

**DRAFT MINUTES
TOWN OF SWANTON
SELECTBOARD MEETING**

**Town Office Building
1 Academy Street, Swanton, VT 05488
In-Person & By Zoom
Tuesday, January 20, 2026**

Present: Joel Clark-Chair, Earl Fournier, Nicole Draper, Nick Brosseau, Steve Bourgeois-Members, Brian Savage-Town Administrator, Cathy Fournier- Town Clerk, Christina Candels-Assistant Town Administrator, Robert Nielsen, Josh Aldrich, Kimi Rapeno, Chief Matthew Sullivan, John Kaczkowski

Zoom: No Attendance

A. Call to Order

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

B. Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Clark led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

C. Agenda Review

Mr. Bourgeois requested to add under Any Other Business a discussion on his email from 12-2-25.

Mr. Savage requested to add under Any Other Business a discussion on the heating system for the Town Office.

D. Meeting Topics

1. Minutes

a) Regular Selectboard meeting of January 6, 2026

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to approve the Regular Selectboard meeting minutes from January 6, 2026, seconded by Mr. Brosseau. Motion carried.

Mr. Fournier stated in the minutes listed the incorrect amount for the carryover for the Brooklyn St. The amount was corrected to \$35,837.50.

2. Public Comments

None

3. Law Enforcement.

a) Swanton Police Department

Chief Sullivan came before the board to share the December 2025 incident analysis.

In December Swanton Village Police responded to 79 incidents in the Town. The top 10 incidents were as follows: 23 traffic stops, 20 directed patrols, 10 suspicious person/circumstance, 3 motorist assist, 3 welfare/suicide check, 2 crash/property damage, 2 driving-license suspended, 2 community outreach, 2 motor vehicle complaints and 2 agency assistance.

Of the 23 traffic stops, 24 tickets were issued and 18 warnings. There were 7 arrests of 7 individuals resulting in 16 charges. The Swanton Village Police provided 5 hours of additional services.

Chief Sullivan shared for 2025 they responded to 1062 incidents resulting in 274 traffic stops, 120 tickets and 257 warnings. There were 53 individuals arrested resulting in 90 charges.

Chief Sullivan said the call volume in total for Swanton Village Police Department was 2912 incidents, which was an approximate 10% decrease from the previous year. With 467 traffic stops that was an increase of 17% over the previous year.

Chief Sullivan shared information about traffic stops and drug activity from the previous year.

Mr. Bourgeois asked if the fines collected from traffic stops, are they able to keep that? Chief Sullivan said they do not collect the money it all goes through the Judicial Bureau. Chief Sullivan said most of that comes back to the Town vs the Village. This is an anticipated revenue in the budget.

Chief Sullivan shared the new officer hired has been working on traffic enforcement.

Mr. Fournier asked if they are still focusing on Sheldon Rd & Bushey Rd? Yes.

Chief Sullivan said they have hired the new officer and others in the pipeline.

Mr. Clark asked if they could pull individuals over without registration, inspection or insurance on their vehicles? Yes, they can give tickets and have the vehicle towed. They can issue a citation if they are criminally suspended.

They discussed vehicles they have seen on Maquam Shore Rd.

If vehicles are towed, the towing company is not required to hold it until it is legal. The vehicle owner pays the towing company.

The board discussed parking at the LVRT. That is considered a public highway because it is open to the general flow of traffic.

Mr. Brosseau asked if the masked individual is still in the area? Yes.

Mr. Clark said the LVRT is a half a million-dollar asset to the community and asks that the police routinely drive through the parking lot showing a presence. Chief Sullivan said yes, but cameras would be good too. Mr. Clark said he is working on getting cameras in the parking lot. The person who was supposed to take care of the cameras since October has not, he is looking for someone else to do so. They are still working on an ordinance to include no parking.

Chief Sullivan shared an incident of shoplifting from Hannaford's and the commonality of this and the lack of accountability from the court system.

b) Swanton Animal Control

The board reviewed the December report and noted the number of unlicensed dogs. Mr. Fournier asked what the ordinance says to do.

