

**DRAFT MINUTES
TOWN OF SWANTON
SPECIAL JOINT MEETING SWANTON SELECTBOARD
SWANTON VILLAGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
SWANTON RECREATION COMMISSION
Town Office Building
1 Academy Street, Swanton, VT 05488
In-Person & By Zoom
*Thursday, July 6, 2023 @ 6:00 pm***

Present: Earl Fournier, Chair; Ed White Sr., Vice Chair; Nicole Draper, Steve Bourgeois, Cody Hemenway, Selectboard Members; Brian Savage, Town Administrator; Cathy Fournier, Town Clerk; Joseph Cava, Interim Administrative Assistant; William Sheets, Village Manager; Neal Speer, Village Board of Trustees President; Eugene LaBombard, Adam Paxman, Board of Village Trustees Members; Joel Clark; Betsy Fournier, Jesse LeClair, Jason Guyette, Sophie Viburt, Recreation Commission Members; Matthew Sullivan, Swanton Chief of Police; Chevon Cooper; Christine Sweeny; Ron Kilburn; Sandy Skeels Kilburn; Gordon Winters

- A. Call to Order – Mr. Fournier called the Special Joint Selectboard meeting to order at 6:00 PM.
- B. Pledge of Allegiance – Mr. Fournier led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- C. Agenda Review
- D. Meeting Topics
 - 1. Minutes
 - a) June 20, 2023, Regular & Zoom Selectboard Meeting

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to approve the draft minutes as written from the 6/20/23 Selectboard Meeting, seconded by Mr. White. Motion carried.
 - 2. Public Comments
 - 3. Law Enforcement
 - a) Swanton Health Officer Report

Members of the Selectboard briefly reviewed the Swanton Health Officer's report. Mr. Fournier mentioned an incident with a cat.

b) Swanton Police Chief Report

Chief Sullivan gave a summary of the 53 incidents in June including suspicious persons, citizen assists, alarm response, community outreach, and motor vehicle accidents. Chief Sullivan mentioned that data is pulled from ticketed offenses and said that additional traffic enforcement is needed in the Village and widely traveled corridors like Route 78. Drug enforcement with Federal participation is also continuing leading to enforcement through search warrants.

There is also an expressed interest in new recruits joining the force. Mr. Bourgeois asked about starting pay rate for experienced officers. Chief Sullivan said \$25.00/hour starting rate with additional compensation based upon experience.

4. Old Town Business

a) Update on LVRT

Mr. Clark mentioned the Federal NEPA grant which is moving along. Mr. Clark also mentioned brush clearing, which is on hold until more favorable weather. Mr. Savage mentioned the Governor's visit on 7/15/23 at 7:00 AM and said anyone is welcome to join the ride towards St. Johnsbury. Mr. Fournier added that Senator Sanders would also be present during the festivities.

Mr. Clark recommended doing outreach within the community to involve younger members of the community. Ms. Draper echoed this to get the community's youth engaged. Mr. Fournier recommended event signs to be placed in the vicinity of Robin Hood Dr. to advertise the event.

b) Update – Library HVAC Installation

Mr. Savage gave an update saying that the HVAC installation has been completed. Ms. Draper asked about flooding in the basement. Mr. Savage said heavy rainfall caused the flooding. Mr. Savage was in contact with librarian staff who feel the issues directly relate to the condition of the foundation. Mr. Fournier recommended scheduling an inspection to evaluate the conditions.

c) Review RFP – Library Icing Issue

Mr. Savage said that the library is seeking proposals to resolve the icing issues around the roof of the building.

d) Media Summary to County Courier

Mr. Savage said there was an issue with the County Courier posting notices in a timely manner. Ms. Candels reached out, but the Currier did not return her calls.

e) Town Credit Card Accounts

Mr. Savage has been initiating applications on behalf of Swanton Town and the Recreation Department. The credit card companies requested income statements to support the applications. Mr. Savage elected to withdraw the applications after finding out that the Town can obtain a credit card through Peoples Trust Company with a starting limit of \$14,000.00 compared to the existing credit card which is only \$10,000.00.

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to authorize Mr. Savage to apply for the credit card through Peoples Trust Company, Mr. White seconded the motion.

