

**MINUTES
TOWN OF SWANTON
SELECTBOARD MEETING
Town Office Building
1 Academy Street, Swanton, VT 05488
Tuesday, April 7, 2026, 6:00 pm
Public Hearing on Bushey Rd./Highgate Rd. Scheduled for 7:00 pm**

Present: Joel Clark-Chair, Earl Fournier, Nicole Draper, Ronald Underwood, Nick Brosseau-Members, Brian Savage-Town Administrator, Cathy Fournier-Town Clerk, Christina Candels-Assistant Town Administrator, Bob Nielsen, David Hubbard, Carol Hubbard, Jenn Desautels, Nikki Centerbar, Josh Ramsdell, Josh Aldrich, Kyle Grenier

Zoom: Denny

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. Savage said he had the Swanton Village Police contract ready to be signed by Mr. Clark.

D. Meeting Topics

1. Minutes

a) Regular Selectboard meeting of March 17, 2026

Ms. Draper made a motion to approve the March 17, 2026, Regular Selectboard meeting minutes as written, seconded by Mr. Brosseau. Motion carried.

2. Public Comments

Mr. Clark asked everyone to keep all military members and families in your thoughts and prayers during this tumultuous time.

3. Law Enforcement

a) Animal Control Report

The board reviewed Mr. Benson's report.

Mr. Brosseau asked if Mr. Benson had found a boarding facility for the Town?

Mr. Savage will follow up with Mr. Benson and let them know.

b) Health Officer Report

The board reviewed Ms. Kelleher's report with no questions.

4. Highway Department

a) 2027 Class II Highway and Structure Grant Applications

Mr. Clark said the grant applications are due 4/15/26 and are ready to be submitted.

Mr. Clark said they intend to apply for the Class II Highway Grant to pave a portion of Lake Rd. The Structures Grant will be towards the Barry Rd culvert project.

Mr. Clark said one of the plow trucks is at Charlebois having work done.

5. Old Town Business

a) Discussion with Missisquoi Valley Rescue – 2026 Contract

Mr. Ramsdell & Mr. Aldrich came before the board to discuss the contract.

Mr. Clark said they received the details about how much it will cost for an audit to be completed as the board requested MVR send them.

Mr. Clark opened it up to comments from the board members.

Mr. Fournier said they don't have the money to do three years? Mr. Ramsdell said no, they agreed to add it to the budget going forward.

Mr. Clark said should Highgate share that cost? Mr. Ramsdell said they are currently in a three-year contract until 2028; they cannot add this until the next contract renewal.

Mr. Clark clarified the cost for a three-year audit? \$60,000.

Mr. Ramsdell said their current accountant files their 9-90's and does their books. They have been using this new firm since 2025. Previously they used Tabs Inc. When the new accountant took over, they did review the three previous years.

Mr. Clark said they need to decide whether to leave or remove the audit requirement in the contract and do we stay with three years of audits or cut it down.

Mr. Ramsdell asked if there are any other services they contract with, they require an audit to be done? Police and Fire contracts are with the Village, and yes, they are audited every year. Paving contracts are done competitively.

Mr. Ramsdell said they've been in business for fifty years and never done it but agreed it's something they need to do.

Ms. Draper said it's providing transparency to the taxpayers.

Mr. Fournier said with the controversy surrounding the organization it would be good thing to do.

Mr. Fournier & Mr. Brosseau said they would be satisfied with adding a 2025 audit requirement be done in 2027.

Ms. Draper asked if their current accountant could provide an internal audit? The contract says a CPA audit. Yes, but they could change that to the wording to an internal audit.

Moving forward 2025 & 2026 can be added to next year's budget done by a CPA.

Mr. Ramsdell said because they had issues with Tabs, their new accountant did go over 2023, 2024 & 2025.

Mr. Savage said having another firm look at it is called Pro Forma, not an audit.

Mr. Fournier asked if they were provided with a report on this? Mr. Ramsdell said he will request this from them.