Ms. Cathy Fournier said some are waiting to get their dog into the vet, but there is one individual who is refusing to license his dog.

Mr. Savage said they can impound the dog but has to pay to board it. They are also concerned because if it is unlicensed its usually not vaccinated.

Mr. Savage said they need to know how strongly the board wants to enforce this? Mr.

Clark said if they have someone who is blatantly refusing and not vaccinated it is part of

there job to bring the dog in. Mr. Fournier said maybe there should be a limit on the number of times they're talked about the same dog.

Ms. Draper shared that Mr. Benson did visit the owner today with the Police escort.

Mr. Savage will follow up with Mr. Benson and let the board know.

4. Highway Department

a) Report

Mr. Clark said the Highway Crew has been busy with plowing.

The sand shed is half full, and they will mix more sand/salt as needed.

The sander they have been using that fits in the small truck was broken but the new auger should arrive tomorrow.

The issues with the controls on the loader have been repaired.

Mr. Clark said he has been approached by a couple of people asking why they don't use more salt on the roads? Mr. Clark said you can see on Maquam Shore the difference between St. Albans and Swanton. Mr. Clark will get the cost estimates to use more vs sand as they do. For example, salt is around \$120 a ton and sand are \$8.

Mr. Bourgeois said he had two calls as well but suggested more attention on the corner by Swanton Beach. Mr. Fournier said usually he is out before the plows and does not think they are that bad. Mr. Fournier suggested looking into brine. It is expensive to get set up, but cheaper to use. Mr. Clark will find out more information.

5. Expenditures

a) General Orders

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to approve the General Orders of 12-17-25 to 12-31-25 in the amount of \$10,404.49, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

b) Highway Orders

Mr. Brosseau made a motion to approve the Highway Orders of 12-17-25 to 12-31-25 in the amount of \$42,395.29, seconded by Mr. Fournier. Motion carried.

c) Library Orders

No Library Orders.

d) Highway & General Payroll Orders

Mr. Fournier made a motion to approve the Highway & General Payroll Orders of 12-17-25 to 12-31-25 in the amount of \$31,635.31, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried.

e) Library Payroll Orders

Mr. Brosseau made a motion to approve the Library Payroll Orders of 12-17-25 to 12-31-25 in the amount of \$6,309.30, seconded by Mr. Fournier. Motion carried.

f) Special Orders

Ms. Draper made a motion to approve the Special Orders of 12-17-25 to 12-31-25 in the amount of \$54,925.00, seconded by Mr. Brosseau. Motion carried.

6. Old Town Business

a) 2026 Library Building Budget Adoption

The budget was reviewed with no changes.

Ms. Cathy Fournier said the actual budget is \$313,017.99, an increase of 1.70% with the amount needed to be raised by taxes is \$250,876.02 due to savings in health insurance.

Mr. Fournier made a motion to approve the 2026 Library Building Budget in the amount of \$313,017.99; the amount to be raised by taxes is \$250,876.02, seconded by Mr. Brosseau. Motion carried.

b) 2026 Highway Budget Adoption

The budget was reviewed with no changes.

The budget Highway budget is -3.63% over last year. When you add to the Fire & Police the budget is a 1.47% increase over last year. The increase is due to 17.37% in the Police Budget. Fire Department Budget shows a decrease because dispatching will be part of the General Budget.

Mr. Clark reviewed the reserve accounts for the Truck account, Road Improvements, Engineering Services.

Mr. Fournier reviewed the Stormwater line rollover for Brooklyn St.

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to approve the 2026 Highway Budget in the amount of \$1,227,974.97; the amount to be raised by taxes is \$1,055,663.94, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

c) 2026 General Budget Adoption

Mr. Clark shared the budget amount, which includes \$50,940.00 for dispatching and said that next year that amount would be at least double that.

The budgets show a decrease vs last year except Recreation and the General Budget because of the addition of dispatching. When you combine Rescue, Swanton Library, Recreation and the General Budget all totals show a 3.28% increase.

Mr. Bourgeois said most of these costs are beyond their control.

