

**SWANTON VILLAGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
SWANTON TOWN SELECTBOARD  
SWANTON VILLAGE MUNICIPAL COMPLEX  
120 FIRST STREET  
SWANTON, VT 05488**

**JOINT MEETING  
Monday, December 12, 2022  
7:00 PM**

**PRESENT:** Neal Speer, Village President; Chris Leach, Trustee; Adam Paxman, Trustee; Eugene LaBombard, Trustee; Reginald Beliveau Jr., Village Manager; William “Bill” Sheets, Village Manager; Lynn Paradis, Assistant Village Manager; Dianne Day, Village Clerk; Brian Savage, Town Administrator; Ed White Sr., Steve Bourgeois, Nicole Draper, Earl Fournier, Town Selectmen; Spencer & Lisa LaBarge; Jenn Yandow, Sandy Kilburn, Joel Clark, Hank Lambert and Ch.16. Via Zoom: Heidi Fryzell and Paul Hansen, Ecopixel Website; Wayne Elliott and Jeff, Aldrich & Elliott.

Unless otherwise noted, all motions carried unanimously.

**1. Call to Order:**

Neal Speer, Village President, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Earl Fournier, Town Selectboard Chair, called the Town meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**2. Pledge of Allegiance:**

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3. Agenda Review:**

None.

**4. Discuss and Act on Equity Statement for the Town and Village of Swanton; also Discuss Jointly Owned Website:**

Neal Speer, Village President, read the following Inclusion Statement: The Village of Swanton condemns racism and welcomes all persons, regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity or expression, age, or disability, and wants everyone to feel safe and welcome in our community. As a Village, we formally condemn all discrimination in all of its forms, commit to fair and equal treatment of everyone in our community, and will strive to ensure all of our actions, policies, and operating procedures reflect this commitment.

The Village of Swanton has and will continue to be a place where individuals can live freely and express their opinions.

By the Swanton Village Board of Trustees on \_\_\_\_\_ 2022

Earl Fournier said their board agrees with the Inclusion Statement but preferred instead of saying the Village and Town of Swanton to just say the “Swanton Community”. Both boards agreed to this and changed the inclusion statement to read as follows:

Swanton condemns racism and welcomes all persons, regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity or expression, age, or disability, and wants everyone to feel safe and welcome in our community.

As a community, we formally condemn all discrimination in all of its forms, commit to fair and equal treatment of everyone in our community, and will strive to ensure all of our actions, policies, and operating procedures reflect this commitment.

Swanton has and will continue to be a place where individuals can live freely and express their opinions.

Signed by Swanton Officials on \_\_\_\_\_ 2022

President Neal Speer \_\_\_\_\_  
Trustee Eugene LaBombard \_\_\_\_\_  
Trustee Chris Leach \_\_\_\_\_  
Trustee Adam Paxman \_\_\_\_\_  
Selectman Earl Fournier \_\_\_\_\_  
Selectman Steven Bourgeois \_\_\_\_\_  
Selectman Ed White Sr \_\_\_\_\_  
Selectwoman Nicole Draper \_\_\_\_\_

Adam Paxman made the motion to approve and sign the Swanton Inclusion Statement as corrected. Eugene LaBombard seconded. Steve Bourgeois also made the motion to adopt the Inclusion Statement with the changes. Ed White Sr. seconded the motion. Motion carried.

The two boards then discussed the joint website they are considering and listened to Paul Hansen and Heidi Fryzell from Ecopixel Website Design give their presentation. They discussed how they would communicate, plan and consult; the design and development of the website; how it's built for ADA compliance; and how they would implement town-specific features including: Meeting document management, calendar, notices, notifications, payment system integration, file management, site search, alert banner, forms, contacts page, resource guide and privacy policy. They also mentioned how they would migrate, organize and ADA-remediate content, provide ongoing maintenance, support and hosting web accessibility, and editor training and support. Nicole Draper mentioned marketing the community. Earl Fournier explained how he wanted to attract tourists and young people to move and live here. Heidi Fryzell then showed neighboring towns that use their website service such as Huntington and Essex Junction. The cost for this website would be \$13,325 for year one and \$1,800 dollars per year for ongoing support, hosting and maintenance.

The two Boards stated they would look this over and consider their options. They thanked Heidi and Paul for their presentation.

#### **5. Public Comment:**

The Boards decided to move some items around on the agenda and wanted public comment at this time. Joel Clark stated he wanted to inform everyone that Lamoille Valley Rail Trail head plan received the full amount of the grant and he is hoping for work to begin in the very near future.

Sandy Kilburn stated the governor announced a new program called IDEAL and said she was hoping Swanton could participate in that.

Ed White Sr., Selectman, made the motion to adjourn the Town's portion of this meeting at 8:04 p.m. Nicole Draper seconded. Motion carried.

#### **6. Sign State Revolving Loan Program for Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade:**

Wayne Elliott, Aldrich & Elliott Engineering Firm, was on via zoom for this presentation. He stated the Wastewater Plant needs a new phosphorus and filtration system so they need to apply for a State Revolving Loan in the amount of \$298,800. He said the total project will cost approximately \$5.9 million dollars but said the Village qualifies for 50% state funding. He said a bond vote may have to be held at a later date. He said he hopes to have construction begin in 2024. Eugene LaBombard wanted to remind everyone that this is mandated by the State of Vermont and said these upgrades need to be done. Reg Beliveau stated that the wastewater plant has been using chemicals to remove phosphorus but said this is too expensive to maintain. Eugene LaBombard made the motion to approve and sign the State of Vermont State Revolving Loan Program Funding Application for \$298,800. Eugene also moved to authorize Village Manager Reginald Beliveau sign and approve necessary documents pertaining to this loan application. Chris Leach seconded both motions. Motion carried.

