by Taxes.....\$1,194,251.50
- Total Highway Budget.....\$2,248,636.02
To Be Raised by Taxes.....\$2,056,636.02
- Library Budget..... \$212,502.88
Library Appropriation..... \$70,900.00
To Be Raised by Taxes..... \$283,402.88

2024 GENERAL BUDGET

- If All Articles Approved - \$1,407,629.32
- To Be Raised by Taxes - \$1,194,251.00
- 2024 Projected Tax Rate - \$.1664
- 2023 Tax Rate - \$.1398
- 2024 Tax Rate Increase - \$.0266

VOTE on Tuesday, March 5, 2024 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

WHAT MAKES UP THE GENERAL TAX

	<u>2023</u>	<u>Tax Rate</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>Tax Rate</u>
Regular:	\$627,726.00	\$0.0874	\$814,928.00	\$0.1134
Rescue :	\$199,245.00	\$0.0277	\$229,761.00	\$0.0320
Recreation:	\$123,247.00	\$0.0172	\$149,562.00	\$0.0210

2024 HIGHWAY BUDGET

- If All Articles Approved - \$2,248,636.02
- To Be Raised by Taxes - \$2,056,636.02
- 2024 Projected Tax Rate - \$.3726
- 2023 Tax Rate - \$.3171
- 2024 Tax Rate Increase - \$.0555

VOTE on Tuesday March 5, 2024 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

WHAT MAKES UP THE HIGHWAY TAX

	2023	Tax Rate	2024	Tax Rate
Regular	\$1,275,656.34	\$0.2310	\$1,285,363.02	\$0.2329
Police:	\$196,784.08	\$0.0357	\$475,057.00	\$0.0861
Fire:	\$278,225.00	\$0.0504	\$296,216.00	\$0.0536

2024 LIBRARY BUDGET

• If Both Articles Are Approved	\$297,986.00
• To Be Raised by Taxes	\$283,402.88
• 2024 Projected Tax Rate	\$.0395
• 2023 Tax Rate	\$.0338
• 2024 Tax Rate Increase	\$.0057

2024 TAX PROJECTIONS

ESTIMATED MUNICIPAL TAX

<u>ASSESSED VALUE</u>	<u>TOWN</u>	<u>VILLAGE</u>
\$150,000.00	\$867.75	\$308.85
\$200,000.00	\$1,157.00	\$411.80
\$250,000.00	\$1,446.25	\$514.75
\$350,000.00	\$2,024.75	\$720.65

The Town opened their presentation up to Public Comment before they introduced the candidates for 2024.

7. Public Comment:

Discussions started taking place regarding the police budget on the Town ballot. Citizens were concerned over the increase from last year to this year. Earl explained that the board wanted to bring the extra hours of coverage to the voters and let them decide if they wanted it or not. Mr. Dubois commented on the hourly rate of the police department. Bill Sheets, Village Manager, asked permission to speak and said that would include the SRO officer and several other items that are not in the Town's proposed contract price. He said they took the number of patrolled shifts worked in the Village and the Town and the Town gets one third of that such as dispatching, the Chief's salary, insurance, etc. and said that's how they arrived very simplistically at the contract rate. Chief Sullivan said he would add that the Town police contract was held very low for many years and said the first contract was in 2012 and back then it was a little over \$100,000. He said for more than a decade the contract hadn't been increased and was basically subsidized by Village taxpayers. Sally Greeno questioned the difference in the price for the police contract on the Town's Warning. Lynn Paradis, Assistant Village Manager, explained that January through March are billed on the existing contract and once the vote takes place in March and a new contract is approved the Town would be billed on the new contract price until the following March when it's voted on again. Ms. Greeno didn't agree with that and said it was too difficult for people to understand and should be changed. Chevon Cooper asked if the Town had looked elsewhere for police coverage. Earl stated they had not but made a rate comparison with what other towns in the area were paying and said this price fell amongst those. James Guilmette asked the same question and said he was disappointed in the board and said they did poor planning because this tax increase was too high. Earl said there were no other alternatives at that time. Chevon Cooper said she contacted the Franklin County Sheriff's Office and they responded to her pretty quickly. She said the Town could have done the same thing. Earl said if the people of Swanton say no, they will need to come up with something else and will honor their decision. Allen Letourneau said because the consensus at the January 10th public meeting was against the added police coverage the Town shouldn't have put this on the ballot. Earl said that meeting was to gauge what people felt about it and he wants the voters to decide. Chief Sullivan said he wanted to put some things into perspective and said under the existing contract a Town resident pays approximately \$98 per year on a home assessed at \$250K and a Village resident pays approximately \$1300 per year for twice the shift coverage and then on-call coverage for 24/7. Joel Clark wanted to make sure taxpayers knew that on a home assessed at \$250K there would be an increase of \$215.25 per year if this police contract were to pass. He said this amounts to \$10.50 per month. He said this information is available and suggested everyone take a copy and educate themselves before they vote. Neal Speer, Village President, said both boards here are elected to do what's best for their community, not an individual want or need. He said the Selectboard has worked hard with the Village to try and do what's best for the community. Neal said budgets are hard this year because everything is going up, but they need to do their due diligence. Neal said the Selectboard is backing the Village's proposed police department budget for the Town. He also said they will do what the voters want and that's why they had so many open houses so that people were informed on what they were voting on. Earl Fournier said if they don't work together and get something done it will end up costing more and said they will do what the voters want them to do. Brian Savage then read the 2024 Town Candidates.