Mr. Clark said they can then edit the contract to include this. The board members all agreed with this change.

Mr. Clark said they are currently in an agreement with MVR for services, but stated they should pay them for January, February and March.

Mr. Ramsdell said they are doing training with the new employees and plan to close on the new building 4/17/26.

Mr. Fournier asked how much the mortgage would be? About \$40,000 a year, which is in the budget.

Mr. Ramsdell will submit a letter to Ms. Cathy Fournier to process a payment.

b) Update on meeting with Swanton Recreation Commission of 3/31/2026

Mr. Clark shared at the meeting they reviewed the floor plan/site plan provided by Cross Consulting Engineering regarding a new rec building.

Mr. Clark said they picked a site plan and they're going to look at the plans for additional parking.

They have made suggested changes, and Cross will revise the plans. Then this will be sent back to them.

Mr. Clark asked about the type of flooring in the gymnasium? Ms. Draper will get the information to Mr. Clark.

Mr. Brosseau asked if they would have a small community space in the building? Mr. Clark said there is no specific room in the plans, anything larger would need to be held in the gymnasium. The cost would be significantly higher if they added a room for that.

c) Town Office Building issues update

Mr. Savage said the blow test was done by Vermont Gas. That report is not done yet, but for the Town to get any grants three things need to be done.

- 1) Condemnation pump from the boiler must drain to the sewer. (currently it "drains" on the floor).
 - Mr. Clark is going to look at this.
- 2) Asbestos abated from the basement ceiling tiles & pipe insulation in crawlspace.
 - This is scheduled to be removed in May.
- 3) Before insulation can be installed in the attic, a licensed electrician must sign off that the knob and tube is disconnected from any power source.
 - This was done Monday, waiting for the report from the electrician.

d) Update for land swap and Maple Grove motion to dismiss & Land Swap with Mr. Rowell.

Mr. Savage shared that he received an update from the Town attorney that Mr. Rowell is not returning calls to schedule a time to finalize this. The paperwork and attorneys are ready.

Mr. Clark recommended Mr. Fournier reach out to Mr. Rowell to see if he will help get this finalized.

Mr. Fournier said he will speak with him again but suggested just having the attorneys schedule the closing.

Mr. Savage shared a copy of the appeal to the environmental court for the motion to dismiss the case from the landowners in December. Mr. Savage was notified last week.

e) Status of Town Audits

Ms. Cathy Fourier said they have the draft of the 2024 audit and will send the information.

Once that audit is completed, they will begin the 2025 audit.

f) Cpl. Leonard Lord Historic Site Marker Dedication

Mr. Clark said the ceremony starts at 1:00 pm in Riverside Cemetery.

Cpl. Lord was the first Vermonter killed in WWI. There was a ceremony held in Veterans Memorial Park in 2018 on the 100th anniversary.

This event is coordinated by the State, Swanton Cemetery Commission and the VFW.

g) Sign the contract with Swanton Village Police

Mr. Savage shared the contract with Mr. Clark for him to sign. This has already been approved.

6. New Town Business

a) Letter of Support for the Village of Swanton NBRC Grant Application

Mr. Savage shared this grant is for the Village to apply for funding towards traffic improvements.

Mr. Brosseau made a motion to support the NVRC Grant Application letter of support, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

b) Liquor Control

Mr. Fournier made a motion to recess the Regular Selectboard Meeting and enter into the Liquor Control Board meeting at 6:36 pm, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

Liquor and Tobacco License Renewals

- Hometown Sunoco Inc-No Violations
Tabacco & Tabacco Substitute
- Veterans of Foreign Wars Charles DePrato Post #778-No Violations
First & Third-Class Liquor License
- Martin's Foods of South Burlington/Hannaford-No Violations
Second-Class

Ms. Draper made a motion to approve the renewals as listed, seconded by Mr. Underwood. Motion carried.

