

**DRAFT MINUTES
TOWN OF SWANTON
SELECTBOARD MEETING
Town Office Building
1 Academy Street, Swanton, VT 05488
In-Person & By Zoom
Tuesday, September 5, 2023 @ 6:00 p.m.**

Present: Earl Fournier- Chair, Ed White Sr.-Vice Chair, Nicole Draper, Cody Hemenway, Steve Bourgeois- Members, Brian Savage- Town Administrator, Cathy Fournier- Town Clerk, Christina Candels- Administrative Assistant, Amy Giroux- Zoning Administrator, Ron Kilburn, Sandy Skeels-Kilburn, Chief Sullivan, Betsy Fournier, Chevon Cooper, Kelly Miller, David Winchester, Julia Tinganelli, Richard Cummings, Lin-Zoom

A. Call to Order

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

B. Pledge of Allegiance

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

C. Agenda Review

Mr. Savage would like to add an item under correspondence about email received.

D. Meeting Topics

1. Minutes

a) August 15, 2023, Regular Selectboard Meeting

Ms. Draper made a motion to approve August 15, 2023, Draft Meeting Minutes as written, seconded by Mr. Hemenway. Motion carried.

b) August 17, 2023, Special Selectboard Meeting

Mr. Hemenway made a motion to approve August 17, 2023. Draft Meeting Minutes as written, seconded by Mr. White. Motion carried.

c) August 22, 2023, Special Selectboard Meeting

Mr. Hemenway made a motion to approve August 22, 2023, Draft Meeting Minutes as written, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried.

2. Public Comments

Ms. Besty Fournier wanted to announce Swanton Enhancement Project will have their annual meeting at Swanton Public Library Thursday September 7, 2023 at 5:30 pm. All are welcome to attend.

3. Law Enforcement

a) Swanton Health Officer Report

The board members reviewed Ms. LaFontaine's August report. Ms. Draper asked if they have been any follow up with August 10th incident? Mr. Savage stated he has not heard of anything but that he did drive by the property and the bags of trash previously scene have been cleaned up. Woods Hill Road property is also being cleaned up.

b) Swanton Police Chief Report

Chief Sullivan updated the board on August 2023 police report for Swanton Town.

In August the Village Police responded to 99 incidents in the Town, 32 directed patrols, 27 traffic stops, 8 property watch, 4 suspicious persons, 3 DUI, 3 alarms, 3 community outreach, 2 juvenile problems, 2 motor vehicle complains.

Out of the 27 traffic stops 9 tickets were issued, 25 warnings and 3 arrests were made. 14 arrest charges for the month for 7 individuals.

Chief Sullivan also reviewed the data collected for the speed monitor set up in two locations in August 2023, South River Street August 13th - August 22nd & Robin Hood Drive August 22nd - August 29th.

Chief Sullivan also updated of recent drug bust in the department's effort to crack down on drug trafficking in the area.

Chief Sullivan also stated they have been receiving complains on ATV traffic in the Village and they are trying to address this. Some of this is confusion the drivers thinking they can operate them, but the Village does not have an ordinance for them.

Mr. Kilburn asked Chief Sullivan if they are responsible for the enforcement at the railroad depot? The recent incident of vandalization is the reasoning for questioning. Chief Sullivan explained the Village Police does patrol the Town from 5pm to 1am, outside of that time it is Vermont State Police responsibility. The response is based on reporting time to dispatch.

Mr. Fournier stated this will be brought before the voters at Town Meeting for more Police coverage.

4. Old Town Business

a) Update on LVRT

Mr. Savage update the board, UVM has completed the Archeological Study, nothing of significance was found. Mr. Joel Clark will attend the next meeting with site & design plans to move forward.

b) Update on Library Building issues.

Mr. Savage updated the board, Town Highway dept removed the concrete that had caved in on the side of the building cleaned it up and put down some new stone. Mr. Savage has met with representative from Twin State Basements, still awaiting quote on this.

Ms. Draper also still worries about water damage, if opening the wall would show anything.

Once Mr. Savage has both bids the board will have a special meeting to review and move forward.

Ms. Draper asked if there have been any attic solutions? This is scheduled for September 14th; the library will need to close early for this. Vermont Gas pays for half of this project. They will fill the library full of air and see where there are leaks.

Mr. Savage stated the painting and window replacements have been completed on the library as well.

Mr. Winchester raised a number of questions about recent work done to the library.

Ms. Cooper if there is an inspector for the town to ensure projects are done correctly and what is needed?

Mr. Fournier stated no, this has been a discussion before that the town should look at someone to help with this.

c) Update on Site Selection Swanton Community Center.

Mr. Fournier reviewed bullet points with board members they think they should look at moving forward. Using Blake Street as the Community Center entrance & exit vs Jewett St. Work with Property Owners on Jewett St & Blake St. for an Intent to sell giving the Town first option to buy. Start the process of looking for grants to fund so this project is not completely taxpayer funded. Recreation Committee include in plans how they plan to include 4th street property.

There will be a Special Selectboard Meeting September 26th at Village Complex to discuss building design, layout and feasibility study. This is what will be presented to tax payers.

Ms. Betsy Fournier stated they can get these items together for the Special Meeting. Ms. Besty Fournier stated that once they have secured the building, location, feasibility study, cost analysis then they can start the process for grant funding.

Ms. Cooper asked for clarification on Blake St entrance and if Jewett St entrance would be closed. Mr. Fournier said this entrance will be used for emergency entrance.

