

**DRAFT MINUTES
TOWN OF SWANTON
SELECTBOARD MEETING
Swanton Village Municipal Complex
120 First St., Swanton, VT 05488
In-Person & By TEAMS
TUESDAY, June 6, 2023 @ 6:00 p.m.**

Please Note: Special Location as well as new virtual access using TEAMS

Present: Earl Fournier-Chair, Ed White-Vice Chair, Nicole Draper, Steve Bourgeois, Cody Hemenway-Members, Brian Savage-Town Administrator, Cathy Fournier-Town Clerk, Christina Candels, -Administrative Assistant, Bethany Remmers- Northwest RPC, Matt Sullivan-Police Chief, Charles Martin, Shelly Martin, June Charbonneau, Gloria A. Bouchard, Eugene LaBombard, Chevon Cooper, Andy LaRocque, James Guilmette, Mark Rocheleau, Steve Ploesser, Sandy Kilburn, Ron Kilburn, Dan Palmer, Michael Korte, Shirley Korte, Jenn Yandow, Melissa Colgan, Dale Colgan, Representative-Matt Walker, Shaun Cheney, David Winchester, Richard Thompson, Neal Speer, Ed Daniel
Via Teams: Linda, Angela Gaudette, Angela Elderton, Don, Gordon Winters,

* All Motions are carried unanimously unless specified otherwise.

A. Call to Order: Mr. Fournier called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

B. Pledge of Allegiance: Mr. Fournier led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

C. Agenda Review

Mr. Fournier requested to add Conversation in regards to County Courier advertising. Mr. Savage requested to add discussion about Town requiring new Credit Card.

D. Meeting Topics

1. Minutes

a) May 16, 2023, Regular & Zoom Selectboard Meeting

Mr. White made a motion to approve the Draft Minutes from the 5/16/2023 Selectboard Meeting, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion Carried.

2. Public Comments

Ms. Martin asked how to find out about Police patrol in front of her home to address reckless four-wheeler activity. Mr. Sullivan stated there is a known issue with Swanton Village & Swanton Town with four-wheeler activity. Current policies do not permit pursuit. Swanton Town currently does have ordinance to operate them on town roads not state highways. Swanton Village does not have ordinance. Mr. Sullivan state they can issue tickets to individuals whom can be

identified, that would require testimony of individual whom takes videos or pictures, this has happened in the past.

Ms. Charbonneau spoke of concerns of vehicles passing on double yellow.

Mr. Sullivan stated that is an area they are watching for speeding as well as using speed trailer. Also, that in Vermont the law states they can pass on double yellow if safely possible.

Mr. LaRocque suggested removing the Pass with Care sign.

3. Law Enforcement

a) Swanton Health Officer Report

Board reviewed Town Health Officers report. Two Notable Incidents:

- 1) Discussion to continue in Executive Session for North River Street Property.
- 2) Health officer was contacted by prospected purchaser of 9 Grand Ave in regards to health and safety of current tenants. After this visit a 48-hour notice was given, town does not have update from 2nd visit.

b) Swanton Police Chief Report

Mr. Sullivan updated report of May 2023.

64 incidents, 5 traffic stops of these traffic stops resulted in:
4 tickets, 4 warnings, 1 arrest

In total 10 arrest charges in Swanton Town in May 2023.

Mr. Sullivan is still actively working with officers to punch cards when patrolling to monitor town patrols.

12 incidents were tracked in May of those

Top 10 incident types:

9 motor vehicle complains, 7 suspicious persons, 7 DUI or Drug, 5 traffic stops, 5 Agency Assist, 4 citizen disputes, 3 thefts, 3 family fights/domestic, 3 welfare checks

Mr. Sullivan reviewed incident report/ ticket report.

Arrest Report states

1 leaving scene of accident, 1 petty larceny, 1 person prohibited possessing firearm, 2 DUI, 1 impeding public office, 1 unlawful trespass, 1 resisting arrest, 1 negligent operation, 1 arrest on warrant.

Mr. Sullivan added continued interest in adding officers, recently contacted by two highly experienced officers requesting to join as part time officers. These officers would be ideal as only need abbreviated training process to learn how things are conducted in Franklin County.