Mr. Brosseau made a motion to approve the 2026 General Budget in the amount of \$1,080,260.89; the amount to be raised by taxes is \$887,923.55, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

Mr. Bourgeois said everyone did a great job on these budgets and stayed within the request 3% for things that were within their control.

7. New Town Business

a) Employee evaluation schedule

Mr. Clark reviewed who reports and does evaluation on who.

Ms. Candels will add the review form in the Personnel Policy. This needs to be a new section created.

Mr. Clark and Ms. Candels will add a new article to the Personnel Policy to include annual reviews be completed.

The review portion will be removed from the Salary Increases in the current draft.

The Selectboard will evaluate the Town Administrator and the Zoning Administrator.

The Town Clerk will evaluate the Assistant Town Clerk.

The Town Administrator will evaluate the Assistant Town Administrator.

Salary increases will remain decided by the Selectboard for Town employees annually. They will retain the option to increase individuals/merit raise. Mr. Bourgeois preferred the option of giving an employee a one-time bonus vs increasing their salary. The Town does not have a matrix of salaries to tie performance in order to tie raises to performance.

The plan is to have these evaluations completed for the Second meeting in February. The Selectboard members will bring their thoughts for Town Administrator and Zoning Administrator reviews and have an executive session meeting with the Selectboard members 2-17-26 at 5pm. They then will meet with the Town Administrator. Mr. Bourgeois will not be available but will send his input to Mr. Clark.

b) Personnel Policy review

Ms. Candels shared the only difference in this draft is the change in vacation time earned. This was changed to become more in line with other Towns. Previously you earned vacation time at 1-, 5-, 15- & 25-year intervals. The suggested change is every 5 years. This would only affect one employee receiving an extra week because of his years of service. This was due to a conversation with Mr. Clark and Ms. Cathy Fournier. These changes will be sent out to the Selectboard.

Mr. Fournier asked regarding boot purchases for the Highway crew if they needed to purchase boots at the two locations listed or if they go over the amount do they have to pay for the difference? No one has gone over that amount, and they can be purchased elsewhere and reimbursed. The board discussed the amount of \$150.00 and agreed it has been that price for a long time and with the increase costs discussed changing it to \$175.00. This was agreed on and will be updated.

Mr. Brosseau asked if the HR representative, Selectboard member, should be added to the policy? It changes each year.

Mr. Clark said his understanding of the reason they have a representative is because if the Selectboard needs more information that person would take care of that, they are there to handle personnel issues for the Selectboard. If an employee has an HR issue they should first speak with their supervisor. This is the way this liaison was previously used.

c) Approve Warning for Annual Town Meeting

The board discussed the wording for the warning on the warning for the Local Option Tax and agreed to add to be used for Capital Projects and Capital Repairs. This will be stated in the agreement with the Village.

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to approve the Warning for Annual Town Meeting, seconded by Mr. Brosseau. Motion carried.

d) Set date for Public Meeting – Local Option Tax

The board discussed and agreed to contact the Village to see if this could be added to their regular meeting 2-9-26. Mr. Savage will follow up and create a PowerPoint for the meeting.

e) NRPC Zoning District Map

Ms. Candels shared the zoning maps that have been approved by the Planning Commission. They need to be signed by the Selectboard Chair and the Town Clerk. Ms. Candels shared the district changes.

Mr. Fournier made a motion to approve the NRPC Zoning District Maps that the Planning Commission has already approved, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

f) Authorization for the Delinquent Tax Collector to Hire Vaughn Comeau for Tax Sales
Ms. Candels said she received a phone call from DTC Ms. Cheney stating she needed the board's approval to hire Mr. Comeau for the Tax Sales as done in previous years.

Mr. Fournier made a motion to have the Delinquent Tax Collector hire Vaughn Comeau for Tax Sales, seconded by Mr. Brosseau. Motion carried.

Mr. Bourgeois said Mr. Comeau does a great job, but asked, does the statute regulate how much Mr. Comeau can charge for this? Mr. Savage said he believes so, it is spelled out. Mr. Comeau has to do title work on the properties before they can be sold at tax sales, and the legal fees are collected at the tax sale. Most people will pay their taxes once they get notice of the sale.

g) Winter Road Policy – Mailboxes

Mr. Clark shared an email with information regarding mailboxes damaged by the snowplows. This only happens a handful of times a year, the Highway crew is very careful. Mr. Clark shared a drafted mailbox proposal.

