

**DRAFT MINUTES
TOWN OF SWANTON
SELECTBOARD MEETING
Town Office Building
1 Academy Street, Swanton, VT 05488
In-Person & By Zoom
Tuesday, March 17, 2026**

Present: Joel Clark-Chair, Nicole Draper, Earl Fournier, Nick Brosseau, Ronald Underwood-Members, Brian Savage-Town Administrator, Cathy Fournier-Town Clerk, Christina Candels-Assistant Town Administrator, Chief Matthew Sullivan, David Horton, Bob Nielsen, Amy Raymond

Missisquoi Valley Rescue Board Members: Josh Ramsdell, Josh Aldrich, Michele Deuell, Alice Cota, Heather King

Zoom: Bonnie

A. Call to Order

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

B. Pledge of Allegiance

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

C. Agenda Review

Mr. Savage requested to add proposed contract for Police for 2026 be added under New Business.

D. Topics

1. Minutes

a) Special Organizational Meeting of March 4, 2026

Ms. Draper made a motion to approve the Special Organizational Meeting minutes of March 4, 2026, as written, seconded by Mr. Brosseau. Motion carried.

2. Public Comments

Mr. Clark shared keeping Vermont guard members and other military personnel around the world in our thoughts, as well as to all the people adversely impacted by the war going on.

Mr. Clark shared all the people of Irish decent in our country to enjoy the holiday, have a great time and be careful going home.

3. Law Enforcement.

a) Swanton Police Department

Chief Sullivan came before the board to share February 2026 Swanton Village Police incident analysis for February 2026 as follows.

Swanton Village Police responded to 162 incidents, resulting in 82 traffic stops, 34 direct patrols, 11 property watches, 5 suspicious persons, 3 crashes, property damage, 3 motorist assists, 3 agency assists, 3 family fight/domestic, 2 citizen assists, 2 alarms.

In February there were 3 arrests of 3 individuals resulting in 14 charges. These were related to traffic and eluding police from traffic stops resulting in multiple charges. Chief Sullivan shared officers have picked up extra shifts under Governors Highway Safety, and this is greatly increasing traffic patrol, resulting in 46.75 hours of additional service hours.

Chief Sullivan shared these Governors Highway Safety hours are not required to be kept in Swanton, this is why people have been seeing Swanton Officers on the interstate and outside of Swanton. Mr. Savage clarified officers have Statewide jurisdiction as well.

Mr. Clark shared the report including a great number of registration displays. Chief Sullivan said yes, they can no longer print them off themselves because they need to be cardboard issued. This also requires people to pay the taxes to register vehicles.

Mr. Fournier said there was a lot of fines, does that money come back to the Town? A small fraction of it does, as well as fines and points that can be adjusted by the judge in the event it is appealed to traffic court.

b) Swanton Animal Control

The board reviewed the ACO report. Mr. Benson is still trying to find a kennel to take animals if needed.

Mr. Underwood said he spoke with Mr. Benson and shared the Town needs new kennels at the Town garage to keep dogs if needed, the current ones are not adequate. Mr. Benson found two on marketplace and the cost was \$550 for both. New they would cost \$1200 for two at Tractor Supply. The board discussed and agreed to have Mr. Benson purchase the used ones or two new if needed. Mr. Underwood will follow up with Mr. Benson to take care of them.

Mr. Fournier made a motion to approve spending up to \$1200 to buy larger kennels, seconded by Mr. Brosseau. Motion carried.

Ms. Cathy Fournier said the Town has an account at Tractor Supply to purchase so they will be tax exempt as well.

Mr. Underwood shared the dog bite incident from 2/5/26 that dog is no longer in Swanton.

Mr. Savage shared the vaccine clinic for dogs/cats went well and the numbers will increase each year if they continue to offer the clinic.

c) Swanton Health Officer Report

The board reviewed the Health Officers Report with no questions.

4. Highway Department

a) Report

Mr. Clark shared his Highway Department report. All vehicles are running well.

They ordered 6 tires for two vehicles, tree removal and vehicles maintenance.

Last week with the rain they did some sweeping, this is easier with the rain causing less dust.

Mr. Clark said the permits from Agency of Natural Resources and Army Core of Engineers were completed for the Barry Road culvert. Mr. Savage is working on

construction easements from the two landowners involved. Mr. Clark anticipates this going out to bid for completion in early 2027.