5. New Town Business

a) E-911 New Road Name

Mr. White made a motion to approve Ely Lane as the subdivision's new road name, seconded by Mr. Hemenway. Motion carried.

b) New Resolution for Signature

Ms. Fournier gave the Selectboard a summary of the resolution for signature on behalf of the Recreation Department.

Mr. Hemenway made a motion for the Selectboard to sign the resolution on behalf of the Recreation Department, seconded by Mr. White. Motion carried.

6. Community and Economic Development - None

7. Highway Department

a) Swanton Hill Road/Barry Road

Mr. Savage said that E-911 needs to be fixed on the Swanton Hill Rd. and Barry Rd. in the vicinity of French Hill Rd. and Reynolds Rd. The Barry Rd. up until the border of Fairfield would become the Swanton Hill Rd.

Mr. White made a motion approving the proposed change of Barry Rd. to Swanton Hill Rd. to bring conformity with E-911 standards, seconded by Mr. Hemenway. Motion carried.

8. Discussion with Village Trustees and Swanton Recreation Commission

a) Master Plan for Recreation Facilities

Ms. Fournier said that once they have a completed feasibility in hand, they'll have the additional information needed to move forward. Ms. Draper recused herself from the Selectboard to speak on recreation matters. Moving forward, Ms. Draper stated that recreation plays an important role in Swanton for economic vitality and tourism. She mentioned specific locations like Marble Mill Park, but also highlighted the growth in recreation initiatives, programming, and activities.

Continuing, Mr. Draper equated recreation as a social and educational opportunity that relates to the seven dimensions of wellbeing. This extends beyond physical ability and broadens the scope for short-term and long-term goals. The community center is a larger goal, but the shorter goals could include short-term maintenance initiatives to make this site meaningful to all and not just some. Some of these great ideas are established through partnerships with the Missisquoi Valley Wildlife Refuge, Abenaki, and completion of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail. It's a partnership to achieve the same goals to create a master plan.

Ms. Fournier asked for clarification on this master plan. Mr. Fournier responded that emphasis would be placed on parks and recreation as the driving forces of this master plan. Mr. Fournier also mentioned the recreation facility as a key component that needs to be folded into this plan. Ms. Kilburn mentioned the health problem with today's youth sitting around at home not being engaged in the community. Mr. Fournier also mentioned the location of the community center as a contributing force for this. Ms. Fournier expressed concern because the Recreation Department is already moving forward with plans to site the community center.

Mr. Bourgeois added that we need to take an inventory of existing building stock to ensure that the proposed building is not replicating what's already exists. Mr. Clark mentioned that a gym space is needed to address activities that cannot be conducted during the day in spaces like schools that are otherwise occupied. Mr. Winters added that a master plan is essential for driving larger projects like a community center. Continuing, Mr. Winters recommended flexibility should specific sites not work out as well as expected/planned. Mr. Fournier said that the community is receiving different stories on what this initiative entails. Mr. Clark stated that plan has always remained the same, a combination community center and recreation facility.

Mr. Clark expressed a need for a public relations initiative so that this project can extend beyond the Selectboard's meeting. Ms. Fournier expressed concern because the Selectboard keeps throwing in roadblocks that delay the planning for this project. Ms. Cooper mentioned her continued involvement in these public meetings but expressed dismay citing the roadblocks previously mentioned. Ms. Cooper said there was a need for greater communication and created a poll to gather data for what Swanton residents want. Mr. Fournier recommended holding a public hearing to gather more information. Ms. Fournier said the Recreation Commission would be prepared to hold a campaign for this public input.

The community wants this, but Mr. Fournier said this won't happen overnight. Planning takes time to understand how much it will cost and how it will be maintained. Mr. Clark recommended that waiting until September would be ideal for the completion of the feasibility study and the final submission of the Municipal plan. Ms. Draper said that the information requested through the Recreation Department is directly correlated with the data weaned through the feasibility study. Mr. Speer added that the feasibility study is an essential part of this plan to ensure that the information is accurate and attainable. Ms. Draper said the information that has been provided was based upon preliminary planning to move the project forward. Mr. Guyette expressed concern with students and their families moving away from Swanton to have opportunities in other communities that are not currently provided by Swanton. Mr. Fournier said they'll schedule a public hearing once the once the data is available.

