

**DRAFT MINUTES
TOWN OF SWANTON
REGULAR SELECTBOARD MEETING
Town Office Building
1 Academy Street, Swanton, VT 05488
In-Person & By Zoom
Tuesday, July 1, 2025**

Present: Joel Clark-Chair, Earl Fournier, Nicole Draper, Steve Bourgeois, Nick Brosseau-Members, Brian Savage-Town Administrator, Cathy Fournier-Town Clerk, Christina Candels-Assistant Town Administrator, Mike Barrett, Lucie Hill, Robert Nielsen, Suzie Kelleher, Ross Lavoie-PC Chair, Oliver Manning PC Vice-Chair, Amy Giroux-Zoning Administrator, Corey Parent, Matthew Sullivan-Swanton Village Police Chief
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 in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.

C. Agenda Review

Mr. Brosseau requested to add a question regarding the Library Repairs/Weatherization under Old Town Business.

Mr. Bourgeois requested to add a question regarding Purchasing of Development Rights under New Town Business.

Mr. Savage requested to add Legal/Insurance claim under Executive Session.

D. Meeting Topics

1. Minutes

a) Regular Selectboard meeting of June 17, 2025

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to approve the Regular Selectboard meeting minutes of June 17, 2025, as written, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

2. Public Comments

Mr. Barrett wanted to comment on the Zoning Bylaws and Mr. Clark suggested he ask his questions during the Public Hearing for the Swanton Land Use & Development Regulations.

3. Law Enforcement.

a) Swanton Police Department

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

In June 2025 responded to 91 incidents in the Town. The top 10 incidents were as follows: 21 traffic stops, 12-agency assists, 10-directed patrols, 6- suspicious

person/circumstances, 4-crash/property damage, 4-alarms, 3-motor vehicle complaints, 3-trespassing, 2-medical emergencies and 2- citizen assistance.

Of the 21 Traffic Stops 5 tickets were issued and 20 warnings. All tickets and warnings were associated with traffic stops.

In June there were 10 arrests of 10 individuals resulting in 12 charges. 6 of the arrests were associated with traffic stops.

In June Swanton Village provided 12.25 additional hours of service outside of contract hours.

Chief Sullivan shared they have two people who have shown interested in becoming Police Officers. Field training is going well for the new part-time officer.

Chief Sullivan said they have replaced the repeater located by the reservoir, and this has made a huge difference with their radios in the Town. It was also raised 40'.

Mr. Fournier asked for clarification on abbreviations for stops and excessive speed.

Chief Sullivan said the weather has increased incidents, many of them being time consuming and labor intensive.

Mr. Clark asked how the illicit drug activity is? Chief Sullivan said it has increased.

Mr. Clark said people can move around easy in other Towns with little police coverage back and forth between Towns. Chief Sullivan said they are working a fraud case that started in the Town.

b) Swanton Health Officer

Ms. Kelleher came before the board to discuss the June SHO report. Ms. Kelleher said she has submitted the affidavit to Ms. Cathy Fournier regarding 33 4th St. The building has been secured, and outdoor trash has been removed. The trash inside remains. The board asked if the building is salvageable? Ms. Kelleher said no.

The board thanked everyone for the help taking care of this, it was a process.

Ms. Kelleher said this shows the limitations of what the Town Health Officer can do.

This has brought the conversation of having an ordinance to enforce these properties when they are not habitable, condemning these types of properties.

Ms. Kelleher said she would be happy to become the enforcement officer along with her Health Officer position with no additional pay.

If the Town enacts an ordinance it will cover the Village, they do not need to have separate ordinances.

Mr. Savage has copies of other Towns and plans to work with the Village Manager, Police Chief, Fire Chief and Health Officer to draft an ordinance.

Mr. Brosseau asked if most of the work is centered around the Village? No, Ms. Kelleher said she has done work in the Town. This position covers the Town & Village together.

4. PUBLIC HEARING

Mr. Clark opened the Public Hearing at 6:16 pm.

Proposed Amendments to Swanton Land Use and Development Regulations and Swanton Zoning Map.

Mr. Lavoie shared the changes from the last Public Hearing have been added since the last meeting.

Mr. Lavoie said he received a call from Swanton Village today regarding the new electric facility project. The concerns they have we not changed were because the Planning Commission had decided to remove the TSA district. Mr. Parent said they came to a meeting this past winter and added it back in verbatim. They were originally going to allow housing in that district, the Village needed the special district because if housing was allowed it would affect Brownfield clean up on the site of their project.