Also added in Marine Patrol.

Ms. Cooper asked if these reports are available to the public. They are part of meeting minutes and Mr. Sullivan noted plan to add to new Town/Village Website.

4. Old Town Business

a) Update on LVRT

Mr. Savage discussed meeting upcoming meeting with VHB to discuss progress & scheduling. June 12, 2023 @ 1pm.
Official opening is scheduled for July 15, 2023 starting in Swanton @ 730am
Governor Scott & Senator Sanders plan to be in attendance.

Ms. Draper spoke of plans for possible event for trail connecting Swanton – Sheldon- St. Albans via LVRT & MVRT.

b) Update on new website

Mr. Savage state website has been up and available since Thursday June 1, 2023. With only minor changes being required.
Ms. Candels put website on screens for everyone in attendance to view. A quick explanation of the site and navigation was done.
Mr. Fournier asked of any feedback received. All feed back has been positive.
Ms. Draper asked if people would like to add to community calendar whom do they contact? Town Administrators Office or Village Office.
Also noted is ability to sign for notifications.

c) Vicious dog complaint

Mr. Savage updated the board the dog in question had been vaccinated and registered with the Town of Swanton.

5. New Town Business

a) Appoint a representative to the Northwest Vermont Rail Trail Council

Mr. White made a motion to appoint Mr. Joel Clark as Swanton representative to Northwest Vermont Rail Trail Council, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

b) Mr. Fournier discussed process for getting new information published in County Courier newspaper.

Board agreed Ms. Candels would create a one-page recap for board to approve to send County Courier.

Mr. LaBombard explained how Village posts draft copy minutes. This is great way to redirect people back to website.

Mr. Winchester stated Swanton Community Facebook page has 5500 followers this is excellent format to share info.

c) Mr. Savage stated to board members Swanton Town credit card had been compromised. Account has been closed at no cost loss to town. The town now needs to open new credit card account.

Mr. Hemenway made motion to approve Mr. Savage open new account for Town of Swanton with Community Bank N.A. with credit limit of \$10,000 for Swanton Town & \$5,000 for Swanton Recreation Dept, seconded by Mr. White. Motion carried. Ms. Draper abstained as member of Swanton Recreation.

6. Community and Economic Development

Mr. Savage has met with prospected applicant for Revolving Loan fund loan. State of Vermont has still not closed out grant to fund program as of yet. Mr. Bourgeois discussed Town of Swanton does not currently have any Formal Loan Policy in place. This is something that should be looked at, possibly created before this is funded. Should the town use a 3rd party bank to handle this as well, with the liability. Currently Liability Insurance does not cover town for this. This will all be discussed more at next meeting.

Mr. Bourgeois met with Tim Smith recently these things discuss local businesses, in these respects should be discussed in executive session at later time.

7. Highway Department

- a) Ms. Angela Lyon-Gaudette, concerns on Maple Grove Estates.

Ms. Gaudette expressed to the board her concerns for pot holes & culvert condition at the entrance of Maple Grove Estates & US Route 7. Mr. Fournier, Mr. White & Kevin Lapan (Swanton Highway Forman) met and viewed issues of concern recently. The culvert is in State of Vermont right-of-way, they do not plan to address at this time Mr. Fournier stated. Mr. Lapan told Mr. Fournier the “plan” is to repave the road next year. Mr. Lapan stated he would make attempt to clean out culvert and patch the roads better in the coming weeks. The pot holes have recently been filled, that being said they will do better patch soon. Mr. Hemenway asked if was patched with Hot or Cold patch that makes a difference.

- b) Hydraulic study from VTrans on Berry Road culvert.

Mr. Savage shared with the board members he received the Hydraulic study back for VTrans for Berry Road culvert. The study stated the only way to fix the culvert is to build a 35’ bridge.

It needs to be noted there is no Swanton residence whom reside on the Berry Road.

The culvert was severely damaged from Halloween storm of 2019.

There are no grant funds available for this bridge or culvert due to fact it is class 3 road.

Mr. Savage would like to arrange a joint meeting with Swanton & Fairfield selectboard members as well as town representatives & senators form Montpelier, discuss the what ideas there is. This road is used by Fairfield residents as short cut to St. Albans.

