

**MINUTES
TOWN OF SWANTON
SELECTBOARD MEETING**

**Town Office Building
1 Academy Street, Swanton, VT 05488
Tuesday, September 2, 2025
6:00 pm**

Present: Earl Fournier-Vice Chair, Nicole Draper, Steve Bourgeois, Nick Brosseau-Members, Brian Savage-Town Administrator, Cathy Fournier-Town Clerk, Christina Candels-Assistant Town Administrator, Bob Nielson, Betsy Fournier, Ron Underwood, Laz Scangas, Sargent Kyle Gagne,

Zoom: No Attendance

Absent: Joel Clark-Chair

A. Call to Order

Mr. Fournier called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Fournier led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.

C. Agenda Review

Mr. Fournier reviewed the agenda.

Ms. Cathy Fournier requested to add Library to Quarterly Budget Review.

Mr. Savage requested to add under New Town Business discussion on 2026 Budget,

Mr. Savage requested to add under Correspondence an email request.

Mr. Savage requested to add Executive Session for Real Estate.

D. Meeting Topics

1. Minutes

a) Regular Selectboard meeting of August 19, 2025

b) Special Selectboard meeting of August 26, 2025

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to approve the Regular Selectboard meeting minutes of August 19,2025 & Special Selectboard meeting minutes of August 26, 2025, seconded by Mr. Brosseau. Motion carried.

2. Public Comments

None

3. Law Enforcement.

a) Swanton Police Department

Sargent Gagne came before the board to share August 2025 incident analysis.

Of the 20 traffic stops 13 tickets and 15 warnings were issued. All but 1 ticket were associated with traffic stops.

In August there were 3 arrests of 3 individuals resulting in 4 charges, none of them were associated with traffic stops.

In August 2025 Swanton Village Police responded to 83 incidents in the Towns. The top 10 incidents were as follows: 20 traffic stops, 19 directed patrols, 8 suspicious person/circumstances, 5 agency assists, 5 motor vehicle complaints, 4 alarms, 3 family fight/domestic, 3 vin number verifications, 2 trespassing.

Swanton Village Police provided 17 hours of additional services.

Sargent Gagne said July and August typically are the busiest months.

Mr. Fournier said they have been on Bushey Rd? Yes, Chief Sullivan has been on the road monitoring traffic. The speed cart is on Bushey Rd as well.

Ms. Draper asked if the additional traffic stops on Bushey Rd were speed related? Yes.

Sargent Gagne said Chad Parah is back working for Swanton Village Police as the school resource officer (SRO) for Swanton, Highgate & Franklin Elementary Schools. This does not address the two full-time openings. The SRO is a full-time position.

Mr. Bourgeois asked if the 17 additional service hours were from a grant? No, this is part of the contract they provide if they have the availability. For example, Chief Sullivan spending time on Bushey Rd for speed enforcement.

b) Swanton Health Officer
No report provided.

4. Highway Department

Update will be provided when Mr. Clark is present.
Paving has started, new truck is on the road, old truck has been sold.

