

**MINUTES
TOWN OF SWANTON
SELECTBOARD MEETING
In-Person & By Zoom
Town Office Building
1 Academy Street, Swanton, VT 05488
Tuesday, January 10, 2023 @ 7:00 p.m.**

Present: James Guilmette, Chair; Earl Fournier (ZOOM User), 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; Joel Clark; Betsy Fournier; Patrick Parah; Jason Cross, Fire Department Chief; Dan Chevalier; Bill Sheets, Village Manager; Cody Hemenway; Hank Lambert; David Winchester; Roger George (ZOOM User)

*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) December 20, 2022, Regular and Zoom Selectboard Meeting

- Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to approve the Draft Minutes from the 12/20/22 Selectboard meeting, seconded by Mr. White. Motion carried.

- 2. Public Comments

- Mr. Lambert came forward as a representative of the Beautification Commission asking about a proposal that was submitted in October 2022. Mr. Guilmette responded they would discuss this under the budget section of the agenda.

- 3. Law Enforcement

- a) Swanton Police Chief Report

- Chief Sullivan gave a brief overview on the occurrences within the month of December including traffic stops, alcohol/drug DUI offenses, motor vehicle complaints, citizen assists, suspicious person/circumstances, and traffic accidents with damages and injuries. Of the traffic stops, around 24% were issued tickets, and an additional 150 were given written warnings. Chief Sullivan responded that some of these traffic offenses were recorded on I-89 and weren't necessarily equated to the Town itself. To draw comparisons with Swanton, Chief Sullivan compared this data against Stowe's to understand the per capita police requirements highlighting some of the discrepancies between Swanton and Stowe.

- Mr. Guilmette asked a clarification about data contained within the report as Swanton PD appearing in other municipalities like Highgate. Chief Sullivan explained that this discrepancy could be from agency assists in other surrounding communities but said he would look deeper into the data to ensure accuracy. Mr. White asked if Swanton PD was still participating in the Meals on Wheels campaign. Chief Sullivan explained no due to unpredictable staff shortages in response to incidents.

Mr. White followed up by asking about drug busts in the community and its relationship with the media? Chief Sullivan explained that search warrants have been executed but explained due to sensitivity procedures this goes through the US attorney's office. Mr. Bourgeois mentioned a call that came in regarding a community concern and were told they couldn't investigate this until after a certain hour. Mr. Sullivan confirmed the operational challenges between the Village PD, the Town PD, and the Vermont State Police.

b) Swanton Health Officer Monthly Report

Mr. Savage said no Health Officer's report was submitted. Mr. Guilmette asked Mr. Savage to look into the absence of a report.

4. Old Town Business

a) Update on LVRT and Swanton Rec/Community Center – Joel Clark

Mr. Clark gave members of the Selectboard a brief overview saying that they're waiting on the grant agreement to finalize details. In regard to the community center, a site visit will be conducted with a representative from Cross Consulting Engineers tomorrow, 1/11/23 to discuss the grade and elevation changes.

b) Approve Appropriation Request of Missisquoi Valley Rescue

Mr. White made a motion to approve the appropriation request of Missisquoi Valley Rescue, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried.

c) Approve Swanton Public Library 2023 Budget

Mr. Savage clarified points on the budget. Mr. Fournier asked about the increases between this year's budget and last year's? Mr. Savage went through describing the increases including bookkeeping, natural gas bill and other utilities. Ms. Fournier also clarified that last year's budget was based upon the previous year's budget to address carryover. Mr. Fournier asked about additional carryover? Mr. Savage said he would be meeting with representatives of the library to discuss changes.

Ms. Fournier began talking about the Town's contribution for the library budget talking about the roof project and other ongoing maintenance projects. Mr. Fournier asked if the library staff were given the same pay increase as other Town employees. Ms. Fournier said this figure is controlled by the library's governing body. Mr. Guilmette recommended increasing the library's maintenance fund to address emergency projects. Ms. Fournier said rollover money in the library budget will be going before the taxpayers as an Article. Mr. Guilmette recommended using ARPA funds to replace three windows on the front of the building and repainting the exterior trim work. To address this increase maintenance, Mr. Fournier recommended increasing the library's maintenance fund to \$10,000.00 to address all these repairs. Ms. Fournier will be revising the library's budget following Mr. Savage's discussion with the library.

Mr. Winchester added feedback on the thermal envelope of the library's addition versus, the original building. The ductwork on the third floor is outside the thermal envelope is redundant causing more damage to the library's exterior. Mr. Guilmette responded that the library's furnaces and condensers are getting changed out to better address these energy deficiencies. Mr. Winchester recommended spending more now to recoup these losses over the next 20 years by working with organizations like Efficiency Vermont. By resolving the issues with the thermal envelope this can greatly improve the building's function over the next couple of

decades. This would place less stress on the proposed replacement units and practice greater due diligence moving forward.

