

MINUTES
TOWN OF SWANTON
SPECIAL SELECTBOARD MEETING
Town Office Building
1 Academy Street, Swanton, VT 05488
MONDAY, November 4, 2024

Present: Joel Clark-Chair, Brendan Long, Steve Bourgeois, Earl Fournier, Nicole Draper-Members, Brian Savage-Town Administrator, Christina Candels-Administrator, Suzie Kelleher, Matthew Sullivan-Swanton Village Police Chief

Zoom: No Attendance

A. Call to Order

Mr. Clark called the meeting to order at 6:01 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. Candels requested to add Liquor Control to the agenda to approve one applicant for three requests.

Mr. Savage requested to add under Old Business a bill for the 4th Street property.

D. Meeting Topics

1. Minutes

a) Regular Selectboard Meeting of October 15, 2024

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to approve October 15, 2024, Selectboard Meeting, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

2. Public Comments

None

3. Law Enforcement

a) Swanton Police Department

Chief Sullivan came before the board to share the October 2024 incident analysis. Chief Sullivan shared in October the Swanton Village Police responded to 99 incidents in the Town. The top ten incident types were as follows: 26 directed patrols, 24 traffic stops, 9 suspicious persons/circumstances, 4 citizen assists, 4 welfare/suicide check, 4 community outreach, 3 agency assist, 2 disorderly conduct, 2 crash/property damage, 2 juvenile problem. Of the 24 traffic stops 12 tickets, 21 warnings, and 2 civil tickets were issued. Also, there were 8 arrests, 10 arrest charges of 8 individuals. 2 of those arrests were associated with traffic stops. Swanton Village Police also provided 8.75 hours of additional services. Chief Sullivan said as requested they spent time providing traffic enforcement on Vt Route 105, warnings and tickets were issued.

Mr. Bourgeois asked what the arrests were for? Serious incidents? Chief Sullivan said it was a mix for drug case, DUI and outstanding warrant.

Chief Sullivan they are also busy with Officers staying up to date with the required 30 hours a year of training to keep certification. Swanton Village typically does this with Burlington Police. This summer they did the required firearms training. These training courses are required but with minimum staffing it can be difficult to get officers off the road for training.

Mr. Fournier asked if they have to pay trainers when they come? Chief Sullivan said they offer but often the departments sending cover the payroll cost or it's done on their own time, it is not covered by the state. Chief Sullivan said there is a shortage of trainers.

Mr. Fournier asked what happens if they don't get certified? Chief Sullivan said it's mandatory and the Police Academy can give you a waiver, generally for 3 months, that's all. Trainings for example: use of force, firearms, CPR, first aide, domestic violence, fair and impartial policing. The Vermont Police Academy does put some together to do via zoom.

Chief Sullivan said as mentioned last month they have one full-time officer requesting in January to go part-time. They have a prospective officer to interview. They have no prior

police experience so they would have to go to the Vermont Police Academy. That is a yearlong process and if they attend in the spring it would fall before, they are responding to calls. They have an interest in part-time.

Chief Sullivan said they are in comparison to other departments below in pay. It is a balance to pay enough and retain those employees. (St. Albans, Milton, VSP & Burlington)

Mr. Bourgeois asked if they are falling behind on the pay scale, what is the average?

Chief Sullivan said he would have to do the math but roughly 15-20% behind, but Swanton is not a union department, and the comparison are, and they have different pay scales.

Mr. Clark asked if additional services were the time on VT Route 105? Chief Sullivan said no that was him during contract time/evening commuter times. Mr. Clark asked if they had spent time following the buses? Chief Sullivan said some, but not noted this month.

Mr. Clark said it would be helpful if the additional services could be listed it would be helpful. Chief Sullivan shared the information in the report.

Mr. Fournier, if the additional services calls are from 911? No, they are typically things people come in requesting services.

Mr. Clark suggested bringing in the pay scales when they discuss the budget. Chief Sullivan said he can send that to them now.

Mr. Fournier asked if they would use the scales in the budget? Chief Sullivan said some yes, but they have not completed the budget yet. Chief Sullivan said they are also under budget this year due to the inability to fill the open position budgeted for July.