Mr. Bourgeois ask is it feasible to close the road, have no residents of Swanton living on the road.

Mr. Savage will make arrangements for the meeting.

Mr. Fournier asked if there is risk of the road needing to be closed due to condition? That can be a consideration if any other storm causes damage.

- c) Mr. Fournier sated they are paving Campbell's Bay Road this week. Also noted is they will as repave Alex Campbell's yard at the same time because town & school bus use as turn around. They know the cost and that will be reimbursed to the town.

Pike Industries agreed and will pave at the same time, once completed the town will bill and be remitted payment.

8. PUBLIC INPUT SESSION – MVU/ROUTE 78 SIDEWALK PROJECT

Ms. Remmers from Northwest Regional Planning updated all in attendance a brief overview of the project since it began.

3200 feet long 5 feet wide sidewalk

From Dunkin Donuts to MVU along route 78.

Also updated is the estimated cost of project, how much has been spent (\$68,000), how much the town has to match grant received (\$158,000) for the project in amount of \$790,000.

Many members of the community as well as effected land owners spoke during Public Input time. Below is listed whom voiced opinion in opposition as well in favor of the project as it is currently designed and planned.

In favor or project: Not In favor of Project as designed: Neutral to project:

James Guilmette
Ed Daniel
David Winchester
Jenn Yandow
Marc Rocheleau

Charles Martin
Shelly Martin
Gloria Bouchard
Dick Thompson
Dale Colgan
June Charboneau
Andy LaRocque
Matt Walker
Steve Ploesser
Sandy Kilburn
Neal Speer
Shaun Cheney

Dan Palmer
Chevon Cooper

Many in attendance were in agreement that the project as Is designed is not favorable due to safety. The of people would like to see the future of the project be redirected up Frontage Road into school that way.

Mr. Savage read three letters he received via email for tonight's meeting from Ms. Amy Brewer, Mr. Joel Clark, Ms. Julie Regimbal (Superintendent MVSD)
They are all attached to these minutes.

Selectboard members voice their opinion on the project as currently designed.

Mr. Bourgeois thanked everyone for their comments but he stated that he was not in favor of the project.

Mr. Hemenway would like to see the option of alternate route via Frontage Road. Possibly saving money

Ms. Draper thanked everyone for coming, works with community youth and shared that 67% of youth wanting to access other services in community and this sidewalk with help them do that. The growth with the airport this can be a connector. Kids are asking for safe pathways to community.

Mr. White thanked everyone for coming to share input. Mr. White is concerned about the cost of the project when he took time on two occasions and did not witness children walking to / from MVU.
Supportive of alternate route via Frontage Road.

Mr. Hemenway asked if the project is designed to go in phases? Ms. Remmers sated she did not believe VTrans would accept that no.

Ms. Remmers also followed up with that in 2019 when the town applied for the grant to cover 90% of project VTrans approved the project because MVSD committed to continuing on to the school. Superintendent Regimbal now states that is not an option in the timeline the town plans to construct project.

Mr. Fournier asked if Ms. Remmers can find out if Vtrans would approve project if redesigned up Frontage Road.

Mr. Fournier thanked everyone for input, agreed board needs to learn more about grant as well if Frontage Road is option.

All these questions need to be answered before making final decision.

Mr. White asked all landowners present if they would consider selling Town of Swanton easement for there land. All present stated no.

9. Any Other Necessary Business

Mr. Savage asked the board to write a letter of support for a \$1,000,000 grant to upgrade the wastewater system. Mr. Savage stated since all town industrial parks though located in town are connected to Village.

wastewater system. This is important to continue improvement of our water ways.

Ms. Draper made a motion Mr. Savage to draft a letter of support for this Community Revitalization Grant, signed by Mr. Fournier, seconded by Mr. Hemenway. Motion carried.

10. Public Comment (Reprise)

11. Upcoming Events

- a) Planning Commission – Public Input on Town Plan – Wed. 6/14/23 – 6:30 pm
Town Offices – 1 Academy Street
- b) DRB – Thursday – 6/15/23 – 6:00 pm – Town Offices – 1 Academy Street
- c) Selectboard Meeting – 6/20/23- 6:00 pm – Town Offices – 1 Academy Street
- d) DRB - Thursday – 6/22/2023 – 6:00 pm – Town Offices – 1 Academy Street

12. Executive Session (Legal, Personnel)

Ms. Draper made a motion to enter executive session at 8:45 p.m., seconded by Mr. Hemenway. Motion carried.

