

**DRAFT MINUTES
TOWN OF SWANTON
SELECTBOARD MEETING**

**Town Office Building
1 Academy Street, Swanton, VT 05488
In-Person & By Zoom
Tuesday October 1, 2024 - 6:00 pm**

Present: Joel Clark-Chair, Nicole Draper, Steve Bourgeois-Members, Brian Savage-Town Administrator, Cathy Fournier-Town Clerk, Christina Candels-Administrative Assistant, Chief Matthew Sullivan-Swanton Village Police Chief, Allen Letourneau, Sam Ruggiano, Brenden Long, Jorie Spaulding, Nicholas Brosseau, Suzie Kelleher
Zoom: Earl Fournier, Josh Ellerbrock, Lynn

A. Call to Order

Mr. Clark called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

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

C. Agenda Review

Mr. Clark reviewed the agenda and requested moving the Selectboard candidate interviews up on the agenda under Public Comment.

Mr. Clark requested to add update on 3-acre storm water rules under Old Town Business

D. Meeting Topics

1. Minutes

a) Regular Selectboard Meeting of September 17, 2024

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to approve September 17, 2024, Regular Selectboard Meeting minutes as written, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

2. Public Comments

None

3. Selectboard Applicants

Each applicant introduces themselves and answers questions from the board as follows.

a) Nicholas Brosseau

Mr. Brosseau shared the current boards and committees he sits on. Mr. Brosseau looks forward to discussions on local option tax, speed studies, recreation.

Ms. Draper asked Mr. Brosseau what is his favorite thing about Swanton?

Mr. Brosseau said community spirit is his favorite thing about Swanton, Halloween and Christmas in the Park. Community involvement with 4 people showing up to be on the Selectboard.

Ms. Draper asked Mr. Brosseau what he thinks Swanton's greatest challenge is?

Mr. Brosseau thinks the biggest challenge is getting businesses to come to Swanton, economic growth in the area. Mr. Brosseau thinks they can attract more factories/businesses to help the local economy.

Mr. Bourgeois asked Mr. Brosseau what committees would he see himself serving as a Selectboard member?

Mr. Brosseau said he would like to be on Animal Control and Police Department.

Mr. Fournier asked Mr. Brosseau if he would run again in March? Yes, and it may not be just for the open seat.

Mr. Clark thanked Mr. Brosseau for his community service and had no additional questions.

b) Allen Letourneau

Mr. Letourneau shared she was born and raised in Swanton and would be thankful for the opportunity to work as a team for Swanton's future. Mr. Letourneau shared his work history.

Ms. Draper asked Mr. Letourneau what his favorite thing is about Swanton?

Mr. Letourneau said he loves Swanton as a whole, older structures, the dam, old houses and character.

Ms. Draper asked Mr. Letourneau what he sees being Swanton's biggest challenge?

Mr. Letourneau said revenue, they need capital to help bring them into the future.

Mr. Bourgeois asked Mr. Letourneau how he sees his skills fitting into the decisions and challenges they have?

Mr. Letourneau said he has had to make tough decisions at work and brainstorm and would work as the cheapest most efficient way.

Mr. Fournier asked Mr. Letourneau if he would be able to listen to people who have a completely different opinion than you and work to a middle ground?

Mr. Letourneau said without a doubt and said the Village problems are real problems and its going to take a team effort to fix them.

Mr. Fournier asked Mr. Letourneau if he would run again in March?

Mr. Letourneau said yes.

Mr. Clark asked Mr. Letourneau his thoughts on the current rec facility and if he things it needs to be expanded?

Mr. Letourneau thinks it needs to be expanded, we need to develop more income to make the building more feasible and affordable.

c) Brendon Long

Mr. Long shared his commitment to the community, helping the community grow.

Mr. Long said his goal if elected would be to make sure Swanton grows and thrives and a vibrant place to live. Mr. Long said his wife and him just moved here and bought a home, but that his wife grew up in this community and he grew up in Southern Vermont. Mr. Long shared his college and work history. Mr. Long loves the community and what he has learned and invested in.

Ms. Draper asked Mr. Long what he thinks Swanton is successful at doing currently?

Mr. Long thinks recent success is building up the small business in the downtown and has seen the transformation over the last five years with new businesses.

Ms. Draper asked Mr. Long what he thinks Swanton's greatest challenge is?

Mr. Long said he feels it's an issue of capital, how do you grow while making sure not to over burden the community. Investing in small business at the same time being able to grow responsibly.

