

**MINUTES
TOWN OF SWANTON
REGULAR SELECTBOARD MEETING
Town Office Building
1 Academy Street, Swanton, VT 05488
In-Person & By Zoom
TUESDAY, September 16, 2025, 6:00 pm**

Present: Joel Clark-Chair, Earl Fournier, Nicole Draper, Steve Bourgeois, Nick Brosseau-Members, Brian Savage-Town Administrator, Cathy Fournier-Town Clerk, Christina Candels-Assistant Town Administrator, Bob Nielson, Oliver Manning, Vicki Hemond, Alan Norris, Jim Foster, Ed White Sr, Lorna Meunier, Tom Parah, Cathrine Dimitruk
Zoom: Ross Lavoie-PC Chair

A. Call to Order

Mr. Clark called the meeting to order 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.

Mr. Brosseau requested to add under Old Town Business an update on the grant for the Historical Society Railroad Depot discussed at the last meeting.

Mr. Brosseau requested an update under Highway and on the line stripping on Maquam Shore Rd.

Mr. Savage requested to add under New Town Business appointment for the Swanton Recreation Commission.

D. Meeting Topics

1. Minutes

a) Regular Selectboard Meeting of September 2, 2025

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from September 2, 2025, as written, seconded by Mr. Brosseau. Motion carried.

2. Public Comments

None

3. Law Enforcement.

a) Swanton Animal Control

The board reviewed the report from AOC Benson for August 2025.

Mr. Benson reported several unlicensed dogs that he is following up on.

Ms. Draper asked if the owner is avoiding Mr. Benson for the incident on 8-26-25 should she follow up with them? Ms. Cathy Fournier said Mr. Benson is going to keep following up with the owner, the dog is a puppy so should have his first set of shots.

Mr. Clark stated Mr. Bensons communication has been good and has been following up with the owners/dogs.

4. Expenditures

a) General Orders

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to approve the General Orders for 8/20/25 to 9/16/25 in the amount of \$71,822.75, seconded by Mr. Brosseau. Motion carried.

Mr. Bourgeois asked if they are in the final payment stage of the LVRT trailhead? That will be a total of roughly \$140,000 so no more bills will come in.

This will come out of Special Orders not General Orders.

Mr. Fournier asked if the Grant for this project would come to the Town? Mr. Clark said the Town pays the bills and submits them for reimbursement to the State and they have received the payment back quick turnaround thus far.

b) Highway Orders

Mr. Brosseau made a motion to approve the Highway Orders for 8/20/25 to 9/16/25 in the amount of \$61,338.77, seconded by Mr. Fournier. Motion carried.

c) Library Orders

Ms. Draper made a motion to approve the Library Orders for 8/20/25 to 9/16/25 in the amount of \$2,870.32, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried.

d) Highway & General Payroll Orders

Mr. Fournier made a motion to approve the Highway & General Payroll for 8/20/25 to 9/16/25 in the amount of \$33,818.88, seconded by Mr. Brosseau. Motion carried.

e) Library Payroll Orders

Mr. Brosseau made a motion to approve the Library Payroll Orders for 8/20/25 to 9/16/25 in the amount of \$ 4,601.85, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

f) Special Orders

Mr. Fournier made a motion to approve the Special Orders for 8/20/25 to 9/16/25 in the amount of \$81,008.76, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

Mr. Clark said to follow up, all bills for the LVRT are paid and they submit for reimbursement to the State. Mr. Fournier asked if they are paid for each submission not until the end? No, they pay for each submission. The Town will receive 80% back from the State. Ms. Cathy Fourier keeps a spreadsheet for this project.

5. Highway Department

a) Monthly Update

Mr. Clark said the Highway crew has been working on mowing, prepped roads for paving, putting down materials after the paving, and vehicle repairs.

Working with the tree company removing trees on Maquam Shore Rd.

All of this years planned paving projects are complete. They switched Sweet Hollow Rd for Cook Rd after the bids were approved due to an error in distance and tons. They still had the same number of tons paved on the roads.

Swanton Hill Rd is completed, the road from French Hill Rd to the end of Swanton Hill Rd has been paved.

