

**Draft Meeting Minutes  
TOWN OF SWANTON  
SELECTBOARD MEETING  
Town Office Building  
1 Academy Street, Swanton, VT 05488  
In-Person & By Zoom  
TUESDAY, July 18, 2023 @ 6:00 p.m.**

Present: Earl Fournier, Chair; Ed White Sr., Vice Chair; Nicole Draper, Steve Bourgeois, Selectboard Members; Brian Savage, Town Administrator; Cathy Fournier, Town Clerk; Christina Candels, Administrative Assistant; Amy Giroux Zoning Administrator, Corey Parent, Kevin Lapan Road Forman, Glen Gurwit, Heather Lavoie, Jason Barney, Ron Kilburn, Joel Clark, Amy Brewer, Sandy Skeels-Kilburn, Ed Daniel, Bill Sheets, Nicholas Brosseau, Chevon Cooper, Oliver Manning,

Call to Order

Mr. Fournier called the Selectboard Meeting to order at 5:59 pm.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Fournier let those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.

C. Agenda Review

Mr. Bourgeois would like to add under Other Business, a meeting with Elementary School Administration.

Mr. Savage would like to add under Old Town Business, Ms. Smith would not be in attendance tonight due to current Flooding Emergency, plans to attend next Selectboard meeting 8/2/23.

Mr. Savage would like to add under Other Necessary Business, would like to discuss wright-of-way of Precision Lane.

Ms. Draper would like to add under Other Necessary Business, Media Summary

D. Meeting Topics

1. Minutes

- a) July 6, 2023 - Regular Selectboard Meeting

**Mr. White made a motion to approve the draft minutes as written from the 7/6/2023 Selectboard Meeting, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried.**

2. Public Comments

3. Expenditures

- a) General Orders

**Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to approve the General Orders of 6/21/23 to 7/18/23 in the amount of \$96,918.70, seconded by Mr. White. Motion carried.**

- b) Highway Orders  
**Mr. White made a motion to approve Highway Orders of 6/21/23 to 7/18/23 in the amount of \$433,277.53, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.**
  - c) ARPA Orders  
**Mr. White made a motion to approve ARPA Orders of 6/21/23 to 7/18/23 in the amount of \$33,111.34, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried.**
  - d) Library Orders  
**Ms. Draper made a motion to approve Library Orders of 6/21/23 to 7/18/23 in the amount of \$2,520.95, seconded by Mr. White. Motion carried.**
  - e) Highway /General Payroll  
**Mr. White made a motion to approve Highway/General Payroll Orders of 6/21/23 to 7/18/23 in the amount of \$32,578.15, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.**
  - f) Library Payroll  
**Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to approve Library Payroll Orders of 6/21/23 to 7/18/23 in the amount of \$9,192.67, seconded by Mr. White. Motion carried.**
4. Highway Department
- Mr. Lapan updated the board that the road patch has been completed on Champlain Street, they will begin working on replacing the Champlain Street culvert Wednesday.
- Mr. Fournier asked about Line striping, Mr. Lapan has not heard back from them yet.
- Mr. Fournier also verified there was no damage due to recent flooding. Three roads had water over them, after water receded there was no damage.
- Mr. Lapan stated they plan to look at what is needed to patch end of Maple Grove Est. this week also.
5. Law Enforcement
- a) Swanton Animal Control  
No Update from Mr. Benson or Mr. Hemenway.
5. Old Town Business
- a) FEMA Hazard Mitigation Program – Stephanie Smith, State of Vermont
- Ms. Smith was unable to attend due to Current Flooding Emergency
- Mr. Fournier stated the last meeting the Selectboard made the decision to not partake in this program. Mr. Fournier questions whether this was the correct decision to make.
- Mr. Fournier doesn't think there is any liability to the Town.

Mr. Bourgeois asked about whether it would need to be mowed and amount of lost tax revenue.

Mr. Savage spoke about the Swanton Town Flood Plan, in that was to support FEMA Flood Mitigation. At the time FEMA would only fund 75% of fair market value, now with State of Vermont matching 25% that brings landowners to 100% fair market value. This brings to question obligations under FEMA Flood Insurance Program by not participating in this.

Mr. Bourgeois requested they wait to reconsider vote when Ms. Smith comes.

There have been three applications for this program, those are currently on hold.

b) Update on Fourth Street Property

Mr. Savage updated members of his attempt to have this property added to Brownsfield. He has a meeting July 31, 2023, and should have a better idea after that if this property will be added. This property has been found to have 35'x35' space with coal dust. The rules have changes requiring the whole property to be tested. If this property is added to Brownsfield list it will open up funding to planning & solutions for the property.

c) Letter from VTRANS relative to Route 78 Sidewalk

Mr. Fournier verified that all board members in attendance had read the letter. There was discussion of amount the town has to pay back to VTRANS. That amount is \$70,287.60. Currently the Town has \$98,617.00 in the Highway Budget for this. There is no invoiced amount as of yet from NWRP or Engineering firm for canceling contract.

