

**Draft Minutes**  
**TOWN OF SWANTON**  
**Town Office Building**  
**1 Academy Street, Swanton, VT 05488**  
**In-Person & By Zoom**  
**Tuesday, November 7, 2023 @ 6:00 p.m.**

Present: Earl Fournier-Chair, Ed White Sr, Nicole Draper, Steve Bourgeois, Cody Hemenway-Members, Brian Savage-Town Administrator, Cathy Fournier-Town Clerk, Christina Candels-Administrative Assistant, Las Scangus, Joel Clark, David Winchester, Rebecca Rupp, Corrina King, Damon Broderick, Rich Kelley, Lin-Zoom

A. Call to Order

Mr. Fournier called the meeting to order at 5:58 pm.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

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

C. Agenda Review

Mr. Fournier requested to add a discussion on Small Business Saturday under New Business.

Mr. Fournier asked if there is an update with MVUHS regarding property under Old Town Business. Mr. Savage stated they have and will review what needs to happen next for the next Selectboard meeting.

Mr. Savage requested to add under New Town Business Franklin County Industrial Corp is having their annual awards reception, a local business and community members is being nominated.

Mr. Savage would like to add under Other Business to have the authority to hire an attorney Vaughn Comeau for delinquent tax collections.

Mr. Savage would like to table Preliminary 2024 Budget Discussion under Highway Department until the next meeting because there are still bills to pay.

Ms. Cathy Fournier mentioned that an amendment of the Selectboard Minutes from December 20, 2023, under Other Necessary Business.

Ms. Cathy Fournier about where to apply funds received, under Other Necessary Business.

D. Meeting Topics

1. Minutes

a) October 17, 2023 - Regular Selectboard Meeting

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

2. Public Comments

No public comments.

### 3. Law Enforcement

#### a) Swanton Health Officer Report

Mr. Savage had included the report in the Selectboard packet. Swanton Health Officers had to items to report. One was a request for water sample test kit, the second for an ongoing rental property.

#### b) Swanton Police Chief Report

Chief Sullivan reviewed Incident Analysis for Swanton Town for October 2023. Of the 88 incidents the top 10 were as follows.

23 traffic stops, 13 directed patrol, 13 property/home watch, 7 agency assistance, 4 citizen assist, 4 suspicious person/circumstance, 3 alarms, 3 search warrants, 2 motor vehicle complains and 2 community outreaches.

Of the 23 traffic stops 2 tickets were issued, 16 warnings were issued and 5 arrest charges for October 2023.

Chief Sullivan stated that in 2022 they made 35 arrests in Swanton Town. In 2023 as of the end of October Chief Sullivan stated they have made 38 arrests so far. Of those 38 some of the top arrests are for 9 DUI's, 6 DLS's, 5 Drug related charges. Chief Sullivan also updated use of force data collected. Swanton Police is trending down below the national average with use of force.

Mr. Bourgeois asked of traffic stops how many results in arrests for outstanding warrants. Chief Sullivan stated that is difficult to say without pulling the data.

Mr. White asked if Swanton Police issue No Trespass Orders? Chief Sullivan stated yes, they assist private property owners with this.

### 4. Old Town Business

#### a) Presentation by Mr. Laz Scangas relative to Library icing issues

Mr. Scangas gave a presentation of the blower door test and inspection that was done at the Swanton Library. This test sucks the air out of the building to show where the building is leaking. Vermont Gas has a program that pays for half of the test. Vermont Gas also has incentive monies to help with fixing issues found by the test. Mr. Scangas found a large number of insulation issues, door and window weather stripping issues in the both buildings. The Ashrae proposed energy score is .20, Swanton Library came back with a score of .84. The Swanton Library is losing the heating equivalent of a good size home.

Also noted that is not part of the inspection was not related to air sealing but a code issue. The elevator shaft does not have the required 1-hour fire rating.

Mr. Scangas is still working on a plan/solution for the Selectboard.

Also noted in the inspection was that the dampers on the new furnaces installed.

Mr. Savage has reached out to installation company for follow up.

