

**MINUTES
TOWN OF SWANTON
SELECTBOARD MEETING**

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

Tuesday, September 1, 2026, 6:00 pm

Present: Joel Clarl-Chair, Nick Brosseau, Earl Fournier, Ron Underwood, Nicole Daper-Members, Brian Savage-Town Administrator, Cathy Fournier-Town Clerk, Christina Candels-Assistant Town Administrator, Robert Nielsen, Suzanne Wahsburn, Adam Paxman, An St. Francis, Phoebe Kittell, Rob Kittell, Mark Rocheleau, Ethan Garisson, Syliva Garrison, Suzie Kelleher, Herbert Bartemy, Shaun Cheney

Zoom: Darci Benoit

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

Ms. Draper requested to add Grants under Community & Economic Development and PTO Road Closure request under New Town Business.

Mr. Underwood requested to add an update on the LVRT Port-a-let under Old Town Business.

Mr. Savage requested to add appointment of the new Zoning Administrator under New Town Business.

D. Meeting Topics

1. Minutes

a) Regular Selectboard meeting of August 18, 2026

Mr. Brosseau made a motion to approve the Regular Selectboard meeting minutes of August 18, 2026, as written, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

2. Public Comments

None

3. Law Enforcement

a) Health Officer Reports

Ms. Kelleher read the board and her Health Officer & Building Safety Officer reports to the board.

1. Discussion of rodent problem – First and Pine Streets

Ms. Kelleher shared the details regarding the ongoing rodent problem between Dollar General and surrounding homes. Ms. Kelleher shared she believes the rodent problem began when Dollar General began their renovations and the rats began seeking other locations to feed. There were further disruptions in July when Dollar General had the area where the dumpster is kept jack hammered and repaired.

Ms. Kelleher has worked with homeowners that have chickens. These owners are doing the right things to eliminate feed availability for the rats to feed, the scent is still an attractant for the rats.

Ms. Kelleher said the owner of the chickens has a Blink camera that does show pictures of rats.

Ms. Kelleher said the chicken feed is a draw even if the rats cannot access the feed because of the good practices in place, when asked if the feed meets the standard set in the Health & Public Safety Ordinance.

Mr. Fourier asked if this was not an issue prior to Dollar General's renovations? No.

Ms. Kelleher said the Vermont Department of Health shared it is up to each individual homeowner eradicate the rats on their own property.

Multiple homeowners on Pine Street and First Street are contracting privately for rat bate and control, these companies report shows active rat feeding from the bate boxes.

Ms. Kelleher has not been able to elevate the issue with Dollar General beyond the store level with an adequate response. Ms. Kelleher has given them a safety order regarding multiple concerns.

Ms. Kittell shared the Orkin man said the rats are aggressively feeding from the bate at her mother's house.

The concern shared by Orkin is that Dollar General is not doing enough to combat the rats and as the weather changes the rats may try to move into homes.

Mr. Underwood asked what company Dollar General is using and if they could work with Orkin. One company working together would be ideal.

The board discussed the issue at length with Ms. Kelleher, and the decision was made that Ms. Kelleher will contact the Department of Health for recommendations for bate locations and notify residents within a radius provided by the State and let them know the Town can provide rat bate in that radius if concerns are raised. Ms. Kelleher will share the district manager's contact information with Mr. Savage to escalate the incident.

Mr. Fournier made a motion to approve Mr. Savage spending up to \$300.00 to purchase rat bate, as Ms. Kelleher's discretion on location, seconded by Mr. Underwood. Motion carried.

Ms. Kelleher will review the ordinance further regarding the keeping of animals and if changes need to be made to the ordinance.

2. Update on 1 Thibault Street

Ms. Kelleher shared she has not made contact with the homeowner since the initial ticket was issued. Since then, two more tickets have been issued.

Ms. Kelleher has asked if they can hire someone to clean up the trash/debris and put alien on the property? This question is still with the Town attorney for legal clarification. Mr. Savage has asked for an answer from the attorney today and will share with the board and Ms. Kelleher as soon as he receives a reply.

Ms. Kelleher said she would not have any cleanup completed without herself and a police presence. Ms. Kelleher will apply with Superior Court for a warrant to clean up the property.

4. New Town Business

a) Representative from Swanton Chamber of Commerce

Discussion of the Royal Swans

Ms. Washburn and Mr. Rocheleau came before the board to discuss their request of the Town to be part of the permit renewal for the swans.

Ms. Washburn shared the breakdown of the cost of the care of the swans from the money allocated by the Town.

Mr. Rocheleau shared as they all know the Chamber is closing at the end of the year. The permit for the swans needs to be renewed by the end of 2026, and they need 501c3 or the Town or Village to take over the permit for the swans.