Mr. Savage asked if departments are offering a sign on bonus? Chief Sullivan said he believes Milton and Burlington are 15K and VSP is 5K. Mr. Savage said one department neighboring New Hampshire is offering 30K. They are structured and paid out overtime.

Mr. Bourgeois asked if under budget had they considered giving officers a bonus for performance, we cannot bring the pay up where it should be. Chief Sullivan said it is not something previously done, traditionally what they do is roll it over into a capital fund to purchase cruisers for example.

Ms. Draper said one of their officers visited Teen Night and they had great interactions with them, and they were grateful. Thank You.

Mr. Clark thanked them for the prompt response to the Rec field when called as well.

b) Swanton Town Health Officer

Mr. Savage said he had nothing to report.

4. Highway Department

Mr. Clark said he will update at the next meeting.

5. Old Town Business

a) Boundary Line Adjustment update

Mr. Savage said they have received no comments since the notice was posted. The 30-notice period is until 11/15. The lawyers are currently working on the deeds.

Mr. Clark said after 11/15 the paperwork can be signed and recorded.

Mr. Fournier asked if the Town paid for the surveying? Yes, but the bill as agreed is to be split between the Town, MVUSD & Brian Rowell.

b) Local Option Tax Discussion

Mr. Clark asked other board members their thoughts on this. Do they want to have a public hearing? As previously discussed, if the Village goes ahead and does that effect the Towns ability to do one. This could also present an issue if both the Town & Village do LOT separately it would mean 2 cents for the Village.

They have not had a meeting with the Village to discuss an LOT and how to split the revenue.

Ms. Draper said she has received a lot of questions/concerns from local businesses about additional tasks for reporting. Ms. Draper thinks a public hearing for business would be useful.

Mr. Clark asked if they should meet with the Village before a Public Hearing.

Mr. Fournier said yes, to see what they are planning, there is no way to have one in the Town & Village separately. There has been pushbacks in Enosburg, for example when one municipality was seeking it separately. Clarify with the Village first.

Mr. Long agreed they cannot answer those questions until they agree first.

Mr. Clark said they will get pushback because it is a tax.

Mr. Fournier said how they want to use the money will be keep for Voters.

Mr. Bourgeois said this kind of tax is imported money also, everyone who comes through the Town that spends money here will contribute, you only use it when you buy something.

Mr. Long said its also important that a lot of the Towns surrounding us have LOT. Speaking to those municipalities and what projects they have been able to fund with it will be great examples. Mr. Long said knowing how much that would raise, how many homes the Town would have to build to raise the same amount of revenue. For example, would the Town have to build 160 homes to generate the same amount of revenue from a LOT vs people coming into Swanton?

Mr. Clark said that is a great way to look at that. For example, if your taxes are \$6000, only about \$1500 of that goes to municipality the rest goes to the school budget. That would take a lot of homes/growth to make up for the previous estimate of 300K the LOT could bring to the Town/Village.

Ms. Kelleher said the Village Trustees have discussed and they agree they should proceed jointly. The Village Trustees understand if they enacted a 1% LOT, and the Town enacts a 1% all of the Village would pay 2% that is not what they want to do to businesses and taxpayers. Ms. Kelleher said Mr. Sheets-Village Manager has spoken with St. Albans Town & City. The Town was able to build their new Town Office & Highway Department with their LOT revenue.

Mr. Bourgeois said Colchester was able to build their new Recreation Facility with their LOT revenue.

Ms. Kelleher said it would be beneficial for both Town & Village to have one LOT and split the proceeds upon which they can agree.

Mr. Clark said they also discussed before that they need a legislative change to do this.

Ms. Kelleher said yes, then get the delegates on board and push this forward because Towns with Villages were left behind as its written right now.

Mr. Clark suggested the next meeting they invite the Village Trustees, and they discuss.