Mr. Fournier stated they have met with Champlain Housing to see that Blake St can be used. Swanton Village currently maintains the street.

Board members discussed the importance of using this property as everything is already there and the property is already owned.

Mr. Hemenway made a motion to use the existing rear parking lot for the location of the New Community Rec Center, seconded by Mr. White. Ms. Draper abstained. Motion carried.

Before Special Selectboard Meeting Mr. Fournier and Ms. Betsy Fournier will schedule a time to go on "For the Record" on local access television.

5. New Town Business

a) Richard Cummings to discuss possible interim zoning change

Mr. Cummings came before the board to discuss his request for an interim bylaw change. Mr. Cummings would like an interim bylaw that would allow his property on Bushey Rd. Mr. Cummings would like his property discussed to all be included in Southern Growth District. This will allow him to build more cottage

style housing on smaller more affordable lots. This processed requires a Public Hearing to approve temporary interim bylaw change. This allows him to begin construction rather than waiting over a year for the Planning Commission that are currently working on updating and rewriting the bylaws. Once the Planning Commission is complete this request will be part of the new bylaws. Mr. Hemenway asked if this will affect any neighboring properties. Ms. Giroux stated there would be none, this will allow for smaller lots and more affordable housing.

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to schedule Public Hearing for October 17, 2023 to discussed this proposed interim bylaw change for Southern Growth District boundary, seconded by Mr. White. Motion carried.

b) Letter of Support for VELCO power Line replacement
Mr. Savage drafted the Letter of Support for VELCO power line replacement.

Mr. Hemenway made a motion for Mr. Fournier signed this letter of support, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

6. Community and Economic Development

Mr. Savage stated they have met with CEO of Champlin Housing to see what options or ideas for housing in Swanton.

Mr. Savage stated they have also met with Ms. Cioffi about her future plans with Merchants Row property.

Mr. Fournier also stated they are still unable to fund the revolving loan program due to State of Vermont not funding the program yet. Mr. Savage will continue to check on this.

7. Highway Department

Mr. Savage discussed directional signs they need to replaced.

8. Any Other Necessary Business

Mr. Savage shared an email he received from Mr. Al Norman he wanted shared with Selectboard members. This email is attached to minutes.

The board members discussed the email.

Ms. Cathy Fournier stated property values are set by the sales and Listers.

The recent sales of property on Maquam Shore does not indicate the quality of the lake water is affecting land values.

Mr. Fournier stated it is everyone's job to keep the lake clean.

Ms. Cooper asked for a copy of the email being discussed.

Mr. Bourgeois wanted the Town Attorney to review this email before responding.

Ms. Draper thinks there is a tactful way to respond without adding legal expense to taxpayers. Mr. Savage stated the Selectboard has no authority of property values.

Mr. Savage will respond to the email stating that it is everyone's responsibility for water quality, and that the Selectboard has no authority to determine property values and for better understanding on this to contact the listers.

Mr. Hemenway made a motion to draft a response to email pending selectboard review, seconded by Ms. Draper. Mr. Bourgeois voted no.

9. Public Comment (Reprise)

Ms. Cooper asked for clarification that the Archeological Study was for LVRT site? Yes.

Ms. Cooper asked whom the contractor who was awarded library painting job? Guillemette's Handy Man Service.

10. Upcoming Events

- a) Gathering of the Realms- September 9&10 Swanton Rec Fields.
- b) Selectboard – Tuesday – Sept. 19, 2023 – 6:00 pm – Town Offices & Zoom
- c) Planning Commission – Wednesday – Sept. 20, 2023 – 6:30 pm Town Offices
- d) Special Selectboard Meeting – Tuesday – Sept. 26, 2023 – 6:00 pm – Village Complex.
- e) DRB – Thursday – Sept. 28, 2023 – 6:00 pm – Town Offices

11. Executive Session (Personnel, Real Estate)

Ms. Draper made a motion to enter executive session at 7:34 pm, seconded by Mr. Hemenway. Motion carried.

Ms. Draper made a motion to exit executive session at 8:09 pm, seconded by Mr. Hemenway. Motion carried.

Mr. Hemenway made a motion to increase Brandon Calderwood's salary to \$25 per hour, seconded by Mr. White. Motion carried.

Mr. White made a motion to increase Mr. David Horton's salary to \$24 per hour as chair of listers and pay Mr. Kevin Nichols \$21 per hour as per schedule for listers pay, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried.

E. Adjournment

Ms. Draper made a motion to adjourn at 8:11 pm., seconded by Mr. White. Motion carried.

SW TOWN ADMIN

From: Al Norman <info@sprawl-busters.com>
Sent: Monday, September 4, 2023 4:53 PM
To: bhigdon@orourkemediagroup.com; SW TOWN ADMIN
Cc: rog and judy george
Subject: Water quality and taxes

Dear Administrator Savage,

I would like to submit the following comments to the Selectboard for their September meeting:

Given the fact that the town of Swanton has taken the position that poor water quality has no impact on property valuations, and that the town has no responsibility for adjusting taxes. Pursuant to this perspective, I would like to ask the board the following two questions:

1. Do you consider it to be a property owner's responsibility if there is poor water quality (extensive plant decay and odor) in the lake?
2. Do you deny that poor water quality has an impact on the valuation of a property?
3. Do you plan on continuing to tax a handful
Of homes on the northern Maquam shore a premium rate of taxation for sub premium lakeshore conditions?

Thank you for responding to these questions.

Al Norman
8 Maquam Shore Road
Forgotten Bay, VT.