**Mr. Bourgeois made a motion for Mr. Scangas to continue his work and come back the Selectboard with solution and cost, seconded by Mr. Hemenway. Motion carried.**

b) Update on LVRT – Mr. Joel Clark

Mr. Clark presented the board with the conceptual design of the LVRT trailhead. The design shows parking, pavilion, picnic tables, current trail, signage, screen area for single portlet, seating and bike racks.

Mr. Clark updated the board on the plans going forward that they can expect to see. The original design had the pavilion in a different location, the change provided safer access from trail and won't require a variance.

NEPA documentation has been submitted. Also required will be a ROW, Swanton's Town attorney will need to draft a document saying its ok to do the work as drawn and that the Town has access to the property with the current lease for the State of Vermont. Mr. Clark will forward this to Mr. Savage.

Project costs to date are

\$50,255 project design & Archeological Study \$10,788.39.

The project budget has been

\$90,000 ARPA, \$3,800 Swanton Enhancement Project, \$375,200 State match

Current Estimate is \$700,000 to complete but is expected to be significantly lower with final design due mid-Dec.

Next Steps

Town attorney letter, continue to site clearing, possibility of setting aside \$30,000 additional ARPA funds, Mr. Fournier suggested maybe putting this in the budget instead. This can be discussed in December.

Mr. Clark also state the State of Vermont has opened the grants for this project for applications also, the grant needs to be submitted by January 8, 2023.

Also noted on the design is the screening fence to eliminate direct headlights hitting the neighboring homes.

Mr. Bourgeois asked about sharing the design with the neighboring properties. The office will send a letter to these property owners and let them know these plans are available in the Town Office.

Ms. Candels will also post the conceptual design on the website.

**Ms. Draper made a motion for the Swanton Town Attorney to review project document and draft the required letter, seconded by Mr. White. Motion carried.**

c) Review and possible adoption of new accounting policies for the Town

As previously discussed, the town was in the process of updating their accounting policies. Mr. Savage drafted the new policies with the Vermont Leagues of Cities & Towns. Ms. Cathy Fournier discussed what few changes the board can expect to see.

The board reviewed the policies and discussed them.

**Mr. White made a motion to approve the new accounting, auditing & financial policies, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.**

5. New Town Business

a) Presentation by Ms. Corrina King of Missisquoi River Basin Association

Ms. King came before the board to share the work that Missisquoi River Basin Association has done with community partners. Ms. King asked what concerns the Selectboard has with the river, future plans and what they would like to see in the future. Some ideas & concerns mentioned were

- Not enough use
- Increase recreation activities/promotions
- Guided tours
- River cleanup
- Marina
- Natural swimming pool
- South River Street River banking
- Tree planting
- River walk

b) Discussion with Trustees of the Swanton Public Library on various issues

Mr. Fournier discussed the concerns the selectboard has with the library.

Mr. Fournier asked Ms. Rupp if she has a copy of the State fire code telling her what would be considered a hazard and what is a violation. Ms. Savage will get this to her and meet with Ms. Rupp.

Mr. Fournier discussed the previously signed Memorandum of Understanding 12/30/2021 stating the Swanton Library draft a personal policy and present to the Town. That was not completed until last week. The board reviewed prior to this meeting and noted its similarity to Swanton Town Employee personnel policies.

Mr. Fournier asked for clarification of staff bringing children in the workplace?

Mr. Fournier asked about paid snow days? If the library is closed due to weather whom ever was scheduled still gets paid.

Mr. Fournier holiday schedule? They have the same number of days as the Town employees.

Mr. Fournier asked about staff homeschooling their children? Ms. Rupp asked about the complaints the town received about staff doing this? Mr. Fournier asked how many employees are homeschooling their children? Ms. Rupp stated 3 employees. On these days they work. Mr. Fournier stated this is not a typical thing done in the workplace. Mr. Bourgeois asked how many hours are the staff homeschooling their kids when they're being paid? Ms. Rupp stated they have brought in other families for workshops with these kids.

