

**Minutes  
TOWN OF SWANTON  
SELECTBOARD MEETING  
Town Office Building**

**1 Academy Street, Swanton, VT 05488**

**Tuesday, May 21, 2024 @ 6:00 p.m.**

Present: Joel Clark-Chair, Nicole Draper, Earl Fournier-Members, Brian Savage-Town Administrator, Cathy Fournier-Town Clerk, Christina Candels-Administrative Assistant, Mark Reilly, Jason Hodgdon, Joe Montagne

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. Clark reviewed the agenda.

Ms. Draper would like to add under Community & Economic development Swanton Community Block Downtown Party discussion.

Mr. Fournier would like to add under New Town Business Promoting Swanton discussion.

Mr. Savage stated Heather Lavoie is not able to attend and will postpone the Historical update.

Mr. Savage requested New Town Business to add Swanton Historical Brainstorm Idea.

Mr. Savage requested to add under New Town Business Draft Profit and Loss first quarter 2024.

D. Meeting Topics

1. Minutes

a) Regular Selectboard Meeting of May 7, 2024

**Ms. Draper made a motion to approve May 7, 2024, draft meeting minutes as written, seconded by Mr. Fournier. Motion carried.**

2. Public Comments

None

3. Law Enforcement

a) Swanton Animal Control

Mr. Savage shared an update from Mr. Benson for April 2024.

Mr. Clark asked for clarification on the incident.

Ms. Draper asked about agency assist with the Sheriff? No additional information available.

Mr. Fournier asked if there was additional information on address that was sent a certified letter? No additional information.

4. Expenditures for 4/17/24 to 5/21/24

a) General Orders

**Mr. Fournier made a motion to approve the General Orders in the amount of \$114,314.23, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.**

b) Highway Orders

**Ms. Draper made a motion to approve the Highway Orders in the amount of \$56,004.44, seconded by Mr. Fournier. Motion carried.**

Mr. Fournier asked for information on a storm water invoice. Mr. Clark asked Mr. Savage to find out if there is any training for the Town for storm water process.

c) Special Orders

**Ms. Draper made a motion to approve the Special Orders in the amount of \$21.50, seconded by Mr. Fournier. Motion carried.**

d) Library Orders

**Mr. Fournier made a motion to approve the Library Orders in the amount of \$5,483.91, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.**

Mr. Fournier asked for clarification on the pump purchase.

Mr. Fournier said there was an email requesting assistance moving dirt for planting. The Highway Department will take care of this.

e) Highway/General Payroll Orders

**Ms. Draper made a motion to approve the Highway/General Payroll Orders in the amount of \$46,097.06, seconded by Mr. Fournier. Motion carried.**

f) Library Payroll Orders

**Mr. Fournier made a motion to approve the Library Payroll Orders for in the amount of \$13,341.31, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.**

5. Highway Dept

a) Joel Clark – Highway Department report

Mr. Clark gave an update. Mr. Clark said the Mack dump truck needed 3 new batteries. The new truck has not gone to Viking yet, Mr. Lapan will check on this. The tractor with side mower will be ready by the end of the week to mow. The Highway crew has done a great job cleaning up trees and stumps at the LVRT trailhead location. The Highway crew has been sweeping street. They had a broke part in the sweeper Mr. Lapan was able to fix, saving considerable money. The Highway crew has been prepping Church Rd for paving. The Highway crew continues to clean up from the beavers on Swanton Hill Rd, as well as a site visit to the area they are planning to work on. Mr. Clark said there is a meeting with the other property owner this week. Mr. Clark said they are also going to talk to the engineer about dropping the existing road vs going over the hill, which may be a better alternative if they can keep traffic back during blasting. The new Maquam Shore Rd three section culvert that was replaced is having issues. The middle & western section the band holding it has failed. They have temporarily fixed this. Goodhue Construction, the contractor who installed the culvert will be fixing it in the next week. Mr. Clark will meet with Wetlands coordinator 5/22/24 for the Brooklyn St. project. The next four weeks they will continue to prep for paving and get pricing for line striping, ditch work, roadside mowing, replace culvert on Bushey Rd.

b) Award 2024 Paving Contract

Mr. Fournier feels this will be a conflict as he has hired Hungerford for paving his driveway, so he does not want to be part of this discussion. He feels this will be a conflict of interest.

