

**DRAFT MINUTES
TOWN OF SWANTON
REGULAR SELECTBOARD MEETING**

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

April 1, 2025 – 6:00 pm

Present: Joel Clark-Chair, Earl Fournier, Nicole Draper, Steve Bourgeois, Nicholas Brosseau-Members, Brian Savage-Town Administrator, Cathy Fournier-Town Clerk, Christina Candels-Assistant Town Administrator, Chief Matthew Sullivan, Robert Nielsen, Ron Underwood, Aaron Hoague, Tristan Hoague, Declan Badeau, Sarah Weld, Kaylin Banyea, Kathleen Banyea

Zoom: No Attendance

A. Call to Order

Mr. Clark called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

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

Mr. Clark welcomed the Scouts to the meeting; they are working on a communication project that required them to attend a meeting and take notes of different opinions on different topics.

C. Agenda Review

Ms. Draper requested to add Promote Swanton update under Old Town Business.

Mr. Brosseau requested to add an update on Corporal Leonard Lord historical marker that the Cemetery Commission has been working on under New Town Business.

Mr. Brosseau asked for an update on the State of Vermont using the highway garage parking lot, Mr. Clark added that under Old Town Business.

Mr. Savage said Swanton Historical Society has requested it to be added to the next meeting agenda.

D. Meeting Topics

1. Minutes

a) Regular Selectboard meeting of March 18, 2025

b) Special Selectboard meeting of March 25, 2025

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to approve the March 18,2025, Regular Selectboard Meeting and March 25, 2025, Special Selectboard Meeting minutes as written, seconded by Mr. Brosseau. Motion carried.

2. Public Comments

Ron Underwood asked when the Selectboard will review the Swanton Rec Bylaws, they seemed to keep being pushed back. Mr. Clark said it will be on the April 15th agenda.

3. Law Enforcement.

a) Swanton Police Department

Chief Sullivan came before the board to share March 2025 incident analysis report.

In March 2025 Swanton Village Police responded to 59 incidents. The top ten incidents were as follows:

16-traffic stops, 11-directed patrol, 4-alarms, 3-motor vehicle complaints, 2-citizen disputes, 2-agency assists, 2-vin number verification, 1-driving with license suspended, 1-suspicious circumstance and 1-wanted person.

The 16 traffic stops resulted in 9 tickets and 15 warnings. There were 4 arrests of 4 individuals on 9 charges. 2 if the arrests were associated with traffic stops.

Chief Sullivan shared one traffic incident was a pursuit that started in Swanton and ended in Cambridge. The officer was attempting to stop the driver for speeding. No one was injured and is currently under review. Multiple agencies assisted. Mr. Fournier asked what time? The incident began at 6:44 pm.

Swanton Village Police provided 5.5 hours of additional services in March.

Mr. Clark asked what prompts and arrest for excessive speed? Chief Sullivan said typically 20 mph or higher, this was a charge from the pursuit.

Chief Sullivan said they have added 5 new policies since the beginning of the year. They have added Missing Person's Policy, Investigations of Criminal Procedure Policy, Domestic Violence Response Policy, Grant Funded Details & Extra Duties Policy and a Pursuit and Vehicle Operations Policy.

Chief Sullivan said they still have two full-time open positions. They have hired a part-time officer, who hopes to go full-time in the future.

b) Swanton Health Officer

The board reviewed the March 2025 report provided by the Swanton Health Officer.

6. Highway Department

a) 2025 Paving Bid document

Mr. Clark shared the new 2025 Paving Bid document; this will allow everyone to bid on the same number of tons. This should make it easier to compare bids if they are all for the same number of tons. This is for the budgeted paving this year. Mr. Clark said they are going to apply for a Class II grant to do some paving on Maquam Shore and County Rd. This will only be done for those roads, if not they will not be paved this year.

The bids also will not include the paving of the Town garage parking lot or Swanton Hill. Those will be done separately.

Mr. Fournier made a motion to approve the Town 2025 Paving Bid as presented, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

b) Swanton Hill Blasting Bid document

Mr. Clark shared they are waiting for two construction easements for the project. The Bid Document RFP for blasting is ready. Mr. Clark said has reviewed it with Tyler from East Engineer, and there are only a couple of people in the region qualified. The RFP will be sent to them.

Mr. Fournier made a motion to move forward with the Blasting Proposal as presented, seconded by Mr. Brosseau. Motion carried.

c) Barry Road Culvert update/discussion

Mr. Clark said they are going to apply for a Structures Grant. The board has photos of the culvert. The culvert is no longer round. In May 2023 the Town received a letter from the State and their recommendation is the culvert be replaced with a 35' bridge. Mr. Clark said they will submit a grant for design, they received a grant not long ago so they may not receive it. The design needs to start at some point this culvert could fail. The only other option is to discontinue that section of the road, which would affect Fairfield traffic. The quote for design is \$25,000.