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to table the Swanton Public Library 2023 budget to the next Selectboard meeting, seconded by Mr. White. Motion carried.

d) Review the Final Draft of the 2023 Swanton Recreation Budget

Mr. Savage presented the Swanton Recreation budget sent over by Ms. Fournier. Mr. Savage drew the Selectboard members attentions to the Town's appropriation versus the total appropriation. Ms. Fournier discussed that some of this appropriation is raised by Swanton Recreation through fundraisers. Mr. Bourgeois expressed the importance of Swanton Recreation and asked about the rollover's money impact on the appropriation figure? Ms. Draper described that if some of this saved money was rolled over into the money market account, it could assist with future projects. Mr. Bourgeois expressed a need to cap the money market or reserve account to better safeguard for the future. Ms. Draper added that this gives more control to the Recreation Department over the Selectboard for spending taxpayer dollars. Mr. Bourgeois recommended discussing this in more depth at future Selectboard meetings.

Mr. White made a motion to approve the final draft of the 2023 Swanton Recreation budget with a 30% rollover, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried.

e) ARPA Update

Mr. Savage summarized the ARPA update in the brief report. Out of the \$1,249,211.88 in ARPA funds received, \$29,357.48 has been expended in projects with other various committals amounting to \$749,680.00. This leaves \$470,174.40 in remaining funds.

5. New Town Business

a) Review 2023 Fire Protection Assessment from Swanton Village Fire Department

Chief Cross came forward to discuss the 2023 Fire Protection assessment. Mr. Bourgeois asked about where the calculation for the assessment figure came from? Chief Cross described that this calculation is based on the Grand List adding the increases caused by the purchase of a new truck and fuel increases.

Ms. Draper made a motion to vote on the 2023 Fire budget, seconded by Mr. White. Motion carried.

b) Review 2023 General Fund Budget

Ms. Fournier discussed increases in employee and Selectboard salaries leading to budget increases in administrative supply expenses. Ms. Fournier also highlighted the Viper cyber security interface to meet insurance requirements. There was a decrease in mileage for meetings attributed to in-person meetings switching to hybrid formats on web-based platforms. As expected, natural gas rates are going up which will lead to higher fuel expenses. Rates for legal fees have remained consistent, but Ms. Fournier recommended keeping an eye on this should an increase be needed. Ms. Fournier also described that the Town Hall gutter project has placed the general fund over budget.

There was a request from Mr. Daniels about the Town Plan budget having annual contributions to the budget for future plan edits. There was also a

request to bring the Bookmobile funding up to \$1,000.00 from the existing \$750.00. Mr. Guilmette mentioned a request for additional funding towards the Northwest Regional Planning Commission. Ms. Fournier stated that this increase has already been accounted for. Mr. Bourgeois clarified that this in addition to other factors would lead to a 5% budgetary increase. Mr. Guilmette talked about cutting the \$12,000.00 economic development budget and reallocating it.

c) Review 2023 Highway Budget

Mr. Guilmette gave a brief overview of the highway budget adding the increases in salt, sand, and paving due to price increases. The culvert line is listed as over budget due to the emergency culvert replacement on Maquam Shore Rd. Ms. Fournier recommended keeping the carryover money from the MVU project to make up the difference in the highway budget. Mr. Fournier asked about funds from other accounts? Mr. Bourgeois also asked about funding from the State? Mr. Guilmette said the State funds were used for the Beebe Rd. project and mentioned the use of ARPA funds to make up the difference.

Mr. Fournier recommended using ARPA funds to repair the culvert on Barry Rd. on the backside of French Hill Rd. Mr. Guilmette will be contacting Mr. Billingsly to discuss solutions moving forward. Mr. Fournier asked about a contingency fund to address emergency repairs? Mr. Guilmette said there is a contingency fund that is set at \$83,000.00 but would like to limit the depletions to this fund. Mr. Fournier recommended adding an additional \$200,000.00 to the road improvement fund to address future projects bringing the total up to \$250,000.00. Ms. Draper recommended doing an analysis of existing roads to determine the paving project needs.

Mr. Guilmette raised another point on stormwater permits. Mr. Savage said the stormwater permit for County Club Estates would amount to \$50,000.00 in application fees before engineering to meet existing State regulations. 18 months' worth of time has been bought on the existing stormwater permit, but engineers are quickly being booked to address this issue statewide. Mr. Guilmette asked about changing the capital reserve fund and whether this would need to be voted on as an Article? Ms. Fournier said yes because this needed to go before as an Article in the past. Mr. Guilmette recommended raising this figure to \$50,000.00 to address aging equipment and the cost of replacing it in the future.

d) Review Proposals from Swanton Village Police Department for 2023 Contract

Mr. Savage gave a brief synopsis of the proposals from the Swanton Village PD. Mr. Bourgeois asked clarification on whether this was due to staff shortages and whether staffing needed to be accounted for in next year's budget? Chief Sullivan described needing to look more closely at the data but asserted that Swanton PD is fully staffed according to the data. Chief Sullivan also discussed the reality of hiring another full-time officer and equated this to the availability factor in the per capita analysis should other officers be absent due to time off. Mr. Guilmette asked about full-time versus part time employment for Swanton PD? Chief Sullivan described that it is an even split between eight full-time officers and eight part-time officers. Mr. Fournier asked for clarification on the additional two hour per shift? Chief Sullivan described that the shift would start an hour earlier at 3:00 PM and extends an hour later to 2:00 AM.

e) Request from Northwest Solid Waste District to have a question placed on the 2023 Town Meeting Ballot

Mr. Savage updated the board letting them know of a bond issue with the Georgia facility which services the surrounding communities including Swanton. At this stage, they would like to have a ballot in Swanton on Town Meeting Day.