Mr. Rocheleau shared they have contacted other groups, and it has been decided this may be a better fit for the Town. There will never be any Town or Village employee to care for the swans. All funding will be covered by the \$2,000 the Town gives annually and from the car shows. Mr. Rocheleau shared, even if they do not have a car show they have at least 5 years of reserves to care for the swans, but the car show will continue as planned.

Mr. Rocheleau shared they respect others who do not think the swans should continue but many also feel they should and would like to see them continue, people love them and they draw a lot of people to the community.

They have the people to care for the swans and the support of the State to continue.

Mr. Clark shared he wants the swans to stay, but asked what would happen if people did not want to take care of them? Mr. Bartemy shared he has employees who check on them and does not see that ever being a problem. Mr. Bartemy keeps them for the winter at his home and will continue.

Mr. Clark said this is what they want to hear and an agreement between a few would be beneficial.

Ms. Washburn shared the current permit with the board members; the renewal needs to be renewed by the end of the year.

Mr. Savage will verify the Town's insurance would be covered if anyone is injured from touching the swans.

Mr. Savage asked if they would renew the permit for one or two swans? Ms. Washburn said she would apply for two in the event they can get another one. They have a very good relationship with the representatives from Vermont Fish & Game.

Mr. Brosseau asked if they would request from the Village again for them to take over the permit? No.

Mr. Fournier said they would need to be transparent with the funds from the Town as that is taxpayer money.

Mr. Cheney said Mr. Bartemy is a large part of the swans, and they would find a way to make sure everything was taken care of. Mr. Bartemy thanked the community, that is why they are here.

Mr. Clark said they will start working on a memorandum of understanding.

b) Re-classification of Hazard Road from Class IV to Trail

Mr. Clark said they met earlier for a site visit and had questions and concerns from residents. The four board members present agreed to not move forward with any action.

Mr. Underwood made a motion to take no further action on the re-classification of Hazard Road from Class IV Road to a Trail, seconded by Mr. Fournier. Motion carried.

Mr. Clark said there is a 35 mph sign on the easter end of the road and the Highway department will place one on the other end. The Town speed limit ordinance state's Hazard Road is 35 mph for the entire length.

The board will review with the police department how much time is spent monitoring speed.

Mr. Garrison asked that they find out how much weight the culvert can handle, because he feels they are going over the road with much higher weighted vehicles.

c) PTO Road Closure Request

Ms. Draper said she received a request from the school PTO that they can close a small section of Bushey St (from the buss loop) and Robinhood Drive (to the fit-n-healthy trail) for a Fun Run the PTO would like to do. This is to protect the safety of people running. This event is scheduled for October 4th 1pm-2pm. The board asked Ms. Draper to ensure the PTO is going to notify people and provide traffic support. They also requested they contact the police and rescue to notify them if they can also be present.

d) Appointment of Zoning Administrator

Mr. Savage shared Carolyn has started part-time and full-time on September 14th. Ms. Giroux is no longer needed, and the board needs to appoint Ms. Towsley as Zoning Administrator. This will not affect her probationary time period. This way

Mr. Brosseau made a motion to appoint Carolyn Towsley as Zoning Administrator for a period of three years, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

The board would like something drafted thanking Ms. Giroux for her years as zoning administrator.

5. Highway Department

Mr. Clark shared paving is almost complete, will be this week.

Mr. Clark will follow up when the line striping is due to be completed.

Mr. Clark shared one employee was injured with a chainsaw last week with a cut finger requiring five stitches, paperwork was completed and they were back at work Monday.

6. Old Town Business

a) Library issues update

Mr. Savage shared Patrick Menard will begin the work in the hall tomorrow.

Mr. Savage received an email from Abby, and they agreed to go with option #1 that is \$9,129.42.(this pricing was from May so will need to verify) Mr. Savage

said they need to move forward if they want the grant because the work needs to be completed before the end of the year for the grant.

Mr. Brosseau made a motion to approve the lighting fixtures from G&G Electric in the amount of \$9,129.42, seconded by Mr. Underwood. Motion carried.

Ms. Draper asked if the hedges can be trimmed in the front of the library.

Mr. Brosseau asked if the snow guards have gone up yet? No, they need to be ordered.

Mr. Clark said they met with Northern Basements regarding the elevator shaft and are going to schedule a meeting with another company as well for input.

Mr. Clark will keep the board updated.

b) Wheeler Round Storm Water Permit Application

Mr. Clark said they have the information they needed and are comfortable moving forward as a co-permittee with them.