Ms. Draper stated she has read the letter multiple times and feels there is some disappointment in the letter that the Town is stopping the program due to right-of-way issues. She has spoken to many community partners and there is a lot of disappointment that this project was stopped.

Mr. Fournier stated the Town would receive all the information on the project if this is deemed a necessity later.

Ms. Kilburn, Mr. Brosseau, Ms. Cooper, Ms. Brewer, Ms. Lavoie, Mr. Clark, Mr. Daniel all spoke in strong favor of continuing project.

Mr. Bourgeois stated he walks the are 300 days a year and does not see people walking. He stands by his decision.

Mr. White stated he before input meeting he sat in his truck, watched for two hours and did not witness anyone walking to school. He stands by his decision.

Mr. Fournier stated he is concerned how much the Town can really afford to do? To him the Rec/Community Center is a higher priority, he stands by his decision.

Mr. Fournier & Mr. Savage did partake in zoom meeting with VTRANS, it was clear the state is not interested in alternative route.

Mr. Fournier stated the town match was not a separate budget item?

Ms. Cathy Fournier stated it was earmarked in Highway Dept and surplus would stay in Highway Dept.

There may not be any monies left after paying NWRP & Engineering firm.

This project has had ample discussion and the board stands by decision.

d) Library Building Issues.

Mr. Fournier stated the ongoing water issue in the basement room the Swanton Historical Society occupies needs to be addressed.

Mr. Barney expressed his feelings that the water issue & the boards letter of request they vacate the room as two separate things.

This arrangement for the Historical Society to occupy the room was a decision made by Library Trustees'.

The Historical Society wishes to be invited back in once the water issue is resolved.

Mr. Brosseau read a letter from Bruce Spaulding. Please see attached

Mr. Clark stated he believed this request/letter to vacate is a violation of Open Meeting Law and the board needs to rescind this request. The Historical Society or Library Trustees were not given the opportunity to discuss before the board, therefore it should not have been discussed in Executive Session to allow for the motion.

Mr. Gurwit stated they would be willing to change the way things are stored to eliminate items sitting on the floor in the future. They would request the ability to move across the hall while repairs are made then move back into current space.

Mr. Savage stated the letter he sent with direction of Selectboard was drafted before the current water issue, the room needs to be emptied and carpet removed so the room can be cleaned. The Highway Dept is willing and able to help move items once the items have been packed and emptied.

Mr. Daniel suggested the possibility of adding space to Community Center for Historical Society.

Mr. Fournier stated this needs to be discussed in a meeting with Selectboard, Library Trustees' & Historical Society, this will be planned for next Selectboard Meeting 8/2/23. Mr. Savage is requesting a meeting before then to formulate a plan to empty room due to water.

**Mr. White made a motion to rescind the letter sent for Swanton Selectboard to Swanton Historical Society to vacate the room in the library in 90 days form 7/6/23 Selectboard Meeting, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.**

6. New Town Business

a) PUBLIC HEARING – 2023 SWANTON MUNICIPAL PLAN

**Ms. Draper made a motion at 7:20 pm to exit regular Selectboard meeting and enter the Public Hearing- 2023 Swanton Municipal Plan, seconded by Mr. White. Motion carried.**

Mr. Daniel spoke of the hard work that was done by the Planning Commission, Amy Giroux- Zoning Administrator, Corey Parent in the last year and thanked them for their work.

Mr. Parent presented the 2023 Swanton Municipal Plan.

This plan is created to show what the Planning Commission would like to see the Town look like in the next 20 years within 8-year plan. The importance of the plan is to show what plans they have for future growth & infrastructure paving the way for grant opportunities.

There will be new draft language to add the future plans Swanton Village has for Municipal Complex & Police department needs.

Mr. Parent will also add updated maps just received for regional planning.

Members of the public asked questions listed below:

- How is growth addressed
- Roads & Sidewalks
- Business growth
- Preserving Historic Character

Mr. Draper recommended edit under Recreations to change skiing to MVSD feeder programs/youth athletics.

Ms. Draper questioned if Village Trustees should be in some places with Selectboard?

Mr. Clark recommended adding a paragraph speaking statutorily the Town of Swanton writes the Municipal Plan, however Selectboard encourages participations with Village Trustees to work together. Working as a team for Swanton. Mr. Parent will add this.

Mr. Fournier asked if Regional Planning has to approve new plan, Mr. Parent stated they had already received the new plan and have added their edits.

