

**MINUTES
TOWN OF SWANTON
SELECTBOARD MEETING
Town Office Building & Zoom
1 Academy Street, Swanton, VT 05488
October 15, 2024 - 6:00 pm**

Present: Joel Clark-Chair, Nicole Draper, Earl Fournier, Steve Bourgeois, Brendan Long-Members, Brian Savage-Town Administrator, Christina Candels-Administrative Assistant, Harold Garrett, Richard Cummings, Cathy Fournier-Town Clerk
Zoom: Damon B, Allan Delhagen

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.

D. Meeting Topics

1. Minutes

a) Selectboard Meeting of October 1, 2024

Mr. Fournier made a motion to approve October 1, 2024, Regular Selectboard Meeting minutes, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried.

Mr. Bourgeois asked where the funds would come from for the office repairs? Mr. Clark said they have 2-3 places they can take the funds from, and Ms. Cathy Fournier will have an updated general fund year-to-date for the next meeting. The work will be completed by then also. Mr. Fournier said they should also have the balance in the Special Funds then also.

2. Public Comments

Damon(zoom) asked for an update on the signs for Swanton. Mr. Clark said not at this time. They have discussed them, and it has not gone far. This is planned for this winter to have the signs made and installed in the spring.

3. Law Enforcement.

a) Swanton Animal Control

Mr. Benson (AOC) did not provide a report. Mr. Savage said if he receives one, he will forward it.

4. Expenditures

a) General Orders

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to approve the General Orders for 9/17/24 to 10/15/24 in the amount of \$124,047.76, seconded by Mr. Fournier. Motion carried.

Mr. Clark asked for clarification on a charge for the railroad depot. Ms. Cathy Fournier said it was the light bill for the depot. Ms. Draper asked about a charge for a lock at the depot? Mr. Savage said it was a lock for the caboose, people were getting into it. Mr. Clark asked about an expense for employees' retirement? Ms. Candels said that is the quarterly payment.

b) Highway Orders

Ms. Draper made a motion to approve the Highway Orders for 9/17/24 to 10/15/24 in the amount of \$57,528.71, seconded by Mr. Fournier. Motion carried.

Mr. Fournier asked about tree expenses. They have been taking down a lot of trees that need to be removed, this was in the budget. They have also used a different tree service with better pricing.

c) Library Orders

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to approve the Library Orders for 9/17/24 to 10/15/24 in the amount of \$3,512.27, seconded by Mr. Long. Motion carried.

d) Highway/General Payroll Orders

Mr. Fournier made a motion to approve the Highway/General Payroll Orders for 9/17/24 to 10/15/24 in the amount of \$35,271.02, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

Mr. Fournier asked why some have checks? Two employees received checks vs. direct deposit.

e) Library Payroll Orders

Mr. Fournier made a motion to approve the Library Payroll Orders for 9/17/24 to 10/15/24 in the amount of \$8,163.73, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried.

f) Special Orders

Mr. Fournier made a motion to approve the Special Orders for 9/17/24 to 10/15/24 in the amount of \$9,666.14, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried.

Mr. Bourgeois asked about the \$7,500 for the swan pond, was this for the liner they agreed to pay half of? Yes. Did the Village pay their half, and how is fundraising going? Mr. Bourgeois asked if this should have been paid without funding complete? Mr. Fournier said the pond needs to be fixed either way. Mr. Savage will follow up with Ms. Washburn.

5. Highway Department

a) Report from TAC - Mr. Harold Garrett

Mr. Garrett said TAC has discussed Route 78 along the river and that shoulder has been completed. They did receive the letter from the Town. For the guardrails the State cannot install them the contractor has to. Mr. Garrett assumes when they fix the road in 2029, they will install guardrails. Mr. Garrett said he has been pushing for guardrails on Vt Route 105 (Sheldon) where people have been killed, that embankment is very steep. They are also actively pushing for the safety of workers on the roadways with signage. Some Towns are lax in this, they are considering literature for Towns.

Mr. Garrett said they have been discussing front/rear cameras being installed in trucks, backup cameras are important.

Mr. Garrett said TAC has asked for crash information for Woods Hill Road and has not received it. Mr. Clark said they did show three years' worth of accidents in the study for the road when requesting speed change, so they have some data.

Mr. Clark asked for more information on the guardrails on Route 78. Mr. Clark feels the Selectboard should write a letter stating that they want guardrails installed. Mr. Fournier thinks Regional Planning should be aware of this because of the importance of that road.

Mr. Fournier made a motion for the Selectboard to draft a letter and request the State install guardrails along Route 78, seconded by Mr. Long. Motion carried.

The letter for repair did not include a request for guardrails.

Mr. Savage will send the letter to Mr. Garrett and Regional Planning also.

Mr. Fournier wanted to post this letter in the Messenger as well. Mr. Bourgeois suggested giving them a chance first.

Mr. Long asked if the issue with signs is because the Towns do not have them or not using them? Mr. Garrett believes the Town has adequately equipped, its other Towns. Mr. Clark said the Highway department has signs out and people do not pay attention to them.

b) Monthly Report on Highway Department Matters - Mr. Joel Clark

Mr. Clark said the vehicles in the Highway Department are all running well. They have been filling the sand mixed with salt shed. Salt will be delivered in the next couple weeks.

The beavers on Swanton Hill Road continue to be an issue, they have contacted someone to remove them. This has been an ongoing issue for a while with the highway crew going multiple times a week to remove dams and debris.

The highway crew is continuing to remove trees in the Town right-of-way before winter.

The plow frames will be installed next week. The highway crew will go to their winter schedule next week, 5-8 hour days.

6. Old Town Business

a) Boundary Line Adjustments

Mr. Savage updated that the three attorneys involved in this have what they need and are working on this. The public notice has been posted today 10/15/24 for 30 days.

Mr. Clark said he was approached about this today and once it was explained they understood the benefits to all three parties. (Town of Swanton, MVUSD & Brian Rowell). Mr. Fournier suggested adding something to the website because the school has been using this land, they don't legally own.

c) Town Office Repairs

Mr. Savage updated that these repairs are scheduled to begin 10/22/24. The Clerk's Office will be moved to this room tomorrow, all access will be through the side door.

Mr. Clark asked if there was any coordination to add more cables under the building once the floor is opened up. Mr. Fournier asked if there is any additional cost for the computers to be moved or part of contract? Mr. Savage said they will be billed and let Ms. Cathy Fournier know to forward the bill to be included in the cost. (to move the clerk's office) They still have not heard back from the insurance company about the claim to see if it will be covered. Mr. Savage said they have contacted Dust Bunnies to thoroughly clean the office when the work is completed. The Town has used them before for Swanton Public Library.

d) Update on Fourth Street property

Mr. Savage said today he received the report from the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation Waste Management & Prevention. The letter said once the Town has a plan for the property to share that with them, then they will review as well with the Vermont Department of Health about what needs to be done with the soil.

Mr. Clark would like to have a conference call with the engineers to move forward. The plan is for recreation.

Mr. Bourgeois said these are all good in case they change the plans/use of the property.

Mr. Clark thinks risk assessment and feasibility will be what they want next. Mr.

Fournier suggested some of the soil in question could be capped with parking as well.

e) Local Option Tax

Mr. Savage shared the update from the Town Attorney regarding Local Option Tax. The Village would like to have a joint meeting to discuss this as well. Mr. Savage suggested one way to address this is to have our state delegates create a bill for Local Option Tax in Town/Village situations.

The Town Attorney said the way the law is written now, both municipalities would need to pass their own tax, this would create 2 cents for Village tax if the Town passed their own as well. This would not be feasible.

Mr. Long asked if they could form an agreement on how the funds would be used or would it have to be split? The use could be put towards these services for example a joint purpose. Mr. Fournier asked if there are restrictions on what the funds could be used for?

Mr. Savage said yes. The Village wants to use it for capital improvements.

Mr. Bourgeois said these taxes are not predictable. Mr. Fournier suggested equipment also, things both Town/Village would benefit from.

Mr. Long clarified it would still take voter approval in an already inflated environment.

Would consumers go to another town to avoid it, St. Albans already has it, and Highgate is looking at it. Having a plan to explain what the funds would be used for. Mr.

Bourgeois is against any of these funds to be used for operation expenses or payroll.

7. New Town Business

a) Request of Mr. Richard Cummings for a ROW for waterline under Sholan Road

Mr. Cummings came before the board to request a right-of-way to run a waterline under Sholan Road for his development. Mr. Cummings is planning to run an 8" waterline from the new State of Vermont Highway garage. Mr. Clark asked if this is the paved section?

No Mr. Cummings said it's the dirt road. Mr. Clark said they do not need to bore under the road, they can dig the line instead. Mr. Clark told Mr. Cummings to prepare an easement/right-of-way for them. Mr. Bourgeois asked how many houses he plans. Mr.

Cummings said the 8" line can serve what he plans plus more. Mr. Fournier asked who pays the fees for the water usage? Mr. Cummings said the homeowners will pay \$2,000 allocation fee to tie in. They then pay St. Albans City quarterly. Mr. Cummings has 3 lots subdivided now and plans for 8 more next year, in 5 years he will be able to do 9 more. It is all determined by Act 250.

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to approve the waterline to go under Sholan Road subject to an easement, seconded by Mr. Fournier. Motion carried.

b) Request of Mr. Richard Cummings for takeover of Jerry mill Lane

Mr. Cummings said Jerry mill Lane was built to standard A76, the standard does not give specifics for pavement. Jerry mill Lane has 4" of pavement, the Town of Swanton policy is 5". Mr. Cummings has checked Essex and Milton, and they require 4". Mr. Fournier asked if he meets the other requirements? Yes. Mr. Fournier asked about the stormwater permit? The current stormwater permit is for the whole development not just the road. The Town of Swanton is not interested in being partners in these projects, the roads need to be separated and in Jerry mill Lane they are not. Mr. Fournier said the Town is not going to be responsible for run off from homes only roads. Mr. Cummings will discuss it with his engineer. Mr. Bourgeois asked about the pavement not being 5", when the road was built the Town of Swanton was not taking over new roads. The Town of Swanton has now adopted a policy for this. Mr. Fournier said the board is less concerned about A76 standard than meeting the Towns current standard/policy. (adopted 7/16/24). Mr. Cummings had the policy before him, Mr. Clark said he will go by the signed copy.

c) Discussion of Employee Appraisals

Mr. Clark said he was not on the board last year but previously they have done annual appraisals on employees. (Town Administrator, Road Forman, Zoning Administrator) at the time they did not have an Administrative Assistant. Mr. Bourgeois asked if the Town Clerk would be included? No, none of the elected officials they are voted in, the only thing the Selectboard could do is give them feedback, they are not employed by the Selectboard.

Mr. Clark asked the board if they want to do annual appraisals at the end of 2024 or set something up to begin in 2025. Mr. Clark said personnel files from previous employees should have examples.

Mr. Bourgeois thinks appraisals can be useful for both sides but can also be destructive. Mr. Bourgeois would like to see how they were previously done before moving forward, as well as see how other municipalities do this. These should be agreed on as a board. Mr. Savage will review personnel files to gather the previously used appraisals.

d) Set date for set up/take down of Veteran Flags for Veterans Day Observance

Mr. Savage said Veterans Day is November 11th and would recommend setting the flags as Saturday November 9th at 9 am, with a rain date of November 10th at 9am. Takedown will be November 16th at 9am, with a rain date of November 17th at 9am.

Mr. Clark said he will do the same as last year and mark them Friday night.

e) Discussion of 2025 Budget schedule

Mr. Savage and Ms. Cathy Fournier have discussed the budget process. The last three years this process has not worked. What Mr. Savage recommends is reaching out to the Village (police & fire) Missisquoi Valley Rescue, Swanton Public Library and Swanton Recreation to see when they will have their budgets completed. Then set a date, one meeting and have them all come in. Previously they had all come in separately and had to come multiple times. They would then have official numbers. Mr. Bourgeois said they would like to have these sent to them at least a week before the meeting. Mr. Clark said this is a budget not the end of year numbers. Mr. Fournier asked when the budgets have to be approved to get in the Town Report? Ms. Cathy Fournier said the 2nd week of January. Ms. Cathy Fournier said the Town General & Highway budget they can prepare. Mr. Bourgeois asked if they should include a certain percentage of an increase? Mr. Savage asked if they have received information on insurance increases yet? Ms. Cathy Fournier said it usually comes in November.

8. Community and Economic Development

None

9. Any Other Necessary Business
None

10. Correspondence

Mr. Savage received an email from Hank Lambert with an update from Swanton Beautification. Swanton Beautification planted 7 trees on Canada Street. Working with Northwest Regional Planning to apply for a grant for streetside trees. Mr. Lambert also announced Suzie Kelleher as the new Coordinator of SEP Beautification Committee. Please welcome Suzie into this role, and thanked Swanton for their continued support.

11. Public Comment (Reprise)
None

12. Upcoming Events

- a) Tuesday - October 22, 2024 - Planning Commission - 5:00 pm
Town Offices and Zoom
- b) Thursday - October 24, 2024 - DRB - 6:00 pm - Town Offices
and Zoom
- c) Monday- November 4, 2024 - Special Selectboard Meeting - 6:00 pm Town
Offices and Zoom.
- d) Tuesday -November 5, 2024, GENERAL ELECTION DAY - Polls open from
7:00 am to 7:00 pm at Village Complex - 120 First Street - Town Offices
CLOSED due to elections.

Mr. Fournier made a motion to move the first meeting in November this year to Monday November 4, 2024, at 6 pm Town Office & Zoom, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

13. Executive session (Real Estate)

Ms. Draper made a motion to enter the executive session at 7:43 pm. Roll Call Vote, Mr. Bourgeois, Mr. Long, Mr. Clark, Mr. Fournier and Ms. Draper All voted Iye.

Mr. Fournier made a motion to exit the executive session at 8:06 pm, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

Real estate No Action Taken

14. Adjourn

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to adjourn at 8:06 pm, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted by
Christina Candels-Administrative Assistant

Received and filed by:

Cathy Fournier, Town Clerk

Date