Mr. Fournier said with the extreme weather we see that is what is damaging these culverts and can cause them to fail. This should be done next spring.

d) Road Commissioner request for spending limit increase

Mr. Clark as Road Commissioner is asking to increase the Road Commissioner spending limit from \$3,000 to \$5,000. Just the cost of removing trees has been over that amount. These are budgeted items. When they review the Town Spending Policies this can be adjusted. Mr. Savage suggested making it a temporary increase, until Policies are reviewed on budgeted items. Tree removal, vehicle repairs etc.

Mr. Brosseau made a motion to temporarily increase the spending limit of the Road Commissioner from \$3,000 to \$5,000 until the review of the Town Policy, limited to budget items, seconded by Mr. Fournier. Motion carried.

7. Old Town Business

a) Swanton Historical Society – Heather Lavoie
Postponed until April 15th.

b) 2023 & 2024 Audit update

Mr. Savage has spoken with A. M. Peisch, and they have completed the 2023 audit and working on the final report. They are aware the Selectboard would like them to come to the Selectboard, this will have to be after April 15th.

A.M. Peisch is willing to do the 2024 audit. The Town received no proposals to the RFP. Before they begin the 2024 audit the Town will receive a proposal, Mr. Bourgeois asked if that will be for 3-year commitment? The longer you stretch it out the more reasonable the price is.

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to request a 3-year commitment from A.M. Peisch beginning with the 2024 audit, seconded by Mr. Fournier. Motion carried.

c) LVRT Update

Mr. Clark shared there will be a pre-construction meeting on Thursday April 3, 2025, at 2 pm. The paperwork has been forwarded to the engineer to review. After the meeting Thursday they should be able to give a notice to proceed. The Village is ready to run the water and power. The contract completion date is August 1, 2025.

d) Library project update

Mr. Savage shared the quote from Menard Handyman to do the remainder of the work for the library to move the ductwork. Laz Scangs has provided a detail scope of general work. Mr. Menard provided cost estimate for each item number. The total is \$7860. This was not put out to bid, given the amount the Town policy does not require.

Mr. Scangas has lined up the dates for the different contractors to get the project competed.

Mr. Fournier asked if they had checked the entry yet? No, they will check the insulation in the entry when they do the other work. Mr. Fournier said the project does not include rain gutters or snow guards. These will be priced separately.

Ms. Draper made a motion to approve Menard Handyman's quote as presented, seconded by Mr. Brosseau. Motion carried.

e) Discussion of vacancy on Northwest Regional Planning Commission

Mr. Clark said the candidate they had in mind is not able to commit to the appointment.

Mr. Bourgeois asked if that should be advertised? Yes, it will be posted on the website & digital sign in the park.

f) Promote Swanton

Ms. Draper shared they did not receive proposals for graphic design of the Welcome to Swanton signs, so they have reached out to Randy Smith from Synchronicity Web Designs, LLC, for visual branding.

Mr. Smith sent a proposal in the amount of \$2,400. Mr. Smith will provide 3-4 variations to choose from and allow edits.

Mr. Fournier said this is a big thing for the community and feels it should be put out to the public. Ms. Draper encouraged the community to be part of the process.

Mr. Fournier said they had approved \$6,000 in special funds for Promote Swanton. They had anticipated this would cost \$1,500, so Mr. Fournier is requesting to increase the amount from \$6,000 to \$7,000.

Mr. Fournier said Mr. Smith is connected to the area and has done work in the Islands.

Mr. Brosseau asked if this was the only designer they met with? Yes, they also put out an RFP and posted online with no responses.

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to increase the amount from \$6,000 to \$7,000 for Promote Swanton from Special Funds, seconded by Mr. Brosseau. Motion carried.

Mr. Brosseau made a motion to have Mr. Savage approve the Synchronicity Web Designs, LLC proposal of \$2,400, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

h) State using Town Garage

Mr. Brosseau asked if the State will be using the garage? Mr. Savage said yes, the State will not be using the garage, they will park a construction trailer on the property. F.W. Whitcomb is the contractor, they received the contract to repave the interstate from St. Albans to the Canadian border this summer. This trailer will be for the engineer. It will not cause any space issue for the Town Highway crew. No construction vehicles will be kept there.

8. New Town Business

a) Corporal Lenard Lord historical marker

Mr. Brosseau said on March 20th the Historic Preservation of Vermont approved a historical roadside marker for Corporal Leanard Lord. Corporal Lord was the first casualty from Vermont during WWI. The Cemetery Commission has been working on

this for a while. This will be placed at Riverside Cemetery. They have a target date of April 12, 2026. The plan is to make this a big event.

Mr. Bourgeois asked if it will be in the cemetery or on the roadside? Mr. Savage said in the cemetery but visible from the road. They will also place a sign point towards the back of the cemetery where Corporal Lord is buried. Mr. Savage said people look for those markers on the roadsides. Mr. Savage said when the marker comes the State will provide the post, but the Town will have to install.