Mr. Savage said at a meeting he recently went to Towns with Villages did not realize this and agree the Legislature needs to be more specific in the Law.

c) Town Office Repairs

Mr. Savage shared the repairs are completed. Mr. Savage said the current cost is \$14,041.49 but they do not have a bill from the electrician, or the IT work completed. The Insurance adjuster has given an estimate claim cost of \$17,729.49.

Mr. Clark said he stopped multiple times during the process. The electrician also when working found a live wire in the wall so it was good they were able to get that fixed too.

Mr. Clark said it will be close for insurance to cover it all, but if it doesn't, they have budgeted 20K for building maintenance. Some has been used but there is enough to cover.

d) Employee Appraisal Discussion

Mr. Clark said they have in from of them several examples of employee's reviews, as well as an example of a review program. (who would do the reviews for what employees) Ms. Draper also brought the reviews used by Swanton Village and Swanton Recreation for example.

The board members will review and discuss at a later date.

e) Fourth Street Property update

Mr. Savage said they had a zoom meeting last week with the engineers to discuss the Vanadium found in the soil. This may naturally occur in the soil; they need more soil samples around the community to find out.

Mr. Clark shared a picture of agreed upon use of the 4th street property. The picture shows parking, youth fields, and shuffle ball.

Part of the discussion they had in the Zoom was knowing what they plan to use it for will determine what they need to do with the soil.

If it is naturally occurring, they may not need to do cleanup.

Mr. Bourgeois asked what Vanadium is? Mr. Clark said it is heavy metal but there is a very low tolerance for it aloud.

Once they know more from additional samples they can proceed.

Mr. Long asked if this is a concern for kids kicking around the dirt or a concern when they build these things it will bring it out of the soil? Mr. Clark said for this type of use the contamination level is very low, but it needs to be dealt with. They Town could also hire a toxicologist to present what the exposure could do.

Mr. Fournier asked if the soil needs to be removed? Mr. Clark said the cost is to truck it to a land fill that will take it.

Mr. Bourgeois asked if the level they are going by is the EPA level not the State? Mr. Clark will find out before they go forward.

Ms. Draper shared a concept that if they do need to cap a portion of the land there could be an outdoor fitness court. This was brought to her attention by their health insurance company MVP. They have identified Swanton as a great place to pioneer a fitness campaign. This might be an option.

Mr. Savage said Atlas Consulting had contracted an outside contractor to do work and they did not include it in their bill and have sent it to the Town now to be paid. The bill is in the amount of \$504.66 related to the testing of the 4th street property.

Mr. Fournier made a motion to pay Atlas Consulting the amount of \$504.66, seconded by Mr. Long. Motion carried.

6. New Town Business

a) Suzie Kelleher, Chair of the Beautification Committee, to request sustainment of the \$3000.00 contribution to the beautification of Swanton. (Mr. Clark is the treasurer for Swanton Enhancement Committee/Beautification Committee and will abstain from any vote)

Ms. Kelleher shared what the Beautification Committee was able to do with the support in Swanton in 2024. Ms. Kelleher said their budget is \$15,000. Sourced through the Towns \$3,000 contribution, \$5,000 Swanton Village Trustees', \$2,000 endowment from Dawn & Earle Taylor, \$5,000 from local donations.

This year planted the garden and pots in front of the Town Clerk's office, garden and walkway at the Swanton Public Library, planters in front and on stairs at the Library, Village Green, Veteran Memorial Park, Merchants Row, Canada St., Bobs' One Stop, St. Maries, Hair Salon, Village Complex, Bridge Boxes and by the Dick Thompson trail by the bridge. They also pay for all the flowers to be watered daily.

This year they planted 10 new trees/shrubs as they have committed to do annually. Next year they will place new pots at the library and move those ones to River Ln by the canoe access out take and add more to the Library and Town Office.

Mr. Clark said Ms. Kelleher has taken over Mr. Hank Lambert's role as chair. Mr. Lambert is working on the 2025 tree grant as well. If they receive the grant, they will take down some trees in the park and replant.

Mr. Bourgeois made a comment that this committee has made Swanton Beautiful.