Mr. Clark said if you compare the tonnage Pike is the low bidder due to the cold planning being done. Mr. Fournier said they don't know how many tons they will need until the work is done. Mr. Clark said what's important to know is they have a dollar figure they stop at.

Ms. Draper said when the numbers are close it's a tough decision, with both reputable companies. Ms. Draper has seen roads done by Pike with a lot of experience; Ms. Draper has not seen Hungerford out as often. Ms. Draper was willing to make a motion but with only herself and Mr. Clark able to vote it presents an issue unless there comfortable voting 2-1. Mr. Fournier said it is not 2-0 because of his abstaining.

Mr. Savage said they follow Roberts Rule of Order, but they did not determine what they will consider a quorum.

That will be added to the next meeting's agenda.

Mr. Fournier would like to postpone this bid when the whole board is in attendance, tonight there are only 3 Selectboard members present.

Mr. Montagne as far as unit pricing, milling is a unit price as well and he was much lower with this price.

**Ms. Draper made a motion to table this until Friday May 24, seconded by Mr. Fournier. Motion carried.**

6. Old Town Business

a) Naming streets off from Highgate Road for E-911

Ms. Candels shared the development off Highgate Rd they discussed at the last meeting they choose to name Deerfield Drive. Ms. Candels spoke with St. Albans Post Office, and she cautioned about naming so closely was under the impression the Fairfield address. Ms. Candels has discovered there is a Deer Yard Dr. of Excavation Dr, this is also a St. Albans mailing address. Ms. Candels suggested sticking with Wilderness Way North & South. Mr. Clark asked if this works for E-911? Mr. Savage said yes.

**Ms. Draper made a motion to accept the proposed change of street name of Highgate Rd. to be Wilderness Way North & Wilderness Way South, seconded by Mr. Fournier. Motion carried.**

b) Update on Water/Sewer Service in Southern Growth Center

Mr. Savage shared he had spoken with Mr. Tim Smith, and he is told by Dominic Cloud (St. Albans City), and they have the capacity for sewer service what they need to look into is the contract they signed with the Town of St. Albans if this is ok before they proceed. This was part of the water; sewer & police coverage contract they signed.

Mr. Savage said for water they have installed an 8" main and there could be concerned with pressure with future development, and they may need pump stations for this. Both are possible but there needs to be more discussion.

Mr. Clark asked if Dominic was going to check with the St. Albans Town? Mr. Savage said yes.

Mr. Fournier asked if Mr. Cummings wanted to invest in it, is it possible to get the water run out there? Mr. Savage said that is something Mr. Cummings would need to find out.

Mr. Savage will follow up. Mr. Cummings has said he has had a conversation with St. Albans City regarding water.

Mr. Clark asked who would own the water line they had run. Mr. Savage was unsure if the State will own the line or St. Albans City. Mr. Clark said the contract was signed with the neighboring land yesterday.

c) Update on Soil Testing – Fourth Street Property

Mr. Savage shared the preliminary report of the soil test. Mr. Fournier said it appears this is preliminary.

Once they have the final report, they will send it to the State of Vermont and give a suggested remediation. Mr. Clark said they also need to know with what they plan to use it for housing or ball fields does it change the remediation?

Mr. Fournier asked if the current contract would bring them to the plan to remediate?

Incurring no more costs? They will give suggestions to remediate what is there yes. Mr. Clark said this will not be considered a plan, they will give possible considerations.

7. New Town Business

a) Heather Lavoie – Swanton Historical Society Update on Possible Building Purchase. Ms. Lavoie requested to postpone this until another meeting.

b) Bridge Closure and Traffic on South River Street and Beebe Road

Mr. Clark said after attending the Village Trustee Meeting it became apparent how much this will affect South River Street & Beebe Rd. when the bridge is closed for repair in terms of safety, traffic flow, roads and the railroad. Mr. Clark thinks they should request police coverage during commute times due to the traffic being sent down the Town roads. Mr. Clark has requested the addresses of all property owners affected by this. Ms. Candels has done this. Mr. Clark will draft a letter to send them, this will include the dates of work and the Swanton Village contact information because this is their project. Mr. Clark suggested this be added to the website, bridge schedule. Mr. Clark thinks we can ask the Village to maintain that.

