

**MINUTES
TOWN OF SWANTON
SELECTBOARD MEETING
In-Person & By Zoom
Town Office Building
1 Academy Street, Swanton, VT 05488
Tuesday, December 6, 2022 @ 7:00 p.m.**

Present: James Guilmette, Chair; Earl Fournier, Vice Chair; Nicole Draper, Ed White, Steve Bourgeois, Members; Brian Savage, Town Administrator; Cathy Fournier, Town Clerk; Joseph Cava, Administrative Assistant; Matthew Sullivan, Swanton Chief of Police; Amy Giroux, Zoning Administrator; Joel Clark; Betsy Fournier; Patrick Parah; Sandy Skeels Kilburn; Laurie Rossi, Missisquoi Valley Rescue; Brian Rowell

*All motions carried unanimously unless specified otherwise.

- A. Call to Order – Mr. Guilmette called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
- B. Pledge of Allegiance – Mr. Guilmette led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- C. Agenda Review
- D. Meeting Topics:

- 1. Minutes

- a) November 15, 2022, Regular and Zoom Selectboard Meeting

- Mr. Fournier made a motion to approve the Draft Minutes from the 11/15/22 Selectboard meeting conditional on recommended edits from Mr. Bourgeois, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

- 2. Public Comments

- Ms. Kilburn mentioned the proposed establishment of a welcome center in Swanton with the assistance from Tim Smith, FCIDC.

- 3. Law Enforcement

- a) Swanton Police Chief Report

- Mr. Sullivan gave the Selectboard an update on the following occurrences in Swanton including three suspicious person, traffic accident, welfare check, seven traffic stops with tickets issued, and alcohol/drug impaired driving. Mr. Sullivan also mentioned the robbery of the Sunoco and Jolly gas stations and mentioned the rise in search warrants secured to hold these delinquents accountable. Speaking about coverage, Mr. Sullivan mentioned the need for an additional staff member to fill the gap between day and night shifts.

- Mr. Bourgeois asked if there was a rule of thumb for police staffing? Mr. Sullivan responded that it varies between municipalities and whether these people are in the office or patrolling. Mr. Bourgeois followed up by asked about the reporting of incidents like the recent break ins? Mr. Sullivan responded that he would like to establish a blotting system to be track and report incidents and occurrences. Part of this stems from needing to update the website between the Village and the Town.

- When looking at the budget, Mr. Fournier asked if the additional staffing would be full-time or if it would be designated as patrol. Mr. Sullivan responded it would vary upon the staffing needed for calls and patrolling.

Mr. Fournier followed up by saying this was proposed during last year's budget but proved to be too expensive to hire the full-time officers needed to meet the coverage. Mr. Sullivan continued, saying this all depends on what's approved for next year's budget focusing on different areas within the Town.

b) Swanton Health Officer Monthly Report

Members of the Selectboard briefly reviewed the health officer's monthly report.

4. Old Town Business

a) Update on Heating/AC replacement at Swanton Public Library & New Roof Installation

Mr. Guilmette came to determination that three of the five boiler units would need to be replaced. This is a bad time of year for the replacement, so once the project is bid on, the materials would be purchased, and the boilers would be replaced in the spring. Mr. Fournier asked about the roofline on the front of the building? Mr. Guilmette responded that the issue has been resolved but could use more insulation to prevent further issues with freeze thaw cycles. Mr. Savage mentioned the library's smoke detector system is over a year past its due inspection. Mr. Guilmette stressed the importance of needing a maintenance person to stay on top of this.

5. New Town Business

a) Review 2023 appropriation request of Missisquoi Valley Rescue

Ms. Billado came forward expressing the appropriation request in response to increased calls. Mr. Guilmette asked whether the call rates were changing. Ms. Billado responded no. The only additional changes are for staff compensation based upon experience and time with Missisquoi Valley Rescue. Ms. Billado said that part of the cost savings are also associated with keeping operations and functions in house rather than contracting with an external billing services.

b) Review 2023 budget of Swanton Recreation Commission

Ms. Fournier brought good news to the Selectboard saying that expenses were lower due to an increase in operations attendance to support recreation opportunities. Though costs like gas/oil, water, electricity, and other utilities have gone up, the Recreation Commission has no control over these resources. By expanding and growing, however the Recreation Commission is able to rollover excess profits to unburden the taxpayers and infill gaps within the community.