#### **7. Approve and Accept Minutes from Monday, November 28, 2022 as presented:**

Chris Leach made the motion to approve and accept Minutes from Monday, November 28, 2022 as presented. Adam Paxman seconded. Discussion: None. Motion carried.

#### **8. Approve and Accept Village Warrants through Wednesday, December 7, 2022:**

Eugene LaBombard made the motion to approve and accept Village Warrants #112-#115 through Wednesday, December 7, 2022 as presented. Adam Paxman seconded. Discussion: Adam Paxman asked about the payment made to Jack Farrelly Company for \$63,425.87. Reg Beliveau stated that was for insertion valves. Motion carried.

#### **9. Elisabeth Nance – Resolution Needed for Riveria Hotel:**

Reg Beliveau, Village Manager, stated Elisabeth couldn't make tonight's meeting but gave him the following update on the Hotel Riveria:

- Contaminated soil from the site of the underground storage unit has been removed and appropriately discarded

- VT Department of Environmental Conservation is finishing its review of the Phase II Report from KAS; we have a call at the end of the week to discuss
- We are working with KAS on the proposal to manage the asbestos abatement; in the meantime, the grant agreement, which will offset 80% of the cost, is being finalized
- Asbestos abatement is expected to be completed by the end of January; we do need to go out to bid to satisfy requirements of both the village and the grant agreement
- David Shea, the demolition guy, is in the loop. He expects to have demolition completed between late February and mid-April. Much of it depends upon the weather because ideally March would be best
- The archaeological assessment report is being finalized. We know that there is evidence of pre-contact at the north end of the building, but nothing has been found that should hinder demolition.

**10. Appoint New Village Manager William “Bill” Sheets as VPPSA Director Effective January 1, 2023:**

Chris Leach made the motion to appoint William “Bill” Sheets, Swanton Village Manager, as the VPPSA Director effective January 1, 2023. Eugene LaBombard seconded. Motion carried.

**11. Discussion on 2023 Draft Budgets with Lynn Paradis:**

Lynn Paradis, Assistant Village Manager, stated she would begin with the General Fund. She said property taxes have gone down some in the fund and said the fire department has level funded their budget for 2023. She said the dispatching bill has increased some as well as property taxes and transportation expenses but said this budget is pretty solid.

She said the Police Department has increased some due to liability insurance, payroll and benefits and said she still needs to finish working on the grant income in this fund.

Lynn said the highway budget may increase quite a bit due to the bridge repairs but she said she would explain another option when they get to the tax piece.

She said she checked with VPPSA so see if the Village needed an increase in the electric department. She said one is not necessary at this time. She said purchase power may be an issue but said this year they had a lot of generation. She said she is making a final bond payment in December 2023 on the 1990-1993 bond at the hydro plant.

Lynn said in the water department she is not anticipating a rate increase at this time. She said after the water line job is complete they may need one then.

Lynn stated in the sewer department revenue is down some and she said she had to increase the chemical line item from \$57,000 to \$81,500. She said her testing line item is also up some and she doesn’t want to adjust the rates in 2023.

Lynn then showed the estimated tax rate for each fund: General would go from 0.0899 to 0.0837 for a change of -0.0062; the fire department would go from 0.0505 to 0.0534 for a change of \$0.0029; the police department would go from 0.4655 to 0.4954 for a change of \$0.0299 and the highway fund would go from 0.3427 to 0.4223 for a change of \$0.0796. She said the total tax rate would go from \$0.9486 in 2022 to \$1.05475 in 2023. She then showed the increase on a home valued at \$175,000, \$200,000 and \$250,000. She said if this budget was approved at these rates there would be an increase of \$185.76 for a home valued at \$175k; a \$212.30 increase on a home valued at \$200k; and a \$265.37 increase on a home valued at \$250k.

Lynn said because of the jump in the highway department she has an option B plan. She said the Village could use the \$200,000 in grant money and make the repairs to the joints and not go ahead with the full repair plan for another \$323,000. She said if they did this she could reduce the highway budget and taxpayers would only see an increase of \$55.00 on a home valued at \$175k; a \$62.95 increase on a home valued at \$200k; and a \$78.69 increase on a home valued at \$250k. The board liked the idea of this and said they would weigh the options. Bill Sheets, Village Manager, stated he did find out that the bridge is slated to be completely rebuilt in 2029. The board thanked Lynn for her draft budgets.

**12. Any Other Necessary Business:**

None.

**13. Executive Session to Discuss Customer Accounts:**

Adam Paxman made the motion to enter Executive Session at 9:40 p.m. Eugene LaBombard seconded. Motion carried.

Chris Leach made the motion to exit Executive Session and reenter Open Session at 9:50 p.m. Adam Paxman seconded. Motion carried.

**ACTION TAKEN:** Chris Leach made the motion to approve the Village of Swanton to write off \$7121.43 in the electric department for non-collectible accounts. Eugene LaBombard seconded. Motion carried.

Adam Paxman made the motion to authorize the Village of Swanton to transfer the current Village Manager's SUV to the police department for \$15,000 and to authorize the purchase of a new Ford Bronco for \$37,877 from EJ Barrette Ford. Eugene LaBombard seconded. Motion carried.

Eugene LaBombard made the motion to approve Village Manager Reg Beliveau to carry over accrued vacation time into 2023 while he works part time for the Village. Adam Paxman seconded. Motion carried.

**14. Adjournment:**

Adam Paxman made the motion to adjourn the Joint Meeting of the Board of the Trustees meeting at 9:55 p.m. Eugene LaBombard seconded. There being no further business at hand, Neal Speer, Village President, adjourned the meeting at 9:55 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dianne Day, Village Clerk

Received and filed by:

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Cathy Fournier, Town Clerk

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Date