Mr. Fournier also suggested the State put signs in Alburgh at the four corners, this can direct trucks down Route 2 to Interstate 89. Mr. Savage said that as well on the interstate at exit 17 North. The Village can request VTrans to do this.

Mr. Savage will speak to Swanton Village to get on their agenda for their meeting.

Mr. Reilly shared his concerns of the speed on South River St. this is a 30mph and they are already speeding. Once the bridge shuts down it will be worse, he does not see police out there. Congestion could slow down traffic. The pedestrian crossing at the Railroad Museum is very dangerous already, what will it be like with the additional traffic and tractor trailers.

Mr. Hodgdon said where he is the blind driveways are going to be very dangerous with tractor trailers, bikes and farm equipment. The truck traffic on that road now are people who have driven that road for years, out of state trucks are not going to know the S curves and blind spots. The wood chip trucks are over 100,000 lbs. and they cannot stop fast. The bridge needs to be fixed but the safety needs to be addressed.

Mr. Clark said the Village is saving a lot of money, this should be spent on having a police officer with lights on to slow down traffic, this should be part of the project costs. Safety should be a priority. Mr. Clark suggested lowering the speed limit to 30 mph to Beebe Rd. South River is not line stripped either. Mr. Fournier said in Canada they have speed danger signs that may help remind people to slow down, he agrees lowering speed. Mr. Reilly said they cannot have a reduced cost on one side to cause a detriment to the people on the other side of the bridge.

c) June 10, 2024, Presentation by VTrans of the 2029 Bridge Project at Regular Village Trustees Meeting.

Mr. Clark said they should meet with the Trustees and express their concerns about safety along the detour. Mr. Fournier asked if the crosswalk could be improved. Mr. Savage will request the Selectboard be added to this agenda to express their concerns.

d) Highgate Road Speed Study

Mr. Savage had requested school bus signs ahead signs be put up and a Speed Study be done on Vt Route 207 at the request of two developments last winter. The data was sent from the Speed Study. The study determined 85% of traffic travels in the mid-50 mph range. Mr. Clark believes they agree 50 mph is too fast. Mr. Fournier said this is a State Highway and they can request that they reduce the speed limit, especially where VT 207 meets Woods hill d. Mr. Fournier said he has recently been down VT 207 and agrees how dangerous it is. All board members agreed to put it on record with AOT the speed be reduced.

**Mr. Fournier made a motion to send a letter to AOT to request the speed be reduced on VT Route 207 down to 40 mph due to safety concerns, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.**

e) Promoting Swanton

Mr. Fournier said Swanton has a lot to offer and marketing Swanton is important. Mr. Fournier said the LVRT article in the 7 Days paper is something Swanton should investigate. Mr. Fournier said there are a lot of committees, but he would like to see one that promotes Swanton: Promoting Swanton brochure, downtown signs. There is a lot they can do that doesn't cost a lot of money. Swanton Village has made a lot of improvements to Marble Mill Park, what about the picnic area there? These things can promote people to take the rail trail here and access.

Ms. Draper said she could not agree more. There has been conversation with Darci Benoit who is the lead on the Economic Development Committee on Swanton Enhancement Project and has started a plan that is hers to share.

Ms. Draper said at Swanton Rec they are working on a plan to promote the LVRT. This is an excellent idea for Swanton Town & Swanton Village to work together.

Mr. Fournier said there needs to be a group to make sure it gets done. There needs to be a direct connection between Selectboard, Village Trustees, Chamber of Commerce, Swanton Enhancement, maybe a representative from each.

Ms. Draper said she met with Trustee Suzie Kelleher, Abby Gaudette, Darci Benoit and herself to talk about a block party in the Merchants Row area to have a block party when the bridge is closed. One of the things they discussed I how they can support the community. One of the programs they used to have during Covid encourage people to shop local/downtown called #ShopLocalSwanton and turn it into Downtown Bucks and promote during the first downtown block party. This would build community engagement and build community engagement. One of the things they discussed was a line item in the Town budget for Town Celebration. This would be a way to support downtown businesses. Mr. Fournier thinks more promotion on the website will help also.