Mr. Clark said trees are a bigger problem than anticipated, they can do some themselves some need to be contracted out.

Mr. Clark and Mr. Lapan met with Vtrans District 8 and discussed the structures grant, and it is due April 15th. The State has a lot of trees to take care of as well. They stated the guardrail on VT Route 78 would not be done until the road is redone.

Mr. Clark said they also discussed sign replacements and sand vs salt on the roads.

Mr. Clark said there is a large poster at the Highway garage that shows all Town culverts.

5. Expenditures

a) General Orders

Mr. Brosseau made a motion to approve the General Orders of February 18, 2026, to March 17, 2026, in the amount of \$66,566.38, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

b) Highway Orders

Ms. Draper made a motion to approve the Highway of February 18, 2026, to March 17, 2026, in the amount of \$62,931.41, seconded by Mr. Underwood. Motion carried.

c) Library Orders

Ms. Draper made a motion to approve the Library Orders of February 18, 2026, to March 17, 2026, in the amount of \$5,322.25, seconded by Mr. Brosseau. Motion carried.

d) Hazard Mitigation Orders

Mr. Brosseau made a motion to approve the Hazard Mitigation Grant Orders of February 18, 2026, to March 17, 2026, in the amount of \$10,500.00, seconded by Mr. Underwood. Motion carried.

Mr. Fourier asked if this was all reimbursable from FEMA grant? Yes. Mr. Savage shared the State visited the property last week and was satisfied.

e) Highway & General Payroll Orders

Mr. Underwood made a motion to approve the Highway & General Payroll Orders of February 18, 2026, to March 17, 2026, in the amount of \$38,268.45, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

f) Library Payroll Orders

Mr. Brosseau made a motion to approve the Library Payroll Orders of February 18, 2026, to March 17, 2026, in the amount of \$11,131.78, seconded by Mr. Underwood. Motion carried.

g) Special Orders

Ms. Draper made a motion to approve the Special Orders of February 18, 2026, to March 17, 2026, in the amount of \$5,397.40, seconded by Mr. Underwood. Motion carried.

6. Old Town Business

a) Discussion with the Swanton Listers relative to re-appraisal

Mr. Horton came before the board to share they sent the RFP for a Townwide reappraisal to all 14 appraisal firms, giving them 60 days to submit a proposal, and they did not receive any proposals.

Mr. Horton said 54% of the Towns in the State are scheduled for reappraisal and there are only 14 approved firms.

The State is aware of the situation.

Mr. Horton said they have been advised by the PBR department to resubmit the RFP to all 14 firms in 6 months.

Mr. Horton shared how the State deems a Town needs reappraisal and compliance. Swanton is not being penalized because they are following the direction given by the State.

Mr. Horton shared current numbers are based on the 2007 reappraisal and this is what causes the CLA to decrease.

Mr. Horton shared what CLA and COD numbers/terms mean for the Town.

Ms. Raymond shared her property values and research from neighboring properties values and that she does not feel the sales of 20 years ago and current are equitable.

Mr. Clark said the Selectboard cannot solve these property values and does not take appeals for property values.

Ms. Raymond left her information with the selectboard members, and feels the appraisals are all over the board and there is not a consistent formula used.

b) Discussion with members of the Board of Missisquoi Valley Rescue, Inc.

Mr. Ramsdell and Mr. Aldrich came before the board to seek any further questions from the investigation. The board members did not have any.

Mr. Fournier said MVR is a private organization and has been for years and what they need to ensure is this doesn't affect the service or community support.

Mr. Ramsdell said this is why they are being transparent.

Mr. Ramsdell shared the new governance structure, the board and how employees can grieve differences. Employees cannot be on the on the board and in the management structure.

The board is made up of 7 individuals. 4 of them are community members and 3 employees. Community board members are Heather King, Michele Deuell, Alice Cota and Marissa Murphy.

Mr. Ramsdell said the management team is made up of a Chief, Assistant Chief and two Captains. Mr. Ramsdell is interim chief.

Mr. Ramsdell said since these changes their roster has grown, and 2 previous employees have returned.

Mr. Aldrich said the members of MVR voted in all positions.

Mr. Clark asked if the purchase of the new building is done? No, they are waiting for an appraisal, if this goes thought they anticipate closing on the sale in April.

Mr. Clark asked if they anticipate the 2027 budget going up for this facility? No, they budgeted for that this year.