Mr. Clark thought they should consider changing the policy to include replacement of broken. The current policy says they will not fix them.

Mr. Clark shared his thoughts to be:

- 1) Replacement will be with a basic post and box provided by the Town. If someone wants a fancier mailbox, we will reimburse the homeowner up to \$65.00.

Installation will be by the homeowner.

- 2) Worn or previously damaged boxes will not be replaced by the Town. This determination will be made by the Road Foreman and the Road Commissioner.

This would cost less than \$1,000.00 a year as an act of goodwill to the taxpayers.

Mr. Bourgeois, Mr. Brosseau, Ms. Draper and Mr. Clark agreed.

Mr. Fournier was not in favor but agreed with the board.

Mr. Clark will update the policy and bring it back to the board members for review and approval.

h) Railroad Museum discussion

Mr. Brosseau shared the visitors' log information for 2025. In 2025 he counted from May 10th to October 10th 215 people who visited the Railroad Depot Museum.

Mr. Clark said they should find out what the cost of the utilities are for the building so everyone knows.

8. Community and Economic Development

a) Promote Swanton update

Ms. Draper said she is still waiting to hear from Ecopixel about the branding work they have been working on and an estimate for wayfinding, Ms. Draper hopes to have this for the next meeting.

Mr. Fournier said they will schedule another round of visits to local businesses once they have the wayfinding information and street scaping plans from the Village.

Mr. Savage shared the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce is holding a chamber mixer at Devine Treasures Thursday, January 22nd 5:30 pm-7:30 pm.

Mr. Bourgeois said he had seen the video from the Vermont Public Town Hall held at the library last week, it was good to see. There is a lot going on.

9. Next Meeting Agenda Items

a) Proposed Health and Safety Ordinance, Loitering Ordinance & Winter Roads update.

10. Any Other Business

a) Email Communication from Mr. Bourgeois 12-2-25.

Mr. Bourgeois sent an email requesting an update from the Rec Department after they authorized \$10,000.00 to begin looking at designs. This was taxpayer money and should know how it was used.

Mr. Bourgeois said he sent an email with thoughts on 12-2-25 to Mr. Clark and Mr. Savage regarding the vehicle and expenditures. Mr. Clark shared it after the last meeting. Mr. Bourgeois said he will send an update to Mr. Clark and Mr. Savage they can share it.

b) Town Office Heating System

Mr. Savage said they have received the energy audit from Vermont Gas since the last meeting. The report shared many areas of concern. Most importantly the boiler for the building is roughly half the size it should be and the lack of insulation in areas as well as between the floors. (The second floor of the building is not heated) The thermostat was replaced in the clerk's office and has helped a little. New ones have been ordered for the rest of the building also. Mr. Savage would like to put an RFP out to plumbers/mechanical company to get the cost to fix the heating system. The second thing is to have the weatherization work done listed in the report that can help.

Mr. Clark said they also need an estimate for insulation between the 1st and 2nd floors. This will save costs as well. The heating system should be planned for spring/summer when they are not in use. The building should have two boilers in the event one fails one keeps minimal heat.

A mechanical contractor can figure out the heat load and what is required for boilers.

Mr. Savage will get estimates for the insulation and speak with Las Scangas.

11. Correspondence

None

12. Public Comment (Reprise)

None

13. Upcoming Events

- a) Thursday – January 22, 2026 – 6:00 pm – DRB – Town Offices
- b) Tuesday – February 3, 2026 – 6:00 pm – Selectboard Meeting – 6:00 pm – Town Offices
- c) Monday- February 23, 2023-6:00 pm-Informational Meeting-Swanton Village Complex

14. Adjourn

**Mr. Fournier made a motion to adjourn at 7:30 pm, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois.
Motion carried.**

Respectfully Submitted by
Christina Candels-Assistant Town Administrator