Mr. Savage drafted an agreement the HOA agrees to sign. Going forward, anyone builds something in a development they need to find out if that will effect there impervious surface.

Mr. Underwood made a motion to approve the Town sign as Co-permittee on the Wheeler Round stormwater permit, seconded by Mr. Fournier. Motion carried.

Mr. Fournier asked that they start discussing how other Towns are taking care of the cost of these in other communities.

Mr. Savage, Mr. Clark and Ms. Candels did have a meeting with the State regarding these permits.

c) Railroad Depot update

Mr. Savage said the asbestos test came back negative and they are still waiting for the lead test. Once that is received, they will notify the contractor to start the work.

d) Old Sholan Road update

No update.

Mr. Savage asked if they should put a jersey barrier at the end? Mr. Fournier asked if they should put up guardrails? That needs to be decided by who owns it.

e) Update on Land Swap

Mr. Savage shared they all received the update from the attorney's office.

The board discussed the previous meeting a couple of years ago and they knew Mr. Rowell wanted to retain access to be able to develop his property in the future if he chooses.

Mr. Clark & Mr. Fournier would like to have a meeting scheduled with Mr. Rowell, the school district, and a couple board members to move forward. This has been going on for over two years now.

f) LVRT Port-a-let Update

Mr. Clark said they agreed at the last meeting to keep the port-a-let but since the last meeting there were two more incidents of vandalism and the decision was made to remove the port-a-let.

Mr. Clark said they have received camera footage of three juveniles that have been identified by the police.

Mr. Clark has replaced the GFI outlet that was broken also.

Ms. Draper has priced a metal overhead door options ranging between \$1,500-\$3,500 if they choose to add one to the structure. This is an option for the future if needed.

This is not the only site this group has vandalized and that is why they were easily identified.

7. Liquor Control Board Meeting

Ms. Draper made a motion to recess the regular Selectboard meeting and enter into Liquor Control Board meeting at 7:40 pm, seconded by Mr. Underwood. Motion carried.

1. Second Class Liquor License Renewal – Stewart Shops
Ms. Cathy Fournier said they have no violations.
Mr. Brosseau made a motion to approve Stweart Shops Liquor License renewal, seconded by Mr. Underwood. Motion carried.

Ms. Draper made a motion to adjourn the Liquor Control Board meeting at 7:40 pm, and reenter the Regular Selectboard meeting, seconded by Mr. Fournier. Motion carried.

8. Community and Economic Development

a) Promote Swanton update

Mr. Fournier shared pictures of potential new industrial park signs. The sign would be two sided, with the panels purchased by the businesses.

Mr. Fournier proposed the signs be located at the end of Babbie Blvd and Route 78 & Robinhood Drive and First St.

Mr. Fournier said they need to determine the location of the right-of-way for accurate placement.

Mr. Fournier said the Handy family did at one point reach out to the Town to see if there was interest in purchasing the property from the Town, that did not move forward. Currently with no future plans for the lot, they do not want the Town to place signs on the property. Mr. Fournier said that is why he would like to place the sign in the State right-of-way.

Mr. Fournier wants to verify where the right-of-way is located.

Mr. Fournier will get prices for footing for the signs. They can proceed with the one by Fournier Farm Equipment.

Mr. Fournier asked how much was in the Economic Development fund? Ms. Cathy Fournier said there is \$35,000.00 in the fund.

b) Grants

Ms. Draper shared information on the Foster Health and Vibrant Communities Through Outdoor Recreation grant that is going to be opening in October.

Ms. Draper said she has reached out for a quote for additional drone photos of the community throughout the seasons.

Mr. Fournier said they have changed the picture on the website and are still working on more photos.

9. Next Meeting Agenda Items

10. Policies for Review

- a) Winter Maintenance Policy
- b) Burning and Disposal of Solid Waste Ordinance

11. Correspondence

- a) Letter received from Vtrans regarding parking on VT Route 78 West

Mr. Savage said he received a letter from Vtrans and they are proceeding with the study and sharing when the hearing will be. September 9, 2026, at 1:30 pm.

12. Public Comment (Reprise)

None

13. Upcoming Events

- a) Monday, September 7, 2026 – Labor Day Holiday – Town Offices and Operations are CLOSED
- b) Tuesday, September 8, 2026 - 5:00 pm – Planning Commission – Town Offices and Zoom
- c) Tuesday, September 15, 2026 – Regular Selectboard Meeting – 6:00 pm – Town Offices and Zoom

14. Adjourn
Mr. Fournier made a motion to adjourn at 8:00 pm, seconded by Ms. Draper.
Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by
Christina Candels-Assistant Town Administrator

Received and filed by:

Cathy Fournier, Town Clerk

Date