TSA was added back in; they did not do a review of it.

Mr. Clark said he has discussed it with Zoning and thinks they have a way forward, but suggests they review setbacks when the Planning Commission reconvenes.

Mr. Lavoie said in September they intend to dive back in with new suggestions and Northwest Regional Planning suggestions and come back to the Selectboard in January.

Mr. Parent said going forward with new changes the State requires can go to the Selectboard and will not require a Public Hearing.

Mr. Barrett said he had four comments and discussions followed each comment:

- June 3, 2025, Public Hearing minutes Mixed Use be added to Rural district. Mr. Lavoie & Mr. Parent said this was discussed more at the meeting and decided not to add Mixed Use.
- Section 3.10 Performance Standards Applicability standards requiring a Site Plan review. Previously all uses in all districts required this, and it has been altered to uses that require a Site Plan review.
- Section 6.2 Coordination (A)(2) Conditional Use review may require compliance with standards addressing the impact of proposed land uses on adjacent properties. May has been inserted.
- Section 5.3 Accessory On-Farm Businesses (D) Activities may be subject to Site Plan review. Mr. Barrett would like, may to be shall.

Mr. Manning said Section 5.18 Roadside Stand (2) you can only sell products raised in Franklin & Grand Isle Counties. This should be broadened to the State of Vermont.

When the Planning Commission reconvenes, they will review:

- TSA District setbacks
- Review Performance Standards
- Review the use of the word may vs. shall in standards.
- Review expanding the sales of products from outside Franklin & Grand Isle County

Vote on Adoption of the Swanton Land Use & Development Regulations & Zoning Map Amendments

Mr. Fournier made a motion to approve the Swanton Land Use & Development Regulations & Zoning Map as changed and presented, effective 7-1-25, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried.

Mr. Clark ended the Public Hearing at 6:51 pm.

5. Highway Department

a) Review of Road Takeover Policy

Mr. Clark discussed the suggested edits of the policy from the Town attorney. Mr. Clark will make the changes and bring them back to the board to adopt.

Mr. Fournier said this will affect the stormwater permits for the Town to take over new roads. The permits for the road will need to be separated. The Town cannot accept responsibility for developments permits.

The wording needs to be looked at for stormwater permits going with homeowners' associations, so they can maintain the permit for driveways and roofs separate from the road.

The Town currently budgets \$30,000 for stormwater permits; this is for current Town-owned roads.

Mr. Clark said the core test for the second section of Maple Grove Estates shows the road is not built to the Town standard, this will not become a Town road. This is why they have a policy.

Mr. Bourgeois asked if these permits are not maintained, does the Town have any liability? No, not if the Town does not own the road.

If the State will not allow the permits to be separated, the Town should not take over any roads.

6. Old Town Business

a) Update on LVRT

Mr. Clark said the contractor has submitted plans for the structure and foundation changes. If it is approved, they can move forward.

Mr. Clark received an updated invoice from the VHB the engineering firm working on the project. The increase of \$10,669.00 is due to having to advertise a second time and change orders with the contractor. The grant will still cover 80% of the increase. Mr. Clark believes they will still be within the amount the Town approved to fund this project.

Mr. Fournier made a motion to approve the VHB increase of \$10,669.00 for the LVRT trailhead, already budgeted in the Special Funds, seconded by Mr. Brosseau. Motion carried.

Mr. Bourgeois commented he recently spoke with a gentleman from Massachusetts who rode the LVRT trail from St. Johnsbury to Swanton. The gentlemen said how valuable this trail is to people. This will bring people to the community.

Ms. Draper said it brings people from all over the world.

b) Adoption of amendments to Purchasing Policy

Mr. Savage added Borrowing Authority as discussed at the last meeting, everything else is the same as previously discussed.

Mr. Bourgeois asked how often this will be reviewed? Mr. Savage said as often as needed.

The board agreed the Town has a good number of policies in place and should develop a rolling schedule to review them regularly. Mr. Clark suggested a 2-year calendar to review them.

Mr. Fournier made a motion to Adopt the purchasing policy as written, seconded by Mr. Brosseau. Motion carried.

c) Adoption of Whistleblower Protection Policy

Mr. Savage said he has the Definition of a Protected Employee added to the Whistleblower Protection Policy as requested at the last meeting.