Mr. Clark said the Selectboard has a meeting on 6/4/24 and suggested Mr. Fournier & Ms. Draper meet prior and make an outline of what they would like to propose, there are many groups in Swanton to include. Mr. Savage will invite the Village Trustees & Village Manager to the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June meeting to discuss Promoting Swanton. Due to the School Budget revote the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting will be moved to June 17, 2024.

f) Historical Society Brainstorm Idea  
Please see attached.

Mr. Savage shares the update sent from Jason Barney. Mr. Clark said at the Town Garage there are picnic tables they have been storing for the Chamber of Commerce. These could be used if the Chamber of Commerce is aggregable. This info can be shared. Mr. Clark said if board members agreed this would be a good use of Special Funds to make it better for kids. This would be part of Promoting Swanton as well. Ms. Cathy Fournier said there are lots of families that tailgate there, and picnic tables would be a great idea.

8. Community and Economic Development

Ms. Draper shared the attached documents for the Community Block Party.

9. Any Other Necessary Business

a) Library Financial Update

Please see attached.

Mr. Fournier asked if the library has used any of the trust funds yet. The update shows income from the trust but not that they have used any.

Mr. Clark said the way the report reads it looks like they're using the interest from the trust funds. Mr. Fournier said the report does not show what they budgeted, but that should be added to the report. This will help them know if they're over budget in some areas. Mr. Clark asked about the building maintenance fund they have. They did not use those funds for the pump purchase the Town paid for that.

10. Correspondence

None

11. Public Comment (Reprise)

Mr. Clark thanked Swanton Beautification Committee for prepping and planting over 800 4" pots.

12. Upcoming Events

a) Thursday, May 23, 2024 – DRB – 6:00 pm – Town Offices

b) Saturday, May 25, 2024 – Flags for Veterans Placement – 9:00 am

Town Offices – Volunteers needed and appreciated!

c) Saturday, May 25, and Sunday, May 26 2024 – Abenaki of Missisquoi

Heritage Celebration– Swanton Rec. Field – 12:00 noon to 5:00 pm

d) Saturday, May 25, 2024, Town Wide Garage Sale 9am-3pm Maps available

Wednesday Swanton Rec.Org or Facebook

e) Monday, May 27, 2024 – Memorial Day – Town Offices and Operations

CLOSED

f) Monday, May 27, 2024 – Memorial Day Parade-Grand Ave– 2:00 pm

g) Saturday, June 1, 2024 – Takedown of Flags for Veterans – 9:00 am

h) Tuesday, June 4, 2024 – Regular Selectboard Meeting – 6:00 pm

Town Offices

I) Tuesday, June 18, 2024-School Budget Re-Vote Village Complex 7am-7pm

j) Markets on The Green- June 9<sup>th</sup>, July 17<sup>th</sup>, August 21<sup>st</sup>

13. Executive session (Real Estate, Personnel, Economic Development)

**Ms. Draper made a motion to enter executive session at 7:29 pm, seconded by Mr. Fournier. Motion carried.**

**Mr. Fourier made a motion to exit the executive session at 8:00 pm, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.**

**Ms. Draper made a motion to increase the hourly wage of the Administrative Assistant to \$22.50 per hour, seconded by Mr. Fournier. Motion carried.**

Mr. Fournier discussed that they have been in conversation with Mr. Brian Rowell and Missisquoi Valley School District about the land beside the Town garage & the Missisquoi Valley School District. All three parties have an interest in this land and have

an agreement drafted. This agreement will give the Town garage what land they need and the school the ownership of the land where they have an alternative entrance.

**Mr. Fournier made a motion to approve the draft letter of agreement authorizing Mr. Savage to sign, this is contingent on Brian Rowell’s approval and changes will need to be reviewed by the Selectboard again, by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.**

14. Adjourn

**Ms. Draper made a motion to adjourn at 8:05 pm, seconded by Mr. Fournier. Motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted by  
Christina Candels-Administrative Assistant

Received and filed by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Cathy Fournier, Town Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date