

MINUTES
JOINT SPECIAL MEETING OF
TOWN OF SWANTON SELECTBOARD
VILLAGE OF SWANTON BOARD OF TRUSTEES
TOWN OF HIGHGATE SELECTBOARD
Swanton Village Complex
120 First Street
Swanton, VT 05488

Wednesday, December 17, 2025

Swanton Selectboard: Joel Clark-Chair, Nicole Draper, Steve Bourgeois, Nick Brossea-Members, Brian Savage-Town Administrator, Christina Candels-Assistant Town Administrator

Absent: Earl Fournier- Selectboard Member

Highgate Selectboard: Ben Lowell-Chair, Richard Flint, Chad Carr-Members, Fredi Hayes-Town Administrator

Absent: Merry Souza, Vern Brosky III

Swanton Village: David Winchester-President, Neal Speer, Adam Paxman, Suzie Kelleher-Trustees, Bill Sheet-Village Manager

Community Members' Present: Josh Ramsdell, Joshua Aldrich, Quincy Fournier, Ryan Rousseau-MVR Board members, Nicki Warren, Victor Trivento, Gary Longe, Sam Fitzsimmons, Cheyenne Aldrich, Samantha Duell, Melanie Malboeuf, Alice Cota, Henery Rainville, Alexandra Bourdeau, Kimi Rappeno, Samatha Berry

Teams: Michael Roberge, Eric McDonnell, Darci Benoit, Amy Jo, Denny Pelletier, Lynn Paradis, Mathew Weisman, Keith Ploof, Tyler Robb, Liza Comiskey, Adam Young, Jon Kalb, Dylan Wright, Ashley Flynn, Adni Dillner

- Prior to the meeting being called to order everyone on Teams was required to have their full name posted and turn on cameras, those without name or unknowns were removed.

A. Call to Order

Mr. Clark called the Swanton Selectboard meeting to order at 6:07 pm.

Mr. Winchester called the Swanton Village Trustees meeting to order at 6:07 pm.

Mr. Flint made a motion to call the Highgate Selectboard meeting to order at 6:07 pm, seconded by Mr. Carr.

B. Agenda Review

No Changes.

C. Meeting Topics

a) Discussion with the Board of Directors of Missisquoi Valley Rescue, Inc

Mr. Ramsdell read a prewritten statement to everyone in attendance:

Good evening, to the Select-boards and community members of the Town of Highgate and the Town and Village of Swanton. My name is Joshua Ramsdell and I'm the Office Manager and Board Secretary for Missisquoi Valley Rescue. Beside me we have our Vice President Joshua Aldrich, Director 1 Ryan Rousseau and Director 2 Quincy Fournier.

We're here with you this evening to address allegations deemed by the VT EMS Office as quote "Sub-Standard Operations". MVR was not once notified of an investigation nor were any current employees or management questioned by the VT EMS Office at any point during the last year, regarding any of these allegations. This investigation was purely one-sided and the handling of this matter by the EMS office was sub-standard.

We would first like to address response readiness. All ambulance services in the state require bi-annual

inspections. You either pass or you fail and we passed, so we're not entirely sure why this is being brought into the limelight other than to defame our reputation and damage our integrity.

Each ambulance has 216 items that are reviewed. Only 10 items can be deficient on each ambulance, a very strict standard by the State of VT, which is commendable, however, several of the items that were deficient were things such as an outdated hard copy of the hazardous materials Emergency Response Guide. We have an app on all tablets in all of our ambulances that cover all the same information. A fire extinguisher needed an inspection and a latch that had popped out of its housing on our bench seat, which was still operable and needed some glue to be seated back in its housing. One truck didn't have a hard copy of the state protocol's also which we have on an app on all of our tablets. There were several other items that were recently expired or back ordered, none of which would have an impact on patient care due to supply redundancies and other equipment on board our truck. Once again, Missisquoi Valley Rescue PASSED our state inspections. The care we provide to the Highgate and Swanton communities was never and will never be compromised. Period.

Next we want to address the personnel concerns. Once again, we feel this investigation was one sided. All were complaints from former employees with no investigation involving current employees nor management. With that said, however, the board of directors takes these allegations seriously and has placed the President and Operations/Personnel Manager on Administrative leave while an impartial investigation from an outside source occurs. At this point in time we are unable to comment further on the personnel issues due to the ongoing investigation, but we can assure you, the select-boards will be presented with the findings and the Missisquoi Valley Rescue, Board of Directors will take the recommended actions by the investigation firm and legal counsel.

We'd like to remind everyone Missisquoi Valley Rescue has been in business for nearly 50 years, since August of 1976, formed specifically for the Town of Highgate and the Town and Village of Swanton. We're a paramedic licensed service that operates 3 ambulances with state-of-the-art equipment. We respond to over 1,800 calls annually. We also hold a regional American Heart Association Training Center, certifying/re-certifying nearly 1,000 persons, including first responders in CPR and First Aid each year. We also offer a variety of classes from VEFR to AEMT. In the last year our instructor coordinator has successfully taught and certified 9 VEFR's and 28 EMT's. That's a total of 37 new EMS providers ready for the EMS work force.

We thank you all for having this meeting with us and we would be glad to answer what questions we can.

Mr. Ramsdell shared the MVR Board of Directors has requested an impartial investigation into the personnel concerns that will be completed by a company from Plattsburgh and is expected to take roughly two weeks. Any employees who have left the organization since September of 2024 will be interviewed in the investigation. Once the investigation is complete all Swanton Selectboard, Highgate Selectboard and Swanton Village Trustees will be provided with a copy of the results as well as recommendations to proceed.

All board members were given the opportunity to ask questions regarding MVR staff and operations, that were answered by MVR board members, including current and future policies, including whistleblower and nepotism policies. Also discussed was the need for community members to be on the Board of Directors.

Board members who spoke shared positive comments regarding MVR's 50 years of service to the Swanton & Highgate communities and thanked them for their dedication and hard work.

Mr. Ramsdell shared the current MVR board is all current employees, they have openings that they would like to have filled in by community members.

Mr. Clark opened questions to the community members present & Teams that were answered by MVR board members.

Mr. Ramsdell shared MVR's current mutual aid coverage for Swanton and Highgate to answer questions regarding this change.

Mr. Ramsdell shared MVR's training and what is required for a member to respond to calls.

D. Adjourn

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to adjourn the Swanton Selectboard meeting at 6:39 pm, seconded by Mr. Brosseau. Motion carried.

Mr. Speer made a motion to adjourn the Swanton Village Trustees' meeting at 6:39 pm, seconded by Mr. Paxman. Motion carried.

Mr. Carr made a motion to adjourn the Highgate Selectboard meeting at 6:40 pm, seconded by Mr. Flint. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted by,
Christina Candels-Swanton Assistant Town Administrator

Received and filed by:

Cathy Fournier, Town Clerk

Date