5. Old Town Business

a) Ronald Kilburn Railroad Museum update
Mr. Scangas shared a PowerPoint with pictures of the Ronald Kilburn Railroad Museum building deterioration.
Mr. Scangas said he is very disappointed in the condition of the building vs when he did the last inspection in 2011 for Ronald Kilburn. Please see attached.
The building needs serious repairs.
Mr. Scangas said the building needs to be cleaned before it can be repaired.
Mr. Bourgeois asked if they would need to work with Historic Preservation? Mr. Scangas said there is a Historic Preservation grant for \$20,000 with a deadline to apply of October 6th. Mr. Scangas is willing to assist Mr. Savage to apply for the grant. The grant will require the same amount of match from the Town.
Mr. Fournier asked if the building damage is from design or age? Not maintaining and taking care of the building.
Mr. Scangas said the report includes his report from 2011. None of the items listed in that report were completed.
Mr. Scangas said his estimator cannot provide a cost estimate by the grant application deadline. Mr. Scangas would like to ask Patrick Menard if he is available to meet him there and give him an estimate. The grant will pay for repairs and painting of repairs but not the area of the building that does not need repairs.
Mr. Scangas has shared these photos with them already.
Mr. Brosseau asked Mr. Scangas if he had reviewed the inside of the building? No.
Mr. Brosseau asked if they took down the façade, would they be able to reuse it? Mr. Scangas said he did not have a ladder to go up and look at it closely. Parts of it could be saved. Mr. Scangas said the non-track side needs to be taken down before it falls down.
Mr. Bourgeois asked who is the eyes on the ground who should be watching the building, the Historical Society? Mr. Savage said that is how this conversation started he received a call from Jay Barney, and he went to look with Mr. Barney early last spring. Mr. Savage told the board they would need a contractor to look at the building and when Mr. Scangas contacted him, he was going to be at the railroad depot for an event and asked if he could look at the building and give them a report/list of what is needed.
Mr. Scangas said in his 2011 report the building was in good shape but needed some paint. Now because none of that was completed it is rotting.
Mr. Bourgeois asked who is responsible for the oversight of the building or just the Historical Society? It is a Town owned building The Town does have an MOU with them that if taken over would not cost the taxpayers any money. Since then, the Town has put a roof on the building and pays all of the expenses. The Selectboard is responsible for the building.
Mr. Brosseau said he did not believe it is on the State register of Historical Buildings for the grant. Mr. Scangas said it is.
Mr. Brosseau said it is not on the National register.
The target completion for the grant in 2027. Mr. Scangas said the grant will not allow them to selectively pull out what they want to do, all of the work will need to be completed.
Ms. Draper said it is a reimbursement style grant so there won't be a match. Mr. Scangas said they will need to match the same amount they are asking for.
Mr. Scangas has no dollar amount right now, that is why Mr. Scangas would like to work with Mr. Menard for an estimate. Mr. Scangas will write up the scope of work to be done.
Ms. Draper said in 2023 she did a visual inspection of the building when she was there with some campers. Ms. Draper noticed rot and encouraged Mr. Scangas to check the basement. On that visit Ms. Draper said there was water damage and evidence of rodents. The holes on the outside make it easy for rodents to get in.
Mr. Fournier said they need to find a way to better manage the facility.

Mr. Bourgeois said this is a time to have a better working relationship with the Historical Society.

Mr. Bourgeois said if they are going to pursue the \$20,000 grant, they need to make sure they have the same amount to match.

Ms. Cathy Fournier said they have \$12,000 in the budget for building maintenance.

Mr. Fournier suggested using some of the Capital Reserve building maintenance funds or Special Funds to complete the project if needed.

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to have Las Scangas work with Patrick Menard and give an estimate to repair the building or whoever is available, seconded by Ms. Draper. Mr. Brosseau abstained as a member of the Historical Society. Motion carried.

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to apply for the grant, authorizing Mr. Savage to sign on behalf of the Town for grant, seconded by Ms. Draper. Mr. Brosseau abstained as a member of the Historical Society. Motion carried.

Ms. Draper made a motion to have Las Scangas be the project manager for this project, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Mr. Brosseau abstained as a member of the Historical Society. Motion carried.

6. New Town Business

a) Abatement of Taxes at request of Tax Collector

Mr. Savage shared the list of travel trailers the BCA has recommended for abatement of taxes.

Ms. Draper made a motion to abate the taxes recommended by the BCA for 2024 in the amount of \$1,132.77, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Mr. Brosseau abstained as a BCA member. Motion carried.

b) Quarterly Budget Reviews

1) Recreation Commission

Ms. Betsy Fournier came before the board to share the budget ending June 30, 2025. Ms. Betsy Fournier said they had a great spring and are on track with the budget. This does not represent any summer camps.

Mr. Bourgeois sent questions to Mr. Savage to share with Ms. Betsy Fournier, and she reviewed them.

- Is the budget ending in June? Yes
- Is the budget for the full year? Yes
- Is the income on track? Yes
- Did they increase prices? Yes
- Is there a seasonal impact on the income? Yes
- Is the loan paid off in this time period? No, that will show in quarter 3. It is listed in the equipment fund line item in the budget.
- Do you have income reported from the taxpayers? Half of the appropriation has been received. It is paid in two instalments from the Town.
- What is the correlation of income from Field Hockey vs expense in the same amount? Ms. Betsy Fournier said they have a Field Hockey program that they run the registration through Swanton Rec and they pay it out.

Mr. Bourgeois asked questions regarding liabilities. These were transfers to the general account.

Ms. Betsy Fournier said things are going good with the new bookkeeper.

Mr. Bourgeois asked if there are grant funds received, they have not reported yet?

Ms. Draper said that it will be shown in the 3rd quarter. MVSD and United Way grants. The grants limit what they can be used for as well, to prevent substance misuse.

2) Highway Department

Mr. Fournier asked if Brooklyn St work would proceed this year? Mr. Savage said as far as he knows yes. This year is about as dry as it is going to be to do this.