Ms. Draper made a motion to exit executive session at 8:57 p.m., seconded by Mr. Hemenway. Motion carried.

Mr. Hemenway made motion to increase Christina Candels pay by \$1 hour, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

E. Adjournment

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m., seconded by Ms. White Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted by,

Christina Candels
Administrative Assistant

To the Swanton Selectboard members,

Good morning. I am writing to you all because I wanted to share some thoughts regarding the proposed sidewalk from the Swanton sidewalk network to MVU that will be discussed on June 6th. Unfortunately, I am unable to attend in person, so I thought I would share my strong support for this project in an email.

As many of you already know, I am a Health Educator at NMC and our region's Safe Routes to School Coordinator and have been for over a decade. This particular project has many, many benefits to both our students and our community.

A sidewalk from MVU connecting to the Swanton sidewalk network is important for our youth in particular! Here are just some of the opportunities a sidewalk provides for MVU students:

- **ACCESS to EMPLOYMENT and RESOURCES**— even when students are old enough to drive, not all students do or have access to a car. But this walkable distance gives them access to Swanton's resources including EMPLOYMENT at places like Hannaford, RECREATION fields, courts, and rec paths, SOCIAL GROUPS such as those at the LIBRARY, and for some, getting home without a bus. It fosters independence which is great in helping youth become adults.
- Walking and biking (physical activity) for youth is important in **maintaining mental and physical health**. NUMEROUS studies demonstrate that walking/biking to/from school helps with academics and behavior. That's also part of the solution to addressing substance misuse and mental health challenges.
- Can help decrease their impact on the **environment**. Human-powered transportation emits no greenhouse gases. It's definitely a safer, greener way to transport oneself
- For some, it's **faster transportation**. Bus rides can be long. Sometimes, for some, walking/biking is a faster way to get from Swanton to MVU and back.
- Some students already walk/bike this. We owe them to make it safe. **It can be engineered and built to be safe.**

I am thrilled that the Selectboard has undertaken this initiative and am extremely confident that when it is built, it will create opportunity, a healthier community, and a safe route for our community's important asset, our youth.

Thank you for your time. Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions or for further discussion.

In good health,
Amy

Amy Brewer (she/her), MPH, CHES
Safe Routes to School Regional Coordinator, Local Motion
Health Educator, Northwestern Medical Center
133 Fairfield St.
St. Albans City, VT 05478
Cell: 802-922-2587
abrewer@nmcinc.org

5 June 2023

Swanton Selectboard
1 Academy Street
Swanton, VT 05488

Subject: Sidewalk on Route 78

Dear Selectboard Members,

I regret not being able to be in person to present my thoughts, but I had another commitment.

I want to start by saying that I fully support installing a sidewalk to Thunderbird Drive. This project was started several years ago. It was a project that was vetted with the community and committed to by a previous Selectboard. While there may be some opposition to the project, the improvements of adding a sidewalk outweigh leaving the situation status quo. There are many positive reasons for adding a sidewalk:

Health and fitness: By creating a safe path for members of the community to walk from the village to the school, you increase the opportunity for people to make healthier choices on how to move about in the eastern part of the Town. Currently the only option is to walk in the road. No viable survey has been completed about how many will use the sidewalk and I am sure it is not on the top of discussion items currently at MVU. Positive promotion of a walking option will help increase the usage. There are also residents on both sides of Route 78 that will have the opportunity to use the sidewalk when installed.

Safety: The current situation for pedestrians walking along the side of the road is not a safe one. The risk of injury only increases in the winter months. Installation of a sidewalk minimizes the risk of walking in that area.