Mr. Savage said they would like to get markers for two graves at the Church Street Cemetery, but it will take time.

Mr. Clark said in 2018 they had family members attend and speak at the event: the National Guard can assist.

b) Liquor Control Board

Mr. Brosseau made a motion to recess the Regular Selectboard and enter the Liquor Control Board Meeting at 6:50 pm, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

- Tobacco License and Tobacco Substitute License – Hometown Sunoco-No Violations

Mr. Fournier made a motion to approve both license renewals for Hometown Sunoco, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried.

Mr. Brosseau made a motion to adjourn the Liquor Control Board meeting and re-enter the Regular Selectboard Meeting at 6:51 pm, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

9. Community and Economic Development

None

10. Any Other Necessary Business

None

11. Correspondence

None

12. Public Comment (Reprise)

None

13. Upcoming Events

- a) Thursday – April 10, 2025 – 5:30 pm – Planning Commission – Town Offices and Zoom
- b) Tuesday – April 15, 2025 – 6:00 pm – Regular Selectboard Meeting – Town Offices and Zoom
- c) Friday – April 18, 2025- TOWN OFFICES AND OPERATIONS CLOSED in observance of Good Friday
- d) Thursday – April 24, 2025 – DRB Meeting – Town Office and Zoom – 6:00 pm

e) Saturday-April 19, 2025-Easter in the Park-Village Green 8:45 am.

14. Executive session (Personnel and contracts)

Mr. Brosseau made a motion to enter executive session at 6:53 pm, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried.

Mr. Fournier made a motion to exit executive session at 7:16 pm, seconded by Mr. Brosseau. Motion carried.

No Action Taken

Discussion on Rec Bylaws

Mr. Bourgeois shared they should receive a good draft of the Swanton Recreation Bylaw before the April 15th meeting. Mr. Bourgeois said the changes are significant, bringing them up to date. Mr. Bourgeois said he wants to make sure they have a good system of checks & balances, and not too much power in one area which could stifle the participation by the Recreation Committee that does a good job. Mr. Bourgeois said at the same time that it will give good oversight by the Selectboard for the Taxpayers money. Mr. Bourgeois said this policy will offer dual control over things. Mr. Bourgeois said they have a lot of players that have stepped forward with a lot of correspondence. Mr. Bourgeois would like to see things come dated, as he has had a lot of correspondence on this bylaw rewrite. Mr. Bourgeois would like to see one document from all the correspondence. Mr. Clark said it will be another document. Mr. Clark said he had a separate meeting with the Rec to add the addendums/suggestions.

Mr. Brosseau suggested to everyone if they can agree at the April 15th meeting that there will be a draft that can be approved at the 1st May meeting. Mr. Bourgeois said he spent hours reading through all the drafts.

Ms. Candels suggested everyone review again and send suggestions to her and she will work with Ms. Draper to add suggestions. Mr. Clark said you have already done that. Mr. Clark has sent out the latest edit with comments.

Mr. Bourgeois said moving forward they have some talented people on the Rec board with knowledge, this will be lost overtime with new people. The clearer these bylaws become the better off the Rec board will be.

Mr. Fournier agreed they should use the latest draft from Mr. Clark, list concerns.

Mr. Bourgeois said if they do this the way he envisions they will have a document ready to go. Mr. Clark thinks there will be differences of opinions they will spend time reviewing.

Mr. Fournier can see the frustrations with Ms. Draper in getting these completed.

Ms. Draper said the Rec board meets on the 14th, so they won't see a draft until May at the height of the Rec's busy season. Purchasing, employees coming back. Ms. Draper is working 80-90 hours a week on all things Swanton, she has asked for help. The Rec board and the taxpayers voted for it. The waiting needs to stop and get the bylaws take care of.

Mr. Clark suggested the Rec meet after the Selectboard's meeting. Mr. Clark said they will add Rec to the Town's purchasing policy first, this is a shift from how it has been done for many years. But not trying to run the Rec Dept.

Mr. Bourgeois said when they are done they the Rec can run with it and they (Selectboard) won't need to get involved unless there's a reason.

Mr. Fournier said he reviewed the Town Report, and they have a good Rec Dept that does a lot, but it is \$300,000 and will go higher. It's time to modernize how the business operates. Will Rec have the same purchasing allowance as the Selectboard? Mr. Clark said he gave suggestions.

15. Adjourn

**Ms. Draper made a motion to adjourn at 7:30 pm, seconded by Mr. Fournier.
Motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted by
Christina Candels-Assistant Town Administrator

MOTIONS FOR ENTERING EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION #1: I move **that we find** that we enter an executive session for the Selectboard to receive confidential contract & personnel information for which the premature disclosure of it to the general public would clearly place the Selectboard & others at a substantial disadvantage.

MOTION #2: I move **that based on our just made findings** that premature disclosure would place the Selectboard & others at a substantial disadvantage, we enter executive session.