2024 Town Candidates for Office

Town Moderator (Vote for no more than 1, 1 Year Term)

Brian K. Savage

Selectperson (Vote for no more than 1, 3 Year Term)

Earl Fournier – Earl said he feels there are more issues he'd like to work on such as the Rail Trail and other improvements such as the downtown area. He said he feels like he has enough energy to continue this and said he's willing to commit to the time.

Selectperson (Vote for no more than 1, 2-year term)

Nicole Draper – Nicole said she decided to run again because she feels like there is more work to do in the community and she is committed to serving everyone. She said this is a non-stop learning process and she is committed to working for everyone.

Allen Letourneau – Allen introduced himself and said he's excited to learn something new and said he wants to get involved to see if he can help. He said he'd like to change a few policies around and streamline processes.

Selectperson (Vote for no more than 1, 1-year unexpired term)

Joel A. Clark – Joel said he's spent 10 years on the Planning Commission, 10 years on the DRB, 8 years on the Selectboard and 8 years as Road Commissioner. He said his plans changed and he feels like there is more he can give to the community.

Amy L. Raymond

Lister (Vote for no more than 1, 3-year term)

David Horton

Lister (Vote for no more than 1, 1-year unexpired term)

Kevin Nichols

Auditor (Vote for no more than 1, 3-year term)

Joyce Bombardier

Trustee of Public Money (Vote for no more than 1, 3-year term)

Nicholas Brosseau – Nick said he was appointed to the position in June and said he'd like to continue with it and keep going forward.

Stephanie Gagne

Library Trustee (Vote for no more than 1, 5 Year Term)

Richard "Rich" Kelly – Rich thanked everyone for coming out.

Cemetery Commissioner (Vote for no more than 1, 5 Year Term)

Cody Hemenway – Cody said they've done some upgrades to the cemetery, and he appreciates everyone's support.

Cemetery Commissioner (Vote for no more than 1, 4 Year Unexpired)

John Kaczowski

Collector of Delinquent Taxes (Vote for no more than 1, 1 Year Term)

Betty L. Cheney – Betty thanked everyone for their continued support.

**VOTE – MARCH 5, 2024 7 AM TO 7 PM
OR REQUEST AN ABSENTEE BALLOT
FROM THE TOWN CLERK**

8. Power Point Presentation and Discussion of Village of Swanton's Proposed 2024 Budget:

Village Manager William "Bill" Sheets highlighted the Village's organizational chart and mentioned his Village Manager Report on pages 4 through 7 in the Annual Village Report. He mentioned the following significant impacts or pressures in each department.

General Fund: Salaries and Benefits; Property Insurance on Village Complex.

Fire Department: Dispatching Costs; Property Insurance; Transportation (Fuel, Maintenance); and Equipment Replacement.

Police Department: Salaries and Benefits; Office Supplies (Computers); Dispatching Costs (First Contract); Property Insurance; Training; Transportation; and Equipment Replacement Fund.

Highway Department: Salaries and Benefits; Property Insurance.

Lynn Paradis, Assistant Village Manager, then showed the Tax Rate 2023 Actual vs. 2024 Proposed:

- General Fund 2023 Tax Rate = \$0.0836 vs 2024 Tax Rate = \$0.1044
- Fire Department 2023 Tax Rate = \$0.0528 vs 2024 Tax Rate = \$0.0532
- Police Department 2023 Tax Rate = \$0.5124 vs 2024 Tax Rate = \$0.6001
- Highway Department 2023 Tax Rate = \$0.3455 vs 2024 Tax Rate = \$0.4153
- 2023 Tax Rate = \$0.9943 vs 2024 Tax Rate = \$1.1730 for a change of .1787 (17.97%)

Taxes 2023 Actual vs. 2024 Proposed

- 2023 Actual on a \$200,000 House = \$1998.60; \$250,000 House = \$2485.75; \$300,000 House = \$2982.90
- 2024 Proposed on a \$200,000 House = \$2346.00 for an increase of \$357.40; \$250,000 House = \$2932.50 for an increase of \$446.75; and \$300,000 House = \$3519.00 for an increase of \$536.10.

This annual increase is for fire, general, police and highway.

Proposed 2024 Taxes by Department

- \$200,000 House = General \$208.80, Fire \$106.40, Police \$1200.20, Highway \$830.60 = \$2346.00
- \$250,000 House = General \$261.00, Fire \$133.00, Police \$1500.25, Highway \$1038.25 = \$2932.50
- \$300,000 House – General \$313.20, Fire \$159.60, Police \$1800.30, Highway \$1245.90 = \$3519.00

Bill then showed what the Village of Swanton electric rates are compared to other utilities in the State of Vermont. Swanton Village has the third lowest rates in the 600 kWh range (\$79.65) and the 1000 kWh range (\$128.18).