Mr. Clark asked how mutual aid is determined? Mr. Ramsdell shared how the mutual aid matrix is designed. Amcare does cover a majority of Swanton for mutual aid.

Mr. Brosseau asked if they use a matrix for non-emergency events? No, the hospital decides who to transfer.

Mr. Ramsdell stated in the drafted contract that the request for financial audit requirement for 2023, 2024 & 2025 is not feasible because they did not budget for it. They have been quoted at \$45,000.00 to \$60,000.00 to complete this. Moving forward they would be more than happy to allocate for an annual audit. Mr. Ramsdell has not seen this request in terms of contracts on other communities' contracts.

Mr. Clark this has come up at the advice of others and from the Town attorney because they have never had one.

Mr. Fourier asked if they have the money in the budget for one year? No, they spent \$15,000.00 on the investigation that was not in the budget, but fully support having an audit.

Mr. Clark suggested putting the request in writing back to the Selectboard.

Mr. Ramsdell said they are more than willing to attend meetings regularly with call stats and information. MVR will come to the Selectboard quarterly with an update.

c) Update on meeting with Swanton Recreation Commission

Mr. Clark said the Selectboard met with the Recreation Commission regarding a location for a facility down by the fields or on the 4th street property. The Recreation Commission decided they would like to proceed with the plan on the 4th street property.

Mr. Clark said he did ask Cross Consulting to draft floor plans, elevations and a site plan.

Mr. Clark said that district in the Bylaws requires 200' setbacks on all sides for a recreational facility. Mr. Clark reached Mr. Lavoie and said these setbacks would not work on either site. Mr. Clark suggested when they come before the board for changes that be address.

Mr. Clark let Atlas Engineering know this plan for 4th street property so they can move forward with the plans.

Mr. Clark said it was very productive and the board is happy to be moving forward.

d) Swanton Public Library Elevator pump update

Mr. Savage said the work was completed on Friday. The elevator company did come earlier because the elevator was not working.

The electrician put the new lighting in the vestibule at the same time.

Mr. Clark said the pump has a warning system should there be an issue.

The next thing they need to do is an RFP for the pipe and some erosion control and sealing in the elevator shaft.

Mr. Fournier suggested adding some kind venting the area for moisture.

Mr. Clark will look at options and get back to the board.

7. New Town Business

a) Request from Swanton School relative to donation – 6th Grade Graduation

Mr. Savage shared an email request for a donation for the 6th grade graduation celebration.

Ms. Draper shared what they have done in the last few years to celebrate.

Ms. Draper said the school would greatly appreciate any amount of donation.

Mr. Fournier made a motion to appropriate \$250.00 donation to the Swanton Elementary 6th Grade Graduation Celebration, seconded by Mr. Brosseau. Motion carried.

b) Discussion of Appointment of an Enforcement Officer for Public Health and Safety Officer

Mr. Savage said this Ordinance will require an enforcement officer who can issue a ticket and will need to be set up with the Judicial Bureau, Mr. Savage can take care of that.

Mr. Savage has spoken with Ms. Kelleher, the Town's Health Officer, and she is willing to be the Public Health and Safety Officer as well for a stipend of \$150.00 per month.

The board discussed how this ordinance will work with her Health Officer duties as well and the Fire Chief. This ordinance is effective April 15th.

Mr. Brosseau asked if they should put a posting out for the position? The board agreed that this works having one person as the Health Officer and Public Safety Officer to enforce, essentially combining the positions vs having two. The position will be combined.

Mr. Fournier made a motion to combine the positions and increase the stipend by \$150.00 a month, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

c) Discussion and possible adoption of Town of Swanton Procurement Policy

Mr. Savage previously passed this policy out for the board to review.

Mr. Brosseau said the only change is replacing the name of the Purchasing Policy to become the Procurement Policy? Yes, and adding pages for required regulations for grants.

Mr. Clark suggested Mr. Savage or Ms. Candels share the Retention Policy for grants, so everyone knows how long paperwork is kept for grants.

Mr. Brosseau made a motion to approve the Swanton Procurement Policy, seconded by Mr. Underwood. Motion carried.

d) Local Option Tax Policy and MOA with Village

Mr. Clark asked this to be added so they can start drafting policy and the MOU.

Mr. Savage shared he notified the commissioner of taxes and spoke to the person in charge of Swanton's LOT, to start the process.