Mr. Bourgeois said the building is attainable, but the expressed the need for a master plan to encompass this. Mr. Clark mentioned that alternatives like moving ball fields are not an attainable solution. Ms. Draper added that there are too many variables at play and a memorandum of

understanding should be drafted to reflect the existing capacity against the proposed capacity. If a new location is needed, then we need to discuss it now. Mr. Fournier proposed the public input following the feasibility study to discuss what could be done.

Ms. Draper spoke on the Recreation Department servicing the community with the resources at hand which are very thin. Mr. Guyette asked about the longevity of the master plan and the constancy needed to propel it. Mr. Fournier cited the MVU sidewalk as an example of things that don't work out and stressed the importance of a master plan. Ms. Cooper asked what the difference is between the parks and recreation master plan, and the municipal plan being worked on by the Planning Commission. If this is required, Ms. Cooper requested a motion to take steps forward in light of the mounting drawbacks that keep accumulating. Mr. Winters spoke on the master plan stating that the acquisition of land needs to be encompassed to establish a base for all parks and recreation initiatives. The Selectboard needs to take a hard look at action steps needed to propel this forward.

Mr. Speer recommended professional input to settle the hodge podge of unsettling drawbacks to stick with a plan. Mr. Fournier recommended that Mr. Savage, Mr. Sheets, and Ms. Draper work together to gather data for the master plan. Mr. Speer said a master plan looks into the future. Mr. Fournier added that the committee members ranging from the Town, Village, and Recreation Commission for the master plan would encompass the representation needed to move forward. Mr. Bourgeois asked if the Village would be okay with Mr. Sheets being the Village's representative. Mr. Speer clarified that this established board could be the central body asking for requests for proposals. Mr. Sheets recommended a location feasibility study to address community concerns.

Mr. White made a motion to appoint Mr. Savage, Mr. Sheets, and Ms. Draper as members of a special board to research resources for a master plan by the 7/25/23 Selectboard meeting, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried.

b) Discussion of ATV Ordinance (w/ Village Trustees only)

Mr. Paxman mentioned a previous Village Trustee meeting with Chief Sullivan that expressed concern on ATV traffic in the Village. This is in response to the ordinance that was enacted last year which didn't encompass the Village. Ms. Draper mentioned signage as a potential tool to mark the limits between the Town and the Village. Mr. Paxman also mentioned getting pictures of repeat offenders that are disrupting the peace

and tranquility of the Village. Mr. White mentioned that the Village Police don't enforce policing of these vehicles. Mr. Paxman said that police can't pursue or chase these vehicles. Mr. Savage said that ATVs shouldn't be used on State roads in addition to Village roads and folding factors like age and insurance can deter repeat offenders. Ms. Cooper recommended video tools to map the acceptable versus unacceptable roads and trails.

9. Any Other Necessary Business

a) Maquam Shore Grant

Mr. Fournier requested a follow up with Kim Jenson through the State of Vermont regarding the invasive species grant to improve lakeshore quality.

10. Public Comment (Reprise)

Mr. Bourgeois expressed gratitude to the Planning Commission for their hard work and efficiency to revise the Municipal plan.

11. Upcoming Events

- a) Planning Commission Meeting – Wednesday, July 12, 2023 at 6:30 pm – Town Office Building
- b) LVRT Celebration – Saturday, July 15, 2023 at 7:00 am – Robin Hood Dr.
- c) Selectboard Meeting – Tuesday, July 18, 2023 at 6:00 pm – In-Person & Zoom at Town Office Building
- d) DRB Meeting – Thursday, July 27, 2023 at 6:00 pm – Town Office Building

12. Executive Session (If needed)

Ms. Draper made a motion to enter executive session at 8:10 pm, seconded by Mr. Hemenway. Motion carried.

Mr. White made a motion to exit executive session at 8:52 pm, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

Mr. White made a motion to rescind the previous motion from the 6/20/23 Selectboard meeting for FEMA hazard mitigation, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Mr. Fournier, Mr. White, Mr. Bourgeois, and Mr. Hemenway voted aye. Ms. Draper voted nay. Motion carried.

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion giving the Swanton Historical Society 90 days to vacate the basement room in the library, seconded by Ms. Draper. Mr. Hemenway abstained. Motion carried.

E. Adjournment

Ms. Draper made a motion to adjourn the Special Joint Selectboard meeting at 8:54 pm, seconded by Mr. White. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted.

Joseph Cava
Interim Administrative Assistant