Bill stated that he is proud to share that Swanton Village Electric is 100% renewable. He said their current FERC license expires in April of 2024.

Bill said in the Water and Wastewater Departments there are two major improvements taking place: The Missisquoi River Water Line Project (2024) and the Wastewater Treatment Facility Upgrade Project (2024-2025). He said a rate increase evaluation is ongoing based upon these two upgrades. The next increase will likely occur in the calendar year 2025.

2024 Candidates

- Village President 1-year term - Neal Speer and David Winchester:

Neal Speer stated he's been on the board quite a while and said this past year his workload has decreased and he's semi-retired. He said he will have even more time to put into the community and said he appreciates the past support he's had from the community and hopes for their continued support. He said he'd like to continue to work with the Town and keep their positive flow going. He said they've put together a good team and hopes he'll have everyone's support next week.

David Winchester – David apologized for not being there in person because he was sick. He said he's lived here for a long time and said his mother worked for the Trustees years ago and said he has neighbors that are Trustees and Selectboard members. He said he looks forward to hopefully getting their vote and working on making changes. He thanked everyone.

- Village Clerk 1-year term - Dianne Day: Thanked everyone for their past support and asked for their continued support.
- Village Trustee 3-year term – Suzie Kelleher and Shayne Mott:

Suzie Kelleher said she lives here in the Village and gave her military service background. She said she feels she has the time now to contribute to the Village. She said she would be available to answer any questions people may have.

Shayne Mott introduced himself and said he appreciates any and all questions people may have. He thanked the existing Trustees and Selectboard members for all the hard work they do. He said he looks forward to working together and said he works for the Fire Department and for Missisquoi Valley Rescue. He encouraged people to reach out to him if they have questions.

- Collector of Delinquent Taxes 1-year term - Betty Cheney: Thanked everyone for their past support and asked for their continued support.

Chris Leach Recognition: Chris Leach – Village Trustee – 1996 to 2024

The Village of Swanton, along with the Village Board of Trustees, Management and Employees, would like to recognize Chris Leach for his 28 Years of Service to the Village of Swanton as Village Trustee. Your dedication of service to the Village residents, Village employees and businesses is greatly appreciated.

Chris was presented with a plaque from the Village of Swanton as well as a picture of himself with some former Trustees. He thanked everyone in attendance and gave a speech on what being a Trustee has meant to him over the years. He also mentioned several projects that he was involved with over the years.

9. Public Comment:

Molly Lambert said she was concerned that if there were no rate increases in the electric department does that mean maintenance issues would be lacking. Chris Leach told her she need not worry about that and explained how Swanton Village works with VPPSA who help keep our rates low. He said there were no issues with maintenance and said the electric crew keeps up with everything. Eugene LaBombard added

that it's important to keep critical thinking people on the Board of Trustees to help keep up with the rules of energy. He said there's a lot of literature to read and said it's important to attend all these meetings.

Chevon Cooper asked how much Village employees pay for their health insurance. Bill Sheets, said they were paying 4% but it was just increased to 6%. She also asked for an explanation on employees working in other departments. Lynn Paradis explained how she tracks and records where everyone works and how it's budgeted amongst all the funds.

Suzie Kelleher asked if the surplus funds from last year's budgets were moved. Lynn Paradis, Assistant Village Manager, explained what she did with those funds.

10. Public Hearing for Public Safety Facility Bond Vote on March 5, 2024:

Neal Speer, Village Manager, called the Public Hearing for the Public Safety Facility Bond Vote to be held on Tuesday, March 5, 2024. Bill Sheets, Village Manager, explained the Village held 37 Open Houses to explain this bond vote requests. He also gave tours of the Village Complex during these open houses.

Bill also gave the following information on Article VI Bond Vote:

- The Village held 37 Open House meetings between December 7, 2023 and February 21, 2024.
- The Bond request of \$14,833,613 is for the creation of a Public Safety Facility.
- If approved, the building will be built on our lot located at 124 First Street, with an expected start date of late 2024.
- The project will require 12 to 15 months to complete.

11. Public Comment:

There were no questions or comments made. Public Hearing was adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

12. Any Other Necessary Business:

Adam Paxman said the Chamber of Commerce announced their Citizen of the Year award and this year Marilyn Dunbar, owner of Scampers, was the recipient. Everyone in attendance applauded that announcement.

13. Adjournment by both Boards:

Chris Leach made the motion to adjourn the Board of the Trustees and Selectboard Informational Meeting and Public Hearing at 9:41 p.m. Adam Paxman seconded. Cody Hemenway made the motion to adjourn the Town meeting. Joel Clark seconded the motion. There being no further business at hand, Neal Speer, Village President, adjourned the meeting at 9:41 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dianne Day
Swanton Village Clerk

Received and filed by:

Cathy Fournier, Town Clerk

Date