Mr. Fourier made a motion to adjourn the Liquor Control Board Meeting and re-enter the Regular Selectboard Meeting at 6:37 pm, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

c) Update on Local Hazard Mitigation Plan

Mr. Savage said the Town has a Local Hazard Mitigation Plan that was put in place after the ice jam flooding 5 years ago. It was done by Northwest Regional Planning with assistance from the Village. Mr. Savage did not know it had an expiration date and it has since expired. This will need to be renewed as it could put grants for the Town or Village in jeopardy.

FEMA has changed the regulations for these but provided no funding. Mr. Savage has spoken with Shaun Coleman from Regional Planning, and they are willing to do this

project for the Town as they did the last one. Mr. Savage will send them a RFP to see what the cost will be to get this moving forward. Mr. Savage will let the board members know the cost.

Ms. Draper made a motion to send an RFP to Northwest Regional Planning for an updated Hazard Mitigation Plan, seconded by Mr. Brosseau. Motion carried.

The RFP should have a estimated completion date.

7. Community and Economic Development

a) Update on Promote Swanton

Mr. Fournier said they don't have a date when the website will be up and running.

Ms. Candels will follow up with Ecopixel to get a date.

Mr. Brosseau asked if we have received any invoices from them? Ms. Cathy Fournier said they are up to date with them.

8. Policy Review – Road and Bridge Standards

Mr. Clark shared this is a standard document the State puts out for the Town's to fill out and include Town information.

Mr. Clark said he was waiting for the lawsuit from Maple Grove to be finished to proceed with the Road Takeover Policy. Now they will move forward with that.

Mr. Fournier said they need a policy.

Mr. Underwood made a motion to approve the Town Road and Bridge Standards Policy, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

9. Any Other Necessary Business

None

10. Items for Regular Selectboard Agenda of April 21, 2026

a) Public Hearing for Zoning By-Law Amendments

Mr. Clark asked Ms. Candels if the issue with the 200' setbacks for recreational facilities is included. Ms. Candels spoke with Mr. Lavoie regarding this, and they discussed where this could work in the Village if these setbacks were changed to make this accommodation.

The Selectboard can add any changes at the meeting.

Mr. Fournier said this needed to be added to the warning if they intend to make this change. Ms. Candels will make this change.

b) Review of Fund Balance Reserve Policy & Balanced Model Budget Policy

The board has these policies they can review in their binders.

c) Review balance in Special Funds.

11. Public Comment (Reprise)

Ms. Hubbard asked if Franklin County Field Days has officially come before the Town for the event? Mr. Clark said they have had discussions with the Zoning Administrator, and the Zoning Bylaw changes are needed for this to proceed with a permit.

Once they are changed, then it can go before the Development Review Board for a Conditional Use Permit. The DRB can set conditions.

Mr. Fournier asked Ms. Candels if they were on the meeting agenda? No, not until these changes are approved. Ms. Candels said once they pass these changes they can go before the board. Mr. Clark asked if the DRB can set up a meeting earlier to accommodate this.

The board said they would like the DRB to hold a hearing once the 21-day waiting period has passed. Mr. Clark asked Mr. Savage to call the DRB chair to get this moving.

12. Upcoming Events

a) Sunday – April 12, 2026 – Cpl. Leonard Lord Historic Site Dedication – 1:00 pm
Riverside Cemetery

b) Tuesday – April 14, 2026 – MVSD Budget re-vote – Polls open 7:00 am to 7:00 pm
Swanton Village Complex

c) Tuesday – April 21, 2026 – Regular Selectboard Meeting with Land Use & Bylaw
Public Hearing –Town Offices – 6:00 pm

d) Thursday – April 23, 2026 – DRB Meeting – 6:00 pm – Town Offices

e) April 9, 10 & 11 MVU Musical- Buy tickets online or at the door.