**Ms. Draper made a motion at 8:02 pm to exit the Public Hearing- 2023 Swanton Municipal Plan and enter regular Selectboard meeting, seconded by Mr. White. Motion carried.**

- b) Information from VTRANS relative to Route 78 West, Reconstruction project Mr. Savage discussed; he has received a packet with updates for the project. This included requested easements in exchange they have offered \$1,100.00 for these permanent easements for end of the roads.

**Mr. White made a motion to accept, sign and give Mr. Savage authority to sign on behalf of the Town of Swanton. Seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.**

- c) Retirement announcement of James Pratt as Lister  
Mr. Pratt will retire effective September 1, 2023 but will be available to help train replacement.  
Mr. Savage is currently drafting the job posting for this position. Mr. Pratts' term expires 2025, The boards appointment someone until next Town meeting, then that person would have to run for the rest of expired term.  
Mr. Brosseau asked if the board had considered following other Towns lead to get away from elected listers vs. assessors?

Ms. Fournier stated the important daily role having a lister in the building daily that is essential to serving our community.

Mr. Bourgeois would like to see follow up with a resolution for Mr. Pratt thanking him for his service to Swanton.

#### 8. Community and Economic Development

Mr. Savage met with Managers & Town Administrators recently at St. Albans Town Hall, one take away form this he would like to discuss is Cathedral Square Senior Living. Mr. Savage would like to contact them to see if they have considered Swanton as a location. These are strictly senior housing.

Mr. Savage attended a virtual meeting in regards to southbound off ramp for exit 21. This is a state priority, this ramp is dangerous. They are going to do a study, then develop a plan.

Ms. Kilburn asked if there is no longer a person in charge of Economic Development since Elizabeth Nance left? Mr. Fournier stated that was part of the hiring of Full-Time Administrative Assistant position to allow Ms. Candels to assume some duties so Mr. Savage can lead Community and Economic Development for Swanton.

Ms. Kilburn state Swanton Enhancement does also have task force for Economic Development. Mr. Savage will reach out to the chair.

Ms. Lavoie feels they also need mor resources for seniors to get to appointments.

#### 9. Any Other Necessary Business

Mr. Bourgeois doesn't think the Elementary School gymnasium is utilized to its potential. Does this have the ability to accommodate some of the programing vs building a gymnasium with Rec Center.

Ms. Draper again requested these questions be brought up when the Rec Dept can be a part of the conversations. The Rec Dept regularly works with the schools to utilize any available time. Those spots are few and far between. The school is utilized 7-5 every day. This does not allow for senior citizen or pre-k/toddler programs with Rec Dept.

Ms. Draper stated this needs to be warned as a meeting to include everyone.

Ms. Fournier stated she had two children go thru schools and there was no gym time then, children would need to practice at 9 at night. The gym problem has been an issue for years. This community needs another gym. Swanton Elementary gym is not big enough, qualified as basketball court.

Ms. Draper stated the school does offer what time is available for programing.

Mr. Savage stated Vermont Precision Tools purchased three lots of land from Franklin County Industrial Development. During title search for 3<sup>rd</sup> lot, Precision Lane. When this was done, it was not deeded to town. This will be fixed and presented to board when completed.

Ms. Draper discussed as a board sharing more with the community. Community members really want to know what's going on, everyone agrees. Going forward Ms. Candels will post a brief recap next day after Selectboard meetings on Facebook & website, before minutes are available. Mr. Savage will update Front Porch Forum so Ms. Candels can add to this as well.

10. Correspondence

11. Public Comment (Reprise)

Mr. Brosseau asked if Selectboard planned to fill vacant position of Trustee of Public Money? This will be added to next Selectboard Meeting agenda.

12. Upcoming Events

- :
- a) Thursday -July 28, 2023 – DRB – Town Offices – 6:00 pm
  - b) Saturday - July 29, 2023 – Annual Chamber of Commerce Car Show – Village Green -9:00 am to 2:00 pm
  - c) Sunday- July 30, 2023 – Swanton Fire Department Open House 1-4pm.
  - c) Tuesday -August 1, 2023 – National Night Out – 5 to 8 pm – Village Green
  - d) Wednesday -August 2, 2023 – Special Selectboard Meeting – 6:00 pm – Town Offices and Zoom
  - e) Saturday -Aug12, 2023 – Swanton Rec Cornfest – 2:00-8:00 pm. Raleigh Athletic Fields

13. Executive Session (If needed)

E. Adjournment

**Mr. White made a motion to Adjourn at 8:39 pm, seconded by Mr. Draper Motion carried.**

Respectfully Submitted By,

Christina Candels  
Administrative Assistant