I have heard several issues raised over the past few months and I'd like to address them:

Safety: I heard at one meeting that there is a safety concern with a sidewalk being installed in that area. As stated by the engineers, the sidewalk would be installed six feet off the edge of the pavement. I have traveled through communities where the speed limit is 45 and there are two travel lanes in each direction. Both sides of the road have curb and sidewalk right off the pavement. I do not see a safety issue with the sidewalk being installed as noted. I would encourage you to ask the designer of the project and NW Regional Planning their opinion on the safety issue. If they have concerns, they should not be supporting this project.

Snow removal: At one Selectboard meeting I heard one Selectboard member say that the Town would have to hire another employee. I do not believe the Town would have to hire another employee. The plowing of sidewalks could take place after the roads have been taken care of. Many of the snow events are only a few inches. People can walk on a sidewalk with a few inches of snow until the snow is cleared. In a heavy snow event, school would be canceled anyway, allowing the sidewalk to be cleared later. Worst case is the Town could bring on a seasonal

employee if it is determined that is what is needed. I also heard over \$100,000 would be needed on a special piece of equipment to clear the snow. While that would be ideal, a properly equipped tractor could do the job for much less money. The town has a capital equipment fund that could be used to purchase the tractor.

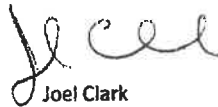
Longevity of construction: I heard a Selectboard member state that the sidewalk would not last long and would have to be replaced within a few years. The sidewalk installed on Bushey Street has been installed for close to ten years and is in fine shape. The sidewalk installed by Town employees on Robin Hood Drive is in fine shape as well. I encourage you so ask the designer how long they expect the sidewalk to last if properly constructed.

Proximity to houses on the Eastern end: I know the residents have concerns with the placement of a sidewalk so close to their homes. I appreciate their concerns, but I do not see the sidewalk interfering with the use of their property.

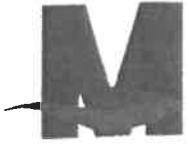
I would also like to add that it is my understanding the school district is aware of this project and they have a companion project to run a sidewalk from their facility out to Route 78. I would hope that if that is the case, the Town would hold up their end of project.

As stated in the beginning, I see the project as a positive for the Town of Swanton. I fully support the project and I hope the Selectboard will as well.

Thank you for your time.



Joel Clark



MISSISQUOI VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

100 Robin Hood Drive, Suite 2
Swanton, VT 05488
Tel: (802) 868-4967 Fax: (802) 868-4265

MVSDSCHOOLBOARDS.ORG

June 6, 2023

Brian Savage, Town Administrator
1 Academy St
Swanton, VT 05488

Dear Mr. Savage,

I am writing to give input into the proposed sidewalk project from Route 78 to the MVU property from the perspective of the school district. Unfortunately we have a full school board meeting tonight and two championship games tonight that will be keeping administrators busy this evening. Elizabeth Nance attended the June 20, 2019 MVU school board meeting to discuss this project. She shared a brief overview of the grant that the Town of Swanton hoped to receive and the commitment that she hoped the school would make to build a sidewalk on MVU property to meet the proposed sidewalk on Route 78. The MVU board voted to support the concept and charged me to write a letter of support for the Swanton's grant application.

Over the past several years, I have followed this project and have kept our MVSD facility committee aware of updates as they have come along. Here are the specific hurdles that the District will need to address should this sidewalk project proceed.:

- As we are a school, the sidewalk would need to be ADA compliant. The approximately 400 feet long sidewalk would need to be 5 feet wide to meet ADA requirements for access.
- MVSD does not own the property on either side of our driveway on Route 78. We would need a construction easement of 20-30 feet during construction and then a permanent easement of about 10 feet from the property owner in order to proceed with the MVU portion of the project.
- This project is currently on the MVSD long-term capital plan with a timeline "to be determined". We cannot commit to a particular timeline, as MVSD has prioritized many capital projects, including the MVU roofing project, which will take place over the next several years.
- The MVU portion of this project would then be thoroughly researched and budgeted for voter approval in a future MVSD budget.

I wanted to be sure that the Select Board understands that this is not a simple or inexpensive project for the school and would likely take longer than the Town's portion of the project, and yet we take the safety of our students seriously. A safer path to school would be a tremendous benefit to our students.

Please feel free to reach out with any further questions or concerns as you move forward with this decision.

Regards,

Julie Regimbal, Superintendent