Brooklyn St. culvert, they are ready to have the easements signed to complete this project this fall. The ground water levels are low making this an ideal time to complete.

Mr. Clark notified L&D line-stripping the paving is complete and they will call when they are ready to stripe the paved rds.

Mr. Brosseau said the State has already striped Maquam Shore Rd and has since been paved, will it need to be redone or are the lines clear enough to, see? Mr. Clark said no, when you pave a road, you pave over the lines the stripes are gone. Mr. Clark did contact the State prior, and they did not notify L&D to wait on Maquam Shore Rd.

L&D said they already striped it from contacting the State to pay for the lines to be redone.

County Rd is a class 2 road, and the State has not had that road striped yet.

Mr. Clark said East Engineering is working on the Barry Rd project, the plan is to apply for a state structures grant in 2026, this will not cover the whole project.

The current culvert is 8'-10'. The current requirements from the State; it will need to have a 35'lineal opening.

Mr. Clark said they have \$1,800 left in the budget for culverts & signs, and they need to buy a culver for Bushey Rd, with a cost of \$3,000. Mr. Clark would like to take \$1,000 from the road improvements line and purchase the culvert.

Mr. Fournier made a motion to approve that transfer of \$1,000 in the budget line items for the culvert, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried.

6. Old Town Business

a) Corrective motion on abatement of taxes at the 9/2/2025 Regular Selectboard Meeting

Mr. Savage shared after listening to the recording of the 9/2/2025 Regular Selectboard Meeting the motion stating the abatement of taxes for 2025. The correct year was 2024.

Ms. Draper made a motion to corrective to change the year from 2025 to 2024, seconded by Mr. Fournier. Motion carried.

Mr. Brosseau abstained.

b) LVRT Trailhead update

Mr. Clark said the pavilion is done except the metal on the roof. The parking lot has been paved. Landscaping has been completed.

Signage is about 70% complete.

The construction of the three-sided pavilion for the porta-potties will be done this week. The contract was extended from 1 August to 19 September; they will be very close to completion then.

Mr. Fournier said the pavilion and the fence for the neighbors does look nice.

c) LVRT Trailhead Grand Opening Celebration

Mr. Savage has emailed and phoned the governor's office and has not received a response. Mr. Savage said he did speak with Representative Matthew Walker, and he will be at the State house tomorrow and will contact the governor's office and ask them to contact Mr. Savage for this event.

Mr. Savage said they still have the signs from the last planned event they can update the signs with.

Mr. Bourgeois asked if they should allow someone to have a pop-up/food truck coffee truck at the trailhead? Mr. Clark said the property through the lease is the Town's so it should be fine. Mr. Clark will check with his contact that hands the rail trails.

Mr. Clark said once they hear from the governor's office they will agree on a date.

This will be advertised.

Mr. Fournier said they should invite Senator Bernie Sanders. Yes, he helped them get the grant for the project.

Mr. Fournier said another issue is that the digital sign in the park is blocked by a sign currently. Mr. Savage will contact the village as they approve of what can be put in the park, as well as ask them to remind people when they put signs out, they cannot block the digital sign.

Mr. Fournier asked if they could get this type of sign for the LVRT trailhead opening? Yes.

d) Maple Grove decision

Mr. Clark said this is a follow up from the meeting a few weeks ago with the road and homeowners, as a board they did not make a decision on how to move forward.

Mr. Clark reminded the board of the motion made on **June 17, 2024**, regarding taking over the second section of Maple Grove Est. as follows:

Mr. Fournier made a motion that the Town of Swanton would take over the second section of Maple Grove Estates (.20 of a Mile) under the following conditions:

- The developer has the topcoat of paving put on the road
- The developer pays for core testing to ensure the road is built to A76 standards
- The developer pays all legal fees the Town will incur
- The Town of Swanton will have in writing the approved storm water permit plans and will not incur a large cost to the Town of Swanton.

Seconded by Mr. Hemenway. Motion carried.

Selectboard members discussion:

Mr. Clark said the core testing was done, and the board has reviewed and they need to decide if they are going to move forward or not.

Mr. Bourgeois asked who the stormwater permit is issued to? Bud Hemond. The Town will need to be a co-permite on this if they move forward. That agreement can say the Town will not incur cost.

