

**MINUTES
TOWN OF SWANTON
SELECTBOARD MEETING
Town Office Building
1 Academy Street, Swanton, VT 05488
In-Person & By Zoom
TUESDAY
August 20, 2024 @ 6:00 p.m.**

Present: Joel Clark-Chair, Steve Bourgeois, Nicole Draper, Brian Savage-Town Administrator, Christina Candels-Administrative Assistant, Bob Neilson, Heather Lavoie

Zoom: Linn

Absent: Earl Fournier, Cody Hemenway

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 would like to add an update under Old Town Business, LVRT update.

Mr. Savage has a legal matter for Executive Session.

Mr. Clark said Mr. Savage and himself did meet with Mr. Tim Smith but he was unable to attend early enough tonight but has confirmed he will attend the next meeting.

D. Meeting Topics

1. Minutes

a) Special Selectboard Meeting of August 5, 2024

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to approve the August 5, 2024, Special Selectboard Meeting as written, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

2. Public Comments

None

3. Law Enforcement.

a) Swanton Animal Control

Mr. Savage shared Mr. Benson's report for July. Mr. Clark asked if there has been any follow up from unlicensed dog at large 7/27/24? Mr. Savage will follow up with ACO and send them an email.

4. Expenditures

a) General Orders

Ms. Draper made a motion to approve General Orders for 7/17/27 to 8/20/24 in the amount of \$81,480.44, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried.

Ms. Draper said it's nice to see the local community support the "Downtown Bucks" from the block party. Mr. Clark said they should look at funding that again next year, it was a great turnout and 2-3 of those a year would be great. Ms. Draper said this could be rolled into several events now in the community.

b) Highway Orders

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to approve the Highway Orders for 7/17/24 to 8/20/24 in the amount of \$53,147.88, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

c) Library Orders

Ms. Draper made a motion to approve the Library Orders for 7/17/24 to 8/20/24 in the amount of \$3,757.98, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried.

d) Payroll Orders

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to approve the Highway/General Payroll Orders for 7/17/24 to 8/20/24 in the amount of \$43,271.95, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

e) Library Payroll Orders

Ms. Draper made a motion to approve the Library Payroll Orders for 7/17/24 to 8/20/24 in the amount of \$9,061.63, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried.

f) Special Orders

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to approve the Special Orders for 7/17/24 to 8/20/24 in the amount of \$17,047.93, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

Ms. Draper said the recreation department updates have made a vast improvement. Mr. Clark said it was money well spent.

5. Highway Department

a) Monthly Update

Mr. Clark shared his monthly highway update.

Vehicles are in good shape. 2005 Mac truck clutch they have been working on, if they need to change the clutch, they will do it inhouse. 2009 Volvo computer issue has been fixed; brakes are being looked at now at Trans Eastern Trucks. This will not cost the Town money for repair. Mr. Lapan is finding out the date of delivery for the new truck. Mr. Bourgeois asked the total cost on the new truck? Mr. Savage will find out.

The Highway crew has been doing a lot of tree removal since the last storm. The Highway department has been looking for trees that need attention, so far only two are too large for them to remove and will contract out, most of them they can remove.

Mr. Clark shared the update from Tyler Billingsly from East Engineering for Swanton Hill Road redesign. Mr. Clark said he wants to meet with the Town of Swanton attorney to discuss the proposed design. Mr. Clark said to get to the recommended 10% they would need to blast. The road is currently 21% at the steepest spot. To get to 10% they would need to drop the road 15', that would be a significant amount of blasting and removal. Mr. Clark & Mr. Billingsly agree going to 14% would work and only need to drop the road 7'-8'. This would allow them to use the existing road right-of-way, allow them to keep the road passable, eliminate wetland permits. Mr. Clark just wants to ensure that staying with 14% does not open the Town to liability with the Town attorney because the State typically wants 10%.

Mr. Bourgeois asked if there could be any other buildings up there? If the existing landowners want to build, they can but they would have to build their own road, the Town road does not go very far.

Mr. Clark said meeting with the attorney and putting it on record will help in the future. They can finish the plans and construct in the spring. They put \$160,000 in this year's budget and will budget the other half next year. They will also have a revised budget of the cost also. The Highway crew will do a lot of the work to save costs.

Mr. Bourgeois and Ms. Draper are comfortable with this option to move forward.

Mr. Clark gave an update on Brooklyn Street, Tyler Billingsly has given a drawing of the work, but he is still waiting for the surveyor's report. Once they have that they will bring it to the board. This project will also be done in the spring.

6. Old Town Business

a) Discussion of Revolving Loan Fund

Mr. Clark said Mr. Savage and himself talked with Cassie Bell from the Department of Housing and Community Development. MS. Bell said the money needs to keep moving, they need to have funded 25% in three years and they have not done that. Currently there are 141 revolving loan funds in Towns right now and 30 Towns have sent the money back because they are not as feasible as originally thought. Mr. Clark said some of the issues are, for example Swanton does not have the infrastructure for billing, would need to create a plan, the money can only be used for job retention or job creation. The Town of Johnson has a similar loan and has not given out a loan yet.