Mr. Brosseau made a motion to adopt the Whistleblower Protection Policy, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

Mr. Clark asked if the font can be fixed so they match? Yes.

d) Update of Former Town Garage Property

Mr. Savage received word from the engineer working on the property that the report sent was a draft and he should receive the final report soon. The final report is what the State will review.

e) Library Repairs

Mr. Brosseau said he read the minutes from the library minutes, and they said the air test was to be completed 6/26/25. Mr. Brosseau asked Mr. Savage if he has the results of this yet and is Vermont Gas providing a rebate.

Mr. Savage has not received anything from Mr. Scangas yet. Mr. Savage has forwarded Mr. Scangas the invoices to file for a rebate.

Mr. Fournier said they should have the info for the next meeting.

Mr. Savage said the project was just under \$89,000.00. Ms. Cathy Fournier will have the total for the next meeting. Alliance Mechanical did come in under budget.

Mr. Fournier suggested adding the amount left allocated for this to a capital reserve fund for future library repairs.

Mr. Clark said they have discussed this previously and can relook at this.

7. New Town Business

a) Proposed changes to Zoning Fees

Ms. Candels said the only change to the fees in the packet is they added a fee for Use Permits, previously they used the building permit fee.

These fees were drafted from comparisons to other Towns.

Mr. Fournier said people do not like fee increases, but with the new changes the Zoning Administrator will be able to permit more projects not requiring DRB approval. Fees do not cover the Zoning Administrator now.

Mr. Bourgeois asked if permits now are at these rates? Ms. Candels said no, anyone receiving permits now are at the current rates not the new ones. The Selectboard needs to decide the effective date.

Mr. Savage asked if Village, Town and School district are included? Mr. Clark said he agrees with municipalities and the school should be exempt from the fees not zoning.

Yours are essentially moving taxpayer money from one to the other. The State and Federal are exempt from fees per statute. This was discovered after the State paid for the highway garage.

Ms. Candels will add Town, Village and MVSD exempt from Zoning Fees.

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to approve the new Zoning Fees, that will take effective 8/1/25, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

With a note for Fee exemptions be added.

Mr. Bourgeois asked if there has been conversation for PILOT for the State garage? Not yet, Mr. Savage said that begins with the Listers.

Mr. Savage said the State is working on the process to assign the easement to the Town for the new entrance to State Drive. It will remain a class 4 road they maintain with public access for development.

b) Request from Suzie Kelleher for contribution to the Swanton Block Party

Ms. Kelleher came before the board requesting \$430 from the Community Celebration fund in the budget. This will be to pay for two bouncy houses for the Swanton Block Party July 25th.

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to approve the request for \$430 from the Community Celebration line item, for two bouncy houses for the Swanton Block Party, seconded by Mr. Brosseau. Motion carried.

Mr. Fournier said if this is an annual event should it be added to the budget as an appropriation? The budget has a line for Community Celebration already, that is where this will come from.

Mr. Clark wanted to thank Ms. Kelleher publicly for the effort she put into the Hometown Banners. They look great. Ms. Kelleher said she is working on a booklet and will give tours later.

Mr. Fournier said Ms. Kelleher is the head of Beautification and the flowers look amazing compared to other communities he has been in.

Ms. Kelleher said next year she would like to dedicate some to community members.

c) Appointment of new member to the DRB

Mr. Clark said the DRB interviewed Kiersten Bourgeois for a vacancy and the DRB would like the Selectboard to approve her appointment.

Mr. Fournier made a motion to appoint Kiersten Bourgeois to the Development Review Board, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried. Mr. Bourgeois abstained.

Mr. Clark said he works with Ms. Bourgeois on the Swanton Enhancement Project, and he feels she will be a great member of the DRB.

d) Planning Commission vacancy

Ms. Candels said Mr. Pratt resigned his seat and Mr. LaRocque's term is up effective 6/30/25 and does not wish to be reappointed. They are down to three members.

Ms. Candels wanted to share with the board the importance of the need for new members when they reconvene in September it will not be ideal if they do not have a quorum and cannot hold meetings.

Mr. Clark asked if they should drop the number of members to three? Mr. Bourgeois suggested this on a temporary basis to conduct business and can fill the positions.

The board agreed.

e) Land Trust Development

Mr. Bourgeois said he has spoken his feelings before about the loss of development rights by land being sold to the Vermont Land Trust.

Swanton has roughly 23,200 acres and 52% is already conserved that cannot be developed. This included the Missisquoi Wildlife Refuge.

Mr. Bourgeois said other Towns have spoken to the Land Trust and asked them if they can look at other communities for a while.

Mr. Bourgeois would like a full analysis of what and how much land is preserved; another farm just recently sold to the Land Trust.

Mr. Bourgeois asked if the board would entertain a meeting with the Land Trust to see what is conserved and what is left to develop.