Mr. Clark said as road commissioner he feels he has laid out what a requirement is for a road, laid out factually what they found regarding the road.

Mr. Fournier said the A-76 standard does not specifically call for 18" of crushed stone so the Town's standard is a little high, and this was done a long time ago with the intent of the Town taking over the road when the project was done. The road was built to the same standards as the first section. The Hemond's engineer believes it was built the same.

Mr. Fournier said the road itself is very good and he sees no drainage issues.

Mr. Fournier said it was implied in the past that the Town would take over the road, homeowners bought the property and may not have if they were not led to believe this. The third section they were told would remain private. The Town has changed its policy over the years.

Mr. Fournier said if they expect the Town to grow and stabilize the tax base, they will need to participate in the infrastructure and take over these roads.

Mr. Clark said he feels if the policy has changed and the road was 15" the board could have that discussion and approve that. The motion made by Mr. Fournier was for A-76 standard and the road does not have 15" of stone. The stone does not disappear over time; some places it is 6.5"-9".

Mr. Clark said they (the Hemond's) have had two engineers involved. Peter Mazurak, hired by Hemond's, who provided the boring, has not attended these meetings and his email says it does not meet the requirements.

Mr. Fournier said that is what it says, but the road looks like it does.

Mr. Bourgeois asked if it was implied the Town would take over the road, do we have something that says that? Mr. Fournier said they had minutes they brought, and he spoke with the former Road Forman (Harold Garrett) and he assumed it would happen.

Mr. Fournier said it was 2018, and the reply from the Town was then they were not taking over any roads.

Mr. Bourgeois asked if they take over the road, will they have any liability with the stormwater permit? The cost of the permit will be borne by the developer or HOA.

Ms. Hemond said Travis Belise is in the process of renewing the permit now.

Mr. Savage said permits are for all impervious surfaces so the Town would have to pay for the road, roofs, driveways would be the responsibility of the HOA.

Ms. Draper shared she is also concerned about the stormwater permit.

Mr. Fournier said it would be in writing they are responsible for the cost of maintaining the permit. There is no HOA currently.

Ms. Meunier said it is in the process of developing and moving forward.

Mr. Brosseau said there is other roads they partially control, if they take over this road without it meeting A-76 standards will they have pressure taking over roads in the future?

Mr. Fournier said they have a problem because they don't have a design/plan to give people when they build roads. For example, the Town of Highgate gets involved in the process earlier, so developers know what is expected of them. Mr. Clark said he agrees, and they should edit the policy and speak with the DRB when they approve developments.

Mr. Clark said he knows of a couple of other roads they have turned down before that will be back before them.

Mr. Clark opened the conversation with the property owners with new information:

Ms. Hemond said she would let the homeowners speak and is here for Bud and he would be happy if the Town stood by its word and did the right thing.

Mr. Norris shared he does not believe this should be held to a core sample and read a internet search he had regarding how to in his opinion accurately decide if a road is built correctly.

Mr. Manning asked how it has been since the last house was built on this section of road?

Ms. Hemond said 10 years. Mr. Manning shared his opinion of how roads should be checked when built, to ensure they are built with the Towns' interest. These rules and bylaws have been drafted and passed with public input, and they need to be followed. Mr. Manning agreed roads do not loose gravel if they did all of the roads in Swanton would fall apart.

Mr. Parah shared a printout of the A-76 standards and shared what words he felt were contradictory. Mr. Parah said in his opinion most Town roads are not built to the standard they are requiring this road to be.

Mr. Parah said you cannot "Promote Swanton" by not taking over roads and developments.

Mr. Foster said he is a developer and said as a developer he appreciates the planning the Town has in designing roads, what is missing is the process of inspection, so developers do not get stuck like Bud Hemond did.

Mr. Foster said there should be some kind of consideration for this road because it was built 13 years ago. This road is built the way it should have been.

Mr. Foster did not feel it was the Town or Mr. Hemond's fault this has been dragged out and the core sample does not feel they tell the whole story. The Town has more to gain by taking over the road than putting it all on the core sample and turning it down. Mr. Clark said the Town did not hire Peter Mazurak or tell him what kind of core samples to perform; he was hired by Hemond's.