Mr. Bourgeois asked for the timeline to the money or send it back.

Mr. Clark said after having the discussion he is in favor of sending the money back to the State, it can allow for larger projects to be funded. The Town could then support larger projects.

Mr. Bourgeois shared his experience in researching loan programs like these and how they were utilized. Mr. Bourgeois said there is Vermont Development Small Business who could assist people, they have the resources vs the Town. Mr. Bourgeois feels the money would be utilized better by sending it back. These loans put a lot of liability on the Town.

Ms. Draper thanked Mr. Clark for putting more effort into this, right now she agrees there is not a need for job retention or creation this could be utilized for.

Mr. Bourgeois said Franklin County Industrial Development has resources to help people also.

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to return the funds in the Revolving Loan Fund back to the State of Vermont, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

Ms. Lavoie asked if the paperwork and red tape would be the same as Swanton Village loans? Mr. Bourgeois said possibly. Ms. Lavoie said the bridge closure was a huge effect on small businesses, in a couple years they will be hit with a longer closure. Could this money be used for that. This money could only be used for job creation or retention.

b) Report on road name

Mr. Savage shared a summary from a follow-up of public comment from the last meeting for 231 Lakewood Dr. Ms. Briggs is requesting the name of Queens Court be changed.

Mr. Savage shared the history of the right-of-way for the street name, when it was named and whom would be required to change the name.

The right-of-way was deeded in 1975. The property has been sold several times, the current owner is Ryan Jordan, and he has applied for and been approved for 5 rental duplexes. The name Queens Court was chosen and approved by the Town of Swanton when owned by Dianne & Michale Lafar as her nick name was "Queenie". Mr. Jordan would have to be the one to request the name change. Mr. Savage has shared this with Ms. Briggs previously. Unless Mr. Jordan comes to request the name change it will remain Queens Court.

Mr. Savage will send a letter to Ms. Briggs.

c) LVRT Update

Mr. Clark shared they did have a bid opening for this project and unfortunately, they did not receive any bids. Mr. Clark thinks several factors played into this time of season, contractors have to be State approved and a lot of them that are, are currently working on projects from storms. The current plan is to send it out again in early 2025.

7. New Town Business

a) A/C repair needed at Swanton Public Library

Mr. Savage said they have some water leaking into the library basement. Ms. Draper shared a video. Ms. Draper said it looks like its coming down the wall and going into the drainage system they had installed.

Mr. Savage said when they installed the new HVAC system last year, they did not replace one of the compressors because it was in good condition. A couple of weeks ago Abby called and said half up the upstairs air conditioning was not working. Alliance Mechanical said the compressor now needs to be replaced. The quote from them for labor and equipment is \$3,760.

Ms. Draper made a motion to approve the bid from Alliance Mechanical for the necessary repairs/replacement of AC compressor in the amount of \$3,760, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried.

Mr. Bourgeois asked how long the warranty would be? Mr. Savage will find out.

b) Promoting Swanton Meeting

Ms. Draper shared she was not able to attend but gave a brief update.

Ms. Draper said the next Promoting Swanton Meeting would be 8/28/24 @6pm at the Village Complex. Hank Lambert will be there from Swanton Beautification Committee as well as others they have invited to attend. The committee plans to continue the conversation on a brochure, downtown bingo game, community wide swan scavenger

hunt. Other things they want to continue working with the Abenaki to support their cultural events, picnic area at Marble Mill, Block party.

c) Zoning By-law Revisions

Mr. Savage said the Planning Commission is working on this and they plan to present these changes to the Selectboard late fall after there public hearing. Mr. Savage said he recommends inviting Village Trustees.

Ms. Candels shared some discussions they had with the Fire Chief for height requirements.

Mr. Savage shared one change the State will allow is Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU), this is causing issues with them giving them E-911 addresses.

8. Community and Economic Development

None

9. Any Other Necessary Business

None

10. Correspondence

Mr. Savage received a letter and invoice from Northwest Access Television. Mr. Clark said they should send a letter back saying they will have this discussion as part of general budgets later in 2024. The Town currently budgets \$1,500 they are requesting \$4,000.

Mr. Bourgeois said its worth noting we can already capture our meetings on Zoom. He does get feedback from people watching it.

Ms. Draper said supporting this organization is more than just municipal board meetings, they support the community as a whole sharing information.

11. Public Comment (Reprise)

None

12. Upcoming Events

a) Thursday, August 29, 2024 – DRB – 6:00 pm – Town Offices & Zoom

b) Monday, September 2, 2024 – Labor Day – Town Offices and Operations –
CLOSED

c) Tuesday, September 3, 2024 – Regular Selectboard Meeting – 6:00 pm
Town Offices and Zoom

13. Executive session

Ms. Draper made a motion to enter executive session at 6:46 pm, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried.

Ms. Draper made a motion to exit the executive session at 6:54 pm, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried.

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to authorize the Town Administrator to spend up to \$2,000 on legal fees for the eviction of a property in Swanton, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

14. Adjourn

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to adjourn at 6:55 pm, seconded by Mr. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by
Christina Candels-Administrative Assistant

Received and filed by:

Cathy Fournier, Town Clerk

Date