Mr. Bourgeois thinks that's different, than employees homeschooling their kids while on the payroll. Ms. Rupp said it really consists of employees who bring their kids to work

with them and provide group tables for these kids to do activities. Ms. Rupp says there is a number of different ways to teach homeschooling. Ms. Rupp stated there is a lot of libraries whom support staff bringing their children to work.

Ms. Rupp asked what they feel the problem is?

Mr. Fournier stated he understands what they are saying and the Selectboard has no control of this and they're telling them the best case, but that they should be concerned about the public perception of this is going to be and how the community feels. Ms. Rupp feels they've had a positive response. Mr. Bourgeois asked how this is measured? Ms. Rupp stated by the number of people whom didn't used to come to the library and now do, library cards, bringing kids to programs, starting homeschool groups. These people are not paid by the town. Ms. Draper talked about the people coming from other towns that don't live in Swanton. Nonresidents are charged a fee. This brings them to our community using the Towns most valuable asset. This generates more attention and interest to Swanton in general that supports people whom may not thrive in traditional environment. Ms. Rupp states they have not had a single complaint.

Mr. Fournier stated he doesn't think a library employee should have that advantage over someone else. But if it's as a group it makes sense but not 1:1.

Mr. Fournier asked if they have looked into the insurance, is an employee covered to bring their child to work under the liability. Ms. Rupp and Mr. Kelley stated yes as patrons. Mr. Fournier asked if they have this in writing? Ms. Rupp stated that a library staff's child shouldn't be different that of another child who patrons?

Mr. Savage state the liability insurance on the library is under the Towns policy and he had reached out and spoke to an underwriter. They stated that any child going to the library with his/her parent is covered as a patron. But when its an employee in this situation they did not know but that there is an upcoming meeting with the underwriters and will be discussed. Ms. Rupp thinks they would be covered and it's not unique. Mr. Savage stated they had never heard of it happening. Ms. Rupp stated libraries do advantage to working mothers.

Mr. Fournier stated he wanted to make sure it is covered. Ms. Rupp is also going to find out how its dealt with at other library for employees whom bring their children to work every day.

Mr. Fournier also discussed the issues with the library that need to be fixed and it comes down to money. Ms. Rupp asked if anyone has looked for construction and building improvements?

Mr. Fournier stated his question is specific as to how much is the endowments? How much money does the library have? The building needs to be taken care of. The town is running out of ARPA money and there's a lot of other projects that need to be done.

Ms. Rupp agreed, Mr. Kelley stated once the have the proposals and know how much they can have that discussion but that it is also in the MOU that the Board of Trustees with pay 50 % of major repairs. Mr. Bourgeois asked how much was in the account? Ms. Rupp will find out.

Mr. Fournier stated they are committed to fixing the build but will expect help.

Mr. Bourgeois wanted to speak as a tax payer he would like to see them discontinue the homeschooling. Ms. Rupp will report that back.

## 6. Community and Economic Development

### a) Small Business Saturday is November 25, 2023.

Ms. Draper suggest touching base with Swanton Enhancement Project, Economic Development Committee they are working with local businesses for plans. Ms. Draper stated having a dedicated list of business in the town, a general business

listing on the website under community. Mr. Savage stated the listers may have a list as business pay personal property tax. Ms. Draper stated she has been asked by business how much revenue the town generates with this tax?

a) Highway Department

a) Update on Brooklyn Street culvert

Mr. Savage stated the Village has learned this project does not qualify for the Grant and Aid for the culvert does not qualify. Mr. Savage is going to contact VTrans because he believes it will for the what the Town needs to do for this project. Mr. Savage will know before they complete the budget.

b) Preliminary 2024 Budge Discussion

Tabled until the next the next Selectboard meeting.

8. Any Other Necessary Business

a) Office reconfiguration

Mr. Savage stated Ms. Candels and him have been sharing an office since she started, some people whom come in feel more comfortable with just Mr. Savage.

Mr. Savage stated they still have the dividers upstairs to build Ms. Candels and office in the second conference room.