Mr. Bourgeois said these are helpful in knowing how close you are to the budget. These are for the first six months so ideally you will have used 45%-50% of the budget.

Mr. Bourgeois asked if the purchase of the new truck was included? Ms. Cathy Fournier said yes because you have to account for it even though the funds were included in the equipment reserve account. The account had enough to pay for the truck.

Mr. Bourgeois asked if they have any reimbursements they have not received yet? For example, the LVRT? No, things like that Ms. Cathy Fournier keeps in the Special Orders fund spreadsheet. It has nothing to do with the Highway Department.

3) General Department

Mr. Bourgeois asked if any accounts receivable have come in? Ms. Cathy Fournier said they are receiving tax payments and recording revenue.

Mr. Fournier noted zoning expenses are down. That is PC/DRB members salary.

Mr. Brosseau asked why some appropriations have been paid and not others? Ms. Cathy Fournier said they are paid once tax money comes in.

4) Swanton Public Library

Mr. Bourgeois asked what income the library has received? That will need to be requested from them. This budget is just the Towns' portion of salaries, benefits and the building.

Ms. Cathy Fournier will request current revenue from the library.

The board thanked Ms. Cathy Fournier for working on these updates.

c) Budget Prep

Mr. Savage said he did check the Consumer Price Index and things are about 3% inflation. They do not know what insurance premiums will be yet.

The agenda for budgets will be discussed at an upcoming meeting.

Mr. Savage said they can have a discussion on LOT at the next meeting.

Mr. Fournier said they also need to discuss Personal Property Tax. Mr. Fournier said he doesn't think it brings in a lot of money. For example, his brother gets a bill for \$34, is it worth it?

Ms. Cathy Fournier said in a lot more than you think.

Ms. Draper said it brings in big money from larger businesses.

Mr. Fournier asked if there was a cut-off. Yes, when it gets to a certain value if they don't buy new equipment, it will fall below the amount they are taxed.

The form is sent out to businesses owners to return.

Mr. Fournier would like to see the numbers on this.

7. Community and Economic Development

a) Approval of contract for drone services

Ms. Draper said they met with Drone VT to take pictures for them to use on the new website updates as part of Promote Swanton. They have taken the information from the brand guide to make the website more accessible.

This will come out of the Promote Swanton Budget.

Ms. Draper said the owner is Lawrence Nixon who lives in the Village.

Mr. Savage said he does excellent photos. He took pictures of the Flags in the Park.

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to approve up to \$450 and Mr. Savage to sign on behalf of the Town, seconded by Mr. Brosseau. Motion carried.

8. Any Other Necessary Business

None

9. Correspondence

a) Email requesting Quiet Zone for Harvest Lane.

Mr. Savage received a phone call from a resident and an email request from Brendan Long that the Town have this area become a Quiet Zone for trains.

Mr. Savage contacted Dan Delabruere, the Rail Bureau Director for Vermont Agency of Transportation. Mr. Delabruere detailed how this process works and that it will “cumbersome and expensive”. Mr. Delabruere estimated the cost to be over \$1 million per crossing just to install sensors, additional lights and gates and equipment needed. There would be an additional expense every year for future maintenance and monitoring costs annually for inspection.

Mr. Delabruere said eliminating the train horn can possibly add additional risk to the Town as well.

Mr. Brosseau asked how Burlington came up with the money to have quiet zones. Mr. Savage suspected it was federal money from the Champlain Flyer commuter rail. When they went out of business VTrans didn’t want to continue to fund the upkeep. The State contributes a huge amount to the railroad.

Mr. Savage will share this information with Mr. Long.

10. Public Comment (Reprise)

None

11. Upcoming Events

- a) Tuesday – Sept. 9, 2025 – Planning Commission – Town Offices – 5:00 pm
- b) Tuesday – Sept. 16, 2025 – Selectboard Meeting – Town Offices – 6:00 pm
- c) Thursday – Sept. 25, 2025 – DRB Meeting – Town Offices – 6:00 pm

12. Executive session -Real Estate

Mr. Brosseau made a motion to enter executive session at 7:18 pm, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

Mr. Brosseau made a motion to exit executive session at 7:27 pm, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

No Action Taken.

Ms. Cathy Fournier shared Suzzane Washburn stopped in and wanted to thank them for the letter sent to her recognizing her work on the Swan Pond. She really appreciated the recognition, she read it and it made her cry that someone appreciated her work.

13. Adjourn

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to adjourn at 7:28 pm, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by
Christina Candels-Assistant Town Administrator

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.

Received and filed by:

Cathy Fournier, Town Clerk

Date