Mr. White made a motion to approve a ballot, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

f) Swanton Beautification

Mr. Lambert came forward to discuss tree planting and irrigation for flower beds to improve the visual beautification of Swanton. The Village is a beautiful area, and the Beautification Commission is requesting an Article and partnership with key organizations like parks and recreation. Paving was also mentioned as a computerized component to address road quality and priority for paving. Mr. Bourgeois asked what Swanton could do to address junkyards along First St.? Mr. Lambert described this as the broken window effect that needs enforcement from zoning to address it.

Speaking with the board, Mr. Guilmette's said that it is up to the Selectboard on how much they wish to contribute. Ms. Fournier clarified that \$1,500 goes through the Swanton Enhancement Project for beautification. The Beautification Commission's request would be upwards of \$5,000.00 for trees and flower beds. Mr. Fournier echoed support for the beautification to improve the quality of Swanton's image.

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to pledge \$3,000.00 to the Swanton Enhancement Project for beautification, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

6. Community & Economic Development

Mr. Savage requested to reserve this for executive session.

7. Highway Department

a) Certification of Highway Mileage 2023

Mr. Savage said that nothing new has been added and requested a motion.

Mr. White made a motion to approve the certification of highway mileage for 2023, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried.

b) Update on Mack Truck Repair

Mr. Guilmette summarized members of the Selectboard on the status of the \$13,000.00 Mack truck repairs and reported that the single axel truck now needs repair.

c) Road Sign

Mr. Guilmette expressed disappointment in the poor conditions of existing road signage and recommended writing a letter to the Secretary of Transportation.

Mr. Fournier made a motion to approve and authorize Mr. Savage to write a letter to the Secretary of Transportation, seconded by Mr. White. Motion carried.

8. Any Other Necessary Business

a) Recess Selectboard Meeting and Convene Liquor Control Board

Mr. White made a motion to recess the Selectboard meeting and convene the Liquor Control Board at 9:20 PM, seconded by Mr. Fournier. Motion carried.

1. Liquor License Renewals for 2023

- Charles DaPrato Post 778, VFW

Mr. Bougeois made a motion to approve Charles DaPrato Post 778, VFW liquor license renewal for 2023, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

b) Adjourn Liquor Control Board and Re-enter Selectboard Meeting

Mr. Fournier made a motion to adjourn the Liquor Control Board and re-enter the Selectboard meeting at 9:22 PM, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

c) Correction to the October 18, 2022 Minutes

Mr. Savage asked for a correction to the minutes of the 10/18/22 meeting for the contribution of \$10,000.00.

Ms. Draper made a motion to amend the minutes from the 10/18/22 meeting, seconded by Mr. White. Motion carried.

9. Correspondence - None

10. Public Comments (Reprise)

Mr. George is baffled by the illegible signage near the I-89 interchange and requested why his correspondence wasn't recorded in the minutes? Mr. Savage replied that he needs confirmation for inclusion in the minutes. Mr. George said he would send out a follow-up email for inclusion. As a follow-up to the recreation budget, Mr. George asked about a funding provision for swimming lessons and lakeshore quality. Ms. Draper responded that the recreation department offers and promotes all types of waterway recreation. Mr. George asked where these resources can be accessed. Ms. Draper said supplies are available at the recreation department at 16 Jewett St. Mr. George continued asking if considerations would be given for ARPA funds to be used for lakeshore quality and invasive plant growths? Mr. Guilmette responded that the Selectboard will explore this during the next ARPA fund discussion. As a final note, Mr. George mentioned the deplorable condition of apartment houses turning into junkyards, and responded that he'd like all these points recorded in the minutes.

11. Upcoming Events

- a) Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday – Monday, January 16, 2023 – Town Offices & Operations CLOSED
- b) Regular and Zoom Selectboard Meeting – Tuesday, January 17, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. – Town Office Building, 1 Academy Street
- c) Planning Commission Meeting – Wednesday, January 18, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. – Town Office Building, 1 Academy Street
- d) DRB Meeting – Thursday, January 26, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. – Town Office Building, 1 Academy Street

12. Executive Session (Legal, Personnel)

Ms. Draper made a motion to enter executive session at 9:35 p.m., seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried.

Ms. Draper made a motion to exit executive session at 10:02 p.m., seconded by Mr. White. Motion carried.

No motions taken.

- E. Adjournment – Mr. White made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:03 p.m., seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joseph Cava
Administrative Assistant

Received and filed by:

Cathy Fournier, Town Clerk

Date