Mr. Fournier made a motion to accept Maple Grove Estates the road construction as-is providing all the other requirements are met, seconded by Ms. Draper.

Mr. Fournier and Ms. Draper. Voted Iye.

Mr. Clark, Mr. Brosseau and Mr. Bourgeois voted Nay.

Motion failed.

e) Speeding issue on Bushey Road

Mr. Clark said he spoke with Swanton Village Police, and they planned to place the speed trailer on Bushey Rd.

Mr. Clark said in speaking with the Police Chief they agreed the only way they make a dent in speeding is to hire a full-time traffic controller for the Town and Village. Officers are spending their time doing things that require multiple officers.

Mr. Savage shared last week a Swanton Police Officer had to back up the Sheriff in Highgate because there were no State Police to assist.

Mr. Bourgeois said they could use help on many roads and agrees they should look into someone for traffic.

Mr. Fournier said he ran into a member of the Highgate Selectboard and they are not excited about the Sheriff's Department, it will make it more affordable if they can share something.

Mr. Clark said if you bring in Highgate you already don't have enough with just the Town and Village roads. Policing at different times for speed.

Mr. Fournier said he's trying to make it affordable as they will have to pay for regular policing.

Mr. Manning asked if the speed camera records data? Yes, in his opinion the Village and Town need to share 24/7 coverage. On Bushey Rd alone he said between 6:30-7:30 am cars are going 40-50 mph over the speed limit. It has made difference with the afternoon presence. Speed is a problem on every road.

Mr. Fournier asked if they could hire the Sheriff's department for help with speed patrol?

Mr. Savage will reach out to the Sheriff's department to see if it is something they will do.

f) Local option tax

Mr. Savage said the Village is interested in moving forward with a Town wide Local Option Tax that the Selectboard and the Trustee's can agree prior how to divide.

The bill request is still on the wall in Montpelier since last year.

The board discussed and agreed that this needs to be a discussion with the Trustees.

Before it goes before the voters, the boards will need to agree on how to spend and divide the funds.

Mr. Savage also showed a spreadsheet for State taxes collected in 2021-2023. For example, if the Town had a Local Option Tax in 2023 the Town would have collected \$293,644.31 to be split with the Village how agreed upon.

Mr. Manning and Mr. Lavoie, shared people are already paying this in other towns and Swanton is missing the opportunity.

Mr. Savage will set up a joint meeting with the Trustee's.

g) Welcome to Swanton Signs

Mr. Clark said the new signs will be in soon.

They will discuss in the Promote Swanton update where to place them.

h) Grant for Railroad Depot Update

Mr. Brosseau said at the last meeting they discussed having Mr. Savage research/apply for the grant and Mr. Brosseau is looking for an update.

Mr. Savage said he has done his part of the application. Mr. Scangas is planning to meet with Patrick Menard when he is back in Town and give them a cost estimate. Mr. Savage said it will be completed before the grant submission deadline.

7. New Town Business

a) Appointments for Planning Commission

Mr. Manning said the Planning Commission supports appointing Desireah Ladieu and Shawn Cheney.

Mr. Brosseau made a motion to appoint Desireah Ladieu and Shawn Cheney to the Planning Commission, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

b) Issues at Swanton Public Library

Mr. Savage shared a couple of weeks ago the pit in the elevator filled with water.

The Highway Department pumped the water out while waiting for the coordination of Alliance and Alpha Elevators, this took a few days.

Alliance Mechanical came and repaired the motors; this took coordination with the elevator company and an electrician.

Mr. Savage said he was told part of the problem was the pipe because the water that is pumped out through is eroded and too small.

Mr. Savage still has not received bills from any of the companies.

Mr. Savage said the elevator company said the door cannot be opened without a technician present, they can receive a fine.

Mr. Fournier asked if the pipe had been replaced? Not yet Mr. Savage has not received a call back from Alliance after calling three times. Mr. Savage will follow up with this.

Mr. Bourgeois said at a previous meeting they asked for income estimate from the library.

Ms. Cathy Fournier received the update and will print it for the board.