Mr. Fournier said the MOU with the Village should be simple.

Mr. Fournier thinks there should be a limit on how much they can spend without voter approval, unless they want to bring before the voters to use some of the money to reduce the budget even though this is not what it was intended for.

Mr. Clark said they had public hearings stating what they would use the money for.

e) Town Office Asbestos Testing Result and Removal Proposal

Mr. Fournier said the proposal does not say if they remove the asbestos they will need someone else to put some insulation back in the space. Therefore, only sending someone in once.

Mr. Fournier asked if they would need to remove the asbestos before the furnace can be replaced? Mr. Clark said they could replace them without disturbing the asbestos but the asbestos needs to be removed and see if they can insulate when there in there.

Mr. Savage is waiting for confirmation whether the building can be open during the removal.

Mr. Fournier made a motion to approve the removal of asbestos from Complete Demolition in the amount of \$6,210.00 as presented, seconded by Mr. Brosseau. Motion carried.

f) LVRT Grand Opening (set date/time, invites)

Swanton Recreation will lead this event.

The board discussed and agreed to have the event on Saturday, May 16, 2026, at 10:00 am.

Mr. Clark said there is money in the LVRT line in the budget for refreshments, supplies and advertising.

g) Police Contract

Mr. Savage shared the drafted contract. The only noted changes from last year were the dates and the amount.

Mr. Fournier made a motion to approve the Swanton Village Police Contract, in the amount of \$574,113.72, seconded by Mr. Underwood. Motion carried.

h) Missisquoi Valley Rescue Contract

Tabled until next meeting.

8. Liquor Control Board Meeting

Ms. Draper made a motion to recess the Regular Selectboard Meeting at 7:44 pm and enter the Liquor Control Board Meeting, seconded by Mr. Fournier. Motion carried.

Hog Island Market

Second Class

Tobacco

Campbell's Bay Inc.

Second Class

Tobacco

Badermann Enterprises LLC

Second Class

Tobacco

Tobacco Substitute

Irons & Ale at the Club LLC

Outside Consumption

First Class

Third Class

Ms. Cathy Fournier said none of them have any violations.

Mr. Fournier made a motion to approve the liquor license renewals as presented, seconded by Mr. Brosseau. Motion carried.

Ms. Draper made a motion to adjourn the Liquor Control Board Meeting at 7:45 pm and reenter the Regular Selectboard Meeting, seconded by Mr. Fournier. Motion carried.

9. Community and Economic Development

a) Promote Swanton update

Mr. Fournier said the website update is complete.

Ms. Draper shared all the changes and what they looked like in the draft and the additional changes planned.

Mr. Underwood asked if there is a way to get text message updates vs emails? Ms. Draper will find out.

This will not go live until the Selectboard and the Village Trustee approve the new design.

Mr. Brosseau made a motion to approve the new updated website design, seconded by Mr. Underwood. Motion carried.

10. Next Meeting Agenda Items

* Route 207/Bushey Rd Public Hearing 7:00 pm.

* 2024 Annual Audit update

* 2nd meeting of April quarterly budget updates

11. Policies for Review

- a) For April – Road and Bridge Standards
- Fund Balance Review Policy
- Balance Model Budget Policy

12. Correspondence

13. Public Comment (Reprise)

None

14. Upcoming Events

- a) Thursday – March 26, 2026 – DRB Meeting – Town Offices – 6:00 pm
- b) Friday – April 3, 2026 – Good Friday – Offices and Operations – CLOSED
- c) Saturday – April 4, 2025 – Easter Egg Hunt at Swanton Rec. Jewett St. Time TBD
- d) Tuesday – April 7, 2026 – Regular Selectboard Meeting – Town Offices – 6:00 pm
- f) Tuesday- April 14, 2026- MVSD School Budget Re-Vote Village Complex 7am- 7pm

15. Executive Session – for discussion of personnel

Mr. Brosseau made a motion at 7:57 pm as follows: 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, seconded by Mr. Underwood. Motion carried.

Mr. Brosseau made a motion as follows: 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, seconded by Mr. Fournier. Motion carried.

Mr. Fournier made a motion to exit executive session at 8:17 pm seconded by Mr. Underwood. Motion carried.

No Action Taken.

16. Adjourn

Mr. Fournier made a motion to adjourn at 8:17 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.