Mr. Bourgeois said he understands it is saving farmland, but it has strangled our future. Properties become more expensive and less available.

Mr. Clark said some of the info can be found online on a map, but conserving land for farms benefits us all. We all use the things farms produce.

Mr. Brosseau asked what he wanted the information for? Legislators? Act 250 reform?

Mr. Bourgeois said it will open the conversation. There are many benefits for these rights for farms who sell to the Land Trust, but we cannot bring in young people if you can't build.

Ms. Draper said there are different incentives, for example ADU's to help housing for young people.

Mr. Clark said we can start with the map.

Mr. Fournier said it would be a good idea to have a discussion with them, for example the Bigelow farm, that would be an area for development.

The goal of Vermont Land Trust is to conserve the State, but can they find creative ways to work with Towns.

Mr. Bourgeois said the new CHIP program, similar to TIF program, could help bring infrastructure to an area not already conserved.

Mr. Savage will reach out to the Vermont Housing Conservation Board.

8. Community and Economic Development

Mr. Fournier said they have been visiting businesses and Ms. Candels has received 11 email responses to share for the website directory. Mr. Bourgeois asked if that can be shared? Ms. Draper said the goal is to provide a directory on the website to share with everyone. This is done by Promote Swanton.

Mr. Fournier said he feels the urgency to develop the brochure with the LVRT trailhead, but they need to get it right.

Mr. Fournier said he will meet with Ms. Kelleher and discuss the placement of the Welcome to Swanton signs to share with their respective boards. The two boards can coordinate where to put them.

Mr. Clark said he contacted the sign company, hopefully at the next meeting they will have an update. To keep in mind state rights-of-way and location.

Mr. Fournier said in visiting the business, they are very excited about this.

Mr. Clark said it would be nice if they could do a once a year meeting to socialize and meet local business owners, maybe the Chamber can help.

Mr. Savage said he has spoken with Village Manager Bill Sheets and they would like to have a joint meeting regarding a Local Option Tax to have a ballot item in March. The

bill did not move forward in Montpelier. Mr. Savage said they could invite legislative representatives to the meeting.

Mr. Clark suggests the board meet without legislative representatives first.

The Tax department does not like the bill sent, but the Tax Commission works for the governor.

Representative Walker introduced the bill as drafted, it did not move this year.

Mr. Savage said the Village Trustees will hold a public hearing on Plans for Bridge 6, and they would like Selectboard members to attend if they can.

9. Any Other Necessary Business

Mr. Brosseau said the Cemetery Commission met Saturday and appointed Macy Dupont to one of the vacant positions.

Ms. Candels said the 1st meeting in August falls on National Night Out, does the board wish to reschedule the meeting as done previously?

Mr. Brosseau made a motion to change the 1st August meeting to Wednesday August 6, 2025, seconded by Mr. Fournier. Motion carried.

10. Correspondence

None

11. Public Comment (Reprise)

None

12. Upcoming Events

a) Friday – July 4, 2025 – Independence Day Holiday – Offices and Operations Closed

b) Monday – July 14, 2025 – Swanton Village Board of Trustees – Public Hearing on Plans for Bridge 6 – Village Complex – 6:00 pm

c) Tuesday – July 15, 2025 – Regular Selectboard – 6:00 pm – Town Offices & Zoom

d) Thursday – July 24, 2025 – DRB – 6:00 pm – Town Offices & Zoom

e) Friday – July 25, 2025 – Swanton Block Party -5:30 pm- 7:30 pm

f) Saturday-July 26, 2025-Chamber of Commerce Car Show - Village Green Rain Date July 27, 2025

13. Executive session (Legal)

Ms. Draper made a motion to enter executive session at 7:51 pm, seconded by Mr. Fournier. Motion carried.

Mr. Fournier made a motion to exit executive session at 8:01 pm, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

Action Taken:

Mr. Brosseau made a motion to approve paying \$1,188.70 for body repairs to a vehicle, seconded by Mr. Fournier. Motion carried.

Mr. Clark clarified there was a stone from the highway crew mowing nick a pickup truck and this is to repair the truck.

14. Adjourn

**Ms. Draper made a motion to adjourn at 8:01 pm, seconded by Mr. Fournier.
Motion carried.**

MOTIONS FOR ENTERING EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION #1: I move **that we find** that we enter executive session for the Selectboard to receive confidential contract, personnel, Legal or Real Estate 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.

Respectfully Submitted by,
Christina Candels-Assistant Town Administrator