Mr. Brosseau said one thing that was brought to his attention was the Highway department did not have a pump when they pumped the water out and had to borrow one.

Mr. Savage said if it floods next time they cannot open the door to pump it out anymore they'll get fined.

Mr. Fournier asked if there are alarms? Yes.

This will be discussed more with the elevator company as well as alarm system for the motors and Mr. Savage will email the board with the update.

c) "Opt-in" Tier 1B Act 250 Jurisdiction

Ms. Dimitruk came to the Selectboard at previous meeting to discuss this.

Ms. Dimitruk updated that the Regional Plan is in the process of being updated. This will include two new changes. The plan will set the boundaries for the State designation areas and set a boundary of growth areas for different Act 250 requirements.

For the Town of Swanton to benefit from this the Selectboard needs to "Opt-in" to Tier 1B. This will eliminate Act 250 requirements for up to 50 units if built in the designated areas. Ms. Dimitruk shared a map of the areas this will be eligible in.

Ms. Dimitruk shared they have met with the Planning Commission and the Village, and they approve of the boundary lines.

The State law was specific to the areas this will be allowed in requiring it to have sidewalks, mixed use zoning for example. This does not eliminate the need for local permits, stormwater or wetland permits.

The Southern Growth District does not qualify because it does not have sidewalks.

Mr. Fournier made a motion to sign the resolution designation of the Village Center and Planned Growth Area Tier 1B, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

d) Emergency Management Plan 2025 Adoption

Mr. Savage said this was sent to the board to review previously. Mr. Beliveau has said not much has changed except phone numbers.

Mr. Brosseau made a motion to adopt the Emergency Management Plan for 2025, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried.

e) Appoint a new member of the Swanton Recreation Commission

Ms. Draper shared that the Swanton Recreation Commission has made the recommendation to appoint Rob Sweet to the board of directors.

Mr. Sweet is a father of two young children and lives in the Village. Mr. Sweet has been part of the rec since he was a young man and is looking to give back to his community.

Mr. Brosseau made a motion to appoint Rob Sweet to Swanton Recreation board, seconded by Mr. Fournier. Motion carried. Ms. Draper abstained.

8. Community and Economic Development

a) Update on Swanton Promotion

Ms. Draper shared that Mr. Fournier, Ms. Kelleher and herself went on the Richard Cowperthwait show to talk about Promote Swanton on 9-11-25.

Ms. Draper shared the slideshow and info they discussed.

Please see attached slideshow & information

Ms. Draper said they will send the drone photos to the website developer and are anticipating that the brochures being ready mid-October.

b) Welcome to Swanton Signs

Mr. Fournier said they have discussed this, and they would like to see these

- Route 78 by Lakewood Dr.
- Route 7 by Hudak's
- Highgate Rd
- Maple fields by the interstate

9. Any Other Necessary Business

a) Library Income Report

Mr. Bourgeois would like to see this stamped received so they know this and other documents when they come into the office.

b) Agenda items for meeting of October 7, 2025

Mr. Clark would like to have a discussion on Special Funds. What has been spent and allocated. Ms. Cathy Fournier will give the board an update.

10. Correspondence

None

11. Public Comment (Reprise)

None

12. Upcoming Events

- a) Thursday, September 18, 2025- Annual SEP Meeting- 5:30 pm- Village Complex
- b) Thursday, September 25, 2025 – DRB Meeting – 6:00 pm – Town Offices
- c) Tuesday, October 7, 2025 – Selectboard Meeting – 6:00 pm – Town Offices
- d) Tuesday, October 14, 2025 – Planning Commission – 5:00 pm – Town Offices
- e) Wednesday, October 15, 2025 – PROPERTY TAXES DUE – 5:00 pm

Mr. Clark suggested board members attend the SEP meeting if they can. The speaker will be Ted Brady, the Executive Director of Vermont League of Cities and Towns at Swanton Village Complex.

Mr. Savage shared next week he will be on vacation.

13. Adjourn

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:04 pm, seconded by Mr. Fournier. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by
Christina Candels-Assistant Town Administrator

Received and filed by:

Cathy Fournier, Town Clerk

Date