Mr. Bourgeois asked in the Recreation Commission could create a reserve? Ms. Fournier responded that in the past they have rolled money over into the money market account but is unsure about this practice moving forward with new accounting principles. Mr. Bourgeois asked about the authority to delegate the money? Mr. Guilmette responded that the taxpayers pay into the general fund, and the authority would go before the community as an article to vote on. Mr. Bourgeois expressed the importance of setting aside a percentage of annual rollover in a reserve fund for emergent projects. Mr. Bourgeois followed up by asking about whose responsibility it is to account for and spend the money. Mr. Fournier responded that ultimately the responsibility would fall upon the Selectboard. Ms, Fournier reiterated the deferral to the taxpayers, and

asked when the budget numbers are due? Ms. Fournier responded no later than the second week in January 2023.

- c) Mr. Kevin Lothian concerning non-permitted use in adjoining property

Interested party did not show up for the meeting.

- d) Discuss scheduling Joint Meeting Village Trustees to discuss proposed Statement of Equity and Inclusion as well as proposed new joint website for December 12, 2022

Ms. Kilburn briefly discussed the Statement of Equity and Inclusion.

6. Executive Session (Real Estate, Personnel if needed)

Ms. Draper made a motion to enter executive session at 7:44 p.m., seconded by Mr. White. Motion carried.

Mr. Fournier made a motion to exit executive session at 8:43 p.m., seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

No motions taken.

7. Community & Economic Development

- a) Report of Elizabeth Nance

Ms. Nance gave an update on the status of the Riviere Hotel mentioning a grant to remediate the asbestos within the building. Mr. Bourgeois asked if the demolition was being put out to bid? Ms. Nance responded that she in conjunction with the Village are researching potential firms with the qualifications to demolish the existing building. Swann Valley has shown interest in the old cheese plant, but it is difficult given the building's size and niche market for cheese manufacturing and processing. Ms. Nance also mentioned the proposed establishment of a Welcome Center in Swanton. Mr. Bourgeois asked about the proposed location? The State is currently in negotiations to acquire land along Interstate I-89, but there is nothing conclusive yet. Ms. Nance also mentioned Green Mountain Knitting taking over the old Mylan building and a rise in subscriptions to the newsletter, Constant Contact. Mr. Savage recommended renewing the existing subscription because of its value to the community. Mr. Fournier asked Ms. Nance about getting a figure for creating a conceptual plan for the Southern Growth district? Ms. Nance said she could speak with Cross Consulting Engineers in the New Year.

Mr. Fournier made a motion to approve the renewal of the newsletter, Constant Contact at an annual rate of \$168.00, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

8. Highway Department

- a) Maquam Shore Road Culvert

Mr. Guilmette gave an update on the replacement of the existing culvert saying the project is complete and the road has been paved.

- b) Update on Mack Truck Repair

Mr. Guilmette gave an update saying the Mack truck is next in line for repair.

- c) Tree Removal

Mr. Guilmette said that trees needed to be removed on Comstock Rd., Viens Rd. and Pond Rd. The project was placed out to bid with bids ranging from the low to upper \$6,000.00s.

Mr. White made a motion to approve Gabree Tree Services bid for \$6,200.00, seconded by Mr. Fournier. Motion carried.

9. Any Other Necessary Business

Mr. Savage mentioned a recent visit from Peter Smith, IT regarding the installation of a new printer. During his visit, Mr. Smith mentioned the need for increased cyber security protection for the technological infrastructure. Mr. Guilmette recommended getting some figures from Mr. Smith

10. Correspondence

a) LVRT Tailhead Grant

Mr. Savage gave the board an update that Swanton was awarded one of the largest grant packages for \$375,164.00 for the LVRT trailhead project. Mr. Clark stated that more information will follow in the coming weeks. Mr. Clark also mentioned the importance of this development in regard to contracting Cross Consulting Engineers to put together a final plan. Mr. Savage also mentioned joining the Vermont Trails and Greenways Council (VTGC) for an annual subscription of \$35.00. Ms. Draper expressed the importance of this asset to low term networking and advertising to Swanton.

11. Public Comments (Reprise) - None

12. Upcoming Events

- a) Planning Commission Meeting – Wednesday, December 14, 2022 at 6:30 p.m. – Town Office Building, 1 Academy Street
- b) Regular and Zoom Selectboard Meeting – Tuesday, December 20, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. – Town Office Building, 1 Academy Street
- c) Town Offices Closed for Christmas Holiday – Friday, December 23, 2022 and Monday, December 26, 2022
- d) Town Offices Closed for New Year’s Holiday – Friday, December 30, 2022 and Monday, January 2, 2023

E. Adjournment – Mr. White made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:18 p.m., seconded by Mr. Fournier. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joseph Cava
Administrative Assistant

Received and filed by:

Cathy Fournier, Town Clerk

Date