13. Bushey Road/Highgate Road Public Hearing – Sholan Road discussion

a) Public Hearing Relative to the Bushey Road/Highgate Road Improvement Plans

Mr. Fournier made a motion to recess the Regular Selectboard Meeting and Enter the Public Hearing for the Bushey Road/Highgate Road Improvement Plans at 7:00 pm, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

Representatives of Bowman, NRPC, and others will be in attendance to present plans and options for improvements to the Bushey Road/Highgate Road (Vt. Rte 207) Intersection

Ms. Desautels & Ms. Centerbar came before the board and community members to share the results of the feasibility study they completed of the intersection. They reviewed the four different options for the intersection from a minor change to a major change and redesign. Please see attached.

The board shared questions about minor changes, for example painting lines would not slow down traffic.

Ms. Desautels, Ms. Centerbar and the Selectboard agreed the major realignment would be the best option, but that takes approval from the State, takes time and will be a significant cost.

Mr. Hubbard shared his concern is that the piece of land left there would not be able to do anything with because of the setbacks according to his engineer, so they should consider moving the intersection 20' farther north. This is a valid concern and can be addressed. Moving the intersection would line it up with a driveway as well.

Mr. Grenier said this is to inform the Town of hurdles, and this a lot of work in this but it is not fully engineered or actual plans.

Mr. Brosseau asked if it would be difficult if they went with a minor change to a major would it be difficult? Yes, the Town would want to make sure the direction they wanted go before.

Mr. Underwood said the traffic pulls up into the road because of the utility pole in the line of sight.

Mr. Clark said a stop bar will be added out there soon.

Mr. Underwood said the minor change would allow the car lights to shine in their living room.

Mr. Underwood said the lowering of the speed limit has helped.

Mr. Grenier said there has been changes at the Vtrans District 8, and he has not been able to share these concepts with them, but he will seek that from.

Mr. Clark asked if he could say who is in charge at District 8? No he cannot.

Mr. Fournier asked when this study will be completed? Ms. Desautels said by the end of the month.

Mr. Underwood made a motion to adjourn the Public Hearing relative to Bushey Road/Highgate Road realignment and reenter the Selectboard Meeting at 7:26 pm, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

b) Discussion on the possible discontinuance of Old Sholan Rd from the Bushey Rd to State Dr.

Mr. Clark reviewed the notes and the process required to discontinue the section of road.

Mr. Savage said he has spoken with Brad McAvoy from Vtrans, when they built the new state garage the State was supposed to transfer that section of road to the Town. This has not taken place yet. Mr. McAvoy will work on that.

Mr. Underwood asked if they would remove the road if it was discontinued? Mr. Clark said it would be turned over to the landowners.

Mr. Fournier said they should put a gate or guardrail. Mr. Clark said that it can be blocked now.

Mr. Fournier made a motion to start the process to discontinue the section of Sholan Road that , seconded by Mr. Brosseau.

Discussion: Mr. Grenier asked if the Town has considered keeping the road as a legal trail or another accessible status for pedestrians in the future. Snowmobiles use it as well.

Mr. Fournier asked why they can't use State Drive? Mr. Grenier said that put people on 207. Snowmobilers are now going through the fields through Cummings land, they can access Bushey Road and Mother Hubbard's.

Mr. Brosseau asked if putting snowmobilers on State Drive would cause an issue with heavy equipment? Putting pedestrians at that intersection is more dangerous.

Mr. Grenier said for future growth keeping a small path of land could pay dividends later on, without knowing what that area is going to look like.

Mr. Fournie said it is something to discuss as the process progresses.

Motion carried.

14. Executive Session – Personnel & Legal

Mr. Brosseau made the following motion: 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 at 7:34 pm, seconded by Mr. Underwood. Motion carried.

Mr. Brosseau made the following motion: 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. Underwood. Motion carried.

Mr. Fournier made a motion to exit executive session at 8:05 pm, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

15. Adjourn

Mr. Brosseau made a motion to adjourn at 8:06 pm, seconded by Mr. Underwood. 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