Also discussed is purchasing Mr. Savage a new desk and putting Mr. Savage in Ms. Candels new office. Mr. Savage has located one online for the estimated cost of \$1,336 approximate. When moving the computers and desks Mr. Peter Smith will also place some of the clusters of wires into a cabinet. They will need to be in a ventilated cabinet. Ms. Cathy Fournier stated there is money in the budget for this. Mr. Fournier asked what line item? Ms. Cathy Fournier stated there is about \$11,000 in the town maintenance fund.

**Ms. Draper made a motion that Mr. Savage can purchase new office furniture and cabinet up to \$2,500, seconded by Mr. White.**

b) Ms. Betty Cheney

Mr. Savage stated Ms. Cheney has about 20 tax sale accounts to turn over to and attorney and she would like to have attorney Vaughn Comeau do the work.

Mr. Bourgeois asked if there was any consideration in local attorneys?

Ms. Cathy Fournier stated Vaughn Comeau has done them the last 3 years.

**Mr. White made a motion to have Attorney Vaughn Comeau handle the tax sale transactions, seconded by Mr. Hemenway. Motion carried.**

c) Amend December 20, 2022, Selectboard Minutes

Ms. Cathy Fournier stated December 20, 2022 Meeting minutes for new furnaces for the Swanton Library stated

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to accept Alliance Mechanical's bid, seconded by Mr. White. Motion carried.

This motion did not state this was to come from the ARPA funds so we need them amended.

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to amend his motion as follows

**Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to accept Alliance Mechanical's bid and the funds will come from the ARPA funds, seconded by Mr. White. Motion carried.**

d) Cash Received

Ms. Cathy Fournier stated they have received \$1,000 from the State of Vermont for the easements on route 78 work. Ms. Cathy Fournier would like to know where they would like to put this money? This is a revenue they didn't anticipate for the Highway Dept.

**Mr. White made a motion to put the \$1,000 revenue in the Highway contingency fund, seconded by Mr. Hemenway. Motion carried.**

Ms. Cathy Fournier stated they have received the expected \$3,500 rebate from Vermont Gas for the library furnaces installed where would they like this money put? This is a revenue they didn't anticipate. DO you want to start a building maintenance fund?

**Mr. Hemenway made a motion to put the \$3,500 in the General Fund with an earmark for library repairs, seconded by Mr. White. Motion carried.**

9. Public Comment (Reprise)

Mr. Bourgeois asked how much Vaughn Comeau received for payment from these tax sales? He is not paid by the town this comes out of the tax sale.

10. Upcoming Events

- a) Veterans Day Holiday – Friday, Nov. 10, 2023 – Office and Operations Closed
- b) Veterans Flags Takedown – Sunday, Nov. 12, 2023 – 9:00 am
- c) Joint Meeting with Village Trustees – Monday, Nov. 13, 2023 – 6:00 pm  
Village Complex and TEAMS
- d) Planning Commission – Wednesday, Nov. 15, 2023 - 6:30 pm – Town Offices
- e) DRB – Thursday – Nov. 16, 2023 – 6:00 pm – Town Offices
- f) Regular Selectboard Meeting – Tuesday – Nov. 21, 2023 – 6:00 pm – Town  
Offices and Zoom
- g) Thanksgiving Holiday – Thursday & Friday – Nov. 23 & 24, 2023 – Offices  
and Operations Closed
- h) Joint Meeting with Village Trustees – Monday, Nov. 27, 2023 – 7:00 pm –  
Village Complex and TEAMS

Also noted:

Run to Remember-Marble Mill Park- Saturday Nov. 11, 2023- 9 am 5K walk  
Chamber of Commerce is looking for volunteers to decorate the park Saturday  
Nov. 11,2023-10 am.

Hunters Breakfast – Fundraiser Nativity Parish Hall Saturday Nov. 18, 2023 8  
am- 10 am.

11. Adjournment

**Ms. Draper made a motion to adjourn at 8:41pm, seconded by Mr. Hemenway. Motion carried.**

Respectfully Submitted by

Christina Candels-Administrative Assistant