Mr. Bourgeois asked Mr. Long if he had to identify two hot spots in Swanton right now what would they be to focus as a board?

Mr. Long said thinks the increased traffic from the border and Burlington, young families are looking to move out of Burlington an opportunity is to ensure you attract that audience in places besides gas stations and Hannaford but into the downtown. Increasing that traffic with community events while supporting small businesses.

Mr. Fournier asked Mr. Long what his work experience is?

Mr. Long said after graduating from St. Micheals College he worked at Switch Back Brewing, Dealer .Com. Currently works for TD Bank/Momentum Financial and currently manages a team at TD Bank.com website and mobile app.

Mr. Fournier asked Mr. Long if he would run again?

Mr. Long said yes, his intent is to run if chosen or not.

Mr. Clark asked Mr. Long where he grew up?

Mr. Long said he grew up in Saxton's River Vermont and Bellows Falls where his father was a Selectman.

Mr. Clark asked Mr. Long one challenging situation he has had and how he overcame it?

Mr. Long shared a recent issue at TD Bank, how do you target a whole community not just an individual branch. One of the things they did was education resources for consumers so they understood what the bank can do for you as well as educate what you can do for yourself. This was a challenge they seen when consumers came in, they wanted to make sure they were serving the community not just themselves.

d) Samuel Ruggiano

Mr. Ruggiano shared he recently moved to Swanton but has worked in the area for the last 39 years as a professional engineer. Mr. Ruggiano said he has been a part of most of the large developments in the area. Mr. Ruggiano and his wife raised their girls in Bakersfield and served on the Development Review Board. Mr. Ruggiano said he has been to almost every board in Franklin County and done substantial work in Swanton. Mr. Ruggiano is semi-retired and has time to do public service.

Ms. Draper asked Mr. Ruggiano what his favorite thing is about Swanton?

Mr. Ruggiano said the lake, downtown and the community members.

Ms. Draper asked Mr. Ruggiano what he sees as Swanton's biggest challenge?

Mr. Ruggiano said bringing in businesses to build the tax base and employment. The challenges that go with that is that Swanton has a substantial amount of wetlands.

Finding developable areas that the State will allow you to develop is a challenge.

Mr. Bourgeois said he has known Mr. Ruggiano for most of the 39 years he's been in business.

Mr. Bourgeois asked Mr. Ruggiano where he sees the challenges in economic development?

Mr. Ruggiano said he feels the growth would be towards the airport with the infrastructure going in as well as the co-generation plant. Housing is always going to be an issue though because of the wetlands.

Mr. Fournier asked Mr. Ruggiano what he thinks of exit 20?

Mr. Ruggiano said it's a great location for development but the challenge Regional Planning, but the State does not. So, any kind of Act 250 permits would be a challenge to obtain, they would consider that scattered development.

Mr. Fournier said they could probably get them to change their mind on that, Mr.

Ruggiano said if you can get that designation that's a great opportunity.

Mr. Fournier asked Mr. Ruggiano if he would run again in March?

Mr. Ruggiano said yes.

Mr. Clark said he is a neighbor to Mr. Ruggiano and has had many conversations with Mr. Ruggiano in regard to water quality and has on other questions.

Mr. Clark said the board will discuss in executive session and he will reach out to all applicants tomorrow.

4. Law Enforcement

a) Swanton Police Department

Chief Sullivan came before the board to share September 2024 Incident Analysis.

Chief Sullivan shared the top ten incidents were as follows.

19 directed patrol, 7 suspicious persons/circumstance, 5 traffic stops, 4 juvenile problems, 4 agency assistance, 3 animal problems, 3 found property, 3 motor vehicle complaints, 2 traffic hazard and 2 thefts. They also provided 6.25 hours of additional services.

Of the 74 incidents the 5 traffic stops resulted in 1 ticket, 5 warnings, 2 arrests, 2 arrest charges of 2 individuals. The arrests were 1 DUI and 1 violation of Conditions.

Chief Sullivan said last year in September 2023 they responded to roughly 90 incidents.

Chief Sullivan said VSP responded to 56 incidents last months vs 74 with Swanton Village Police.

Chief Sullivan said he researched previous years and in 2022 by this time of the year they SVP had answered 604 incidents in the Town while VSP had responded to 326.

In 2023 SVP had responded to 687 incidents in the Town while VSP had responded to 390 incidents.

In 2024 YTD SVP has responded to 961 incidents in the Town while VSP has responded to 643 incidents.

Some of these are worth noting they proactive and