Mr. Bourgeois asked if this is on the warning? Mr. Clark said it is part of the Highway budget. Mr. Fournier said it must be, because that way its only paid for by Town residents, because the Village also contributes separately.

Mr. Clark said they need to look at this as long term not every year request.

Ms. Kelleher said they have already done a pre-order for next year.

Ms. Kelleher said once the mural is painted near the VFW they will plant flowers there too.

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to add the \$3,000 request to the 2025 Highway Budget, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried. Mr. Clark abstained.

Mr. Fournier said that the Beautification Committee does such a great job they should be given \$1,000 more than the \$3,000 they are requesting. They have made the Village beautiful, and everyone agreed. Mr. Fournier said he knows the cost and they have the youth helping. It makes everyone feel better.

Mr. Bourgeois rescinded his motion, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

Mr. Fournier made a motion to add the \$4,000 request to the 2025 Budget for the Beautification Committee, seconded by Mr. Long. Motion carried. Mr. Clark abstained.

b) Recommendation of Town Health Officer to State Health Commissioner

Ms. Kelleher has submitted a letter of interest for the open position.

Mr. Fournier asked Ms. Kelleher why she is interested in this? Ms. Kelleher said most of her focus is on the Village, but speaking with Chief Sullivan he suggested having someone the officers can contact at any time would be helpful.

Mr. Fournier asked Ms. Kelleher if she has time for all of these positions? Yes.

Mr. Bourgeois asked if the position is paid? Yes.

Mr. Clark asked how many calls they get from the Police for Health Officer support? Mr. Savage said none since he has been taking care of it. Ms. Kelleher said the Health Officer assisting the Police would be helpful, for example houses they could move drugs out of if the houses are un-inhabitable. The Health Officer can assist with this.

Mr. Fournier made a motion to recommend Suzie Kelleher to the State Health Commissioner as Town of Swanton Health Officer, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

7. Community and Economic Development

Mr. Savage reported a new flower shop on First Street they have applied for permits.

8. Liquor Control Board

Mr. Fournier made a motion to exit the Regular Selectboard Meeting and enter the Liquor Control Board Meeting at 7:23 pm, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

Ms. Candels said they have an application from Stewarts Shops for a 2nd Class Liquor License, Tobacco License & Tobacco Substitute License. They have purchased the Jolly Stores. Jolly had no violations. They will be transitioning from Jolly to Stewarts Shops.

Ms. Draper made a motion to approve Stewarts Shops request for Second Class Liquor License, Tobacco License& Tobacco Substitute License, seconded by Mr. Fournier. Motion carried.

Ms. Draper made a motion to exit the Liquor Control Board Meeting and enter back into the Regular Selectboard Meeting at 7:25 pm, seconded by Mr. Fournier. Motion carried.

9. Any Other Necessary Business

Mr. Bourgeois commented he has been to the Missing Piece Bakery during their soft opening. She carries a great line of pastries. They are welcome to the downtown.

10. Correspondence

None

11. Public Comment (Reprise)

Mr. Clark commented for anyone watching get out and Vote tomorrow.

12. Upcoming Events

a) Tuesday November 5, 2024, General Election Town Office Closed- Polls open 7am-7pm Swanton Village Complex

b) Monday - November 11, 2024 - Veterans Day Holiday - Office and Operations – CLOSED

c) Tuesday - November 19, 2024 - Regular Selectboard Meeting 6:00 pm Town Office and Zoom

d) Monday - November 25, 2024 - Planning Commission 5:00 pm - Town Office and Zoom

e) Thursday - November 28 and Friday - November 29, 2024 - Thanksgiving Holiday - Offices and Operations - CLOSED

13. Executive Session (Personnel, Real Estate, Contract)

Ms. Draper made a motion to enter the executive session at 7:27 pm, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Roll Call Vote. All Iye's.

Mr. Fournier made a motion to exit executive session at 7:56 pm, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried.

No Actions Taken

14. Adjourn

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to adjourn at 7:56 pm, seconded by Mr. Fournier. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by
Christina Candels-Administrative Assistant

Received and filed by:

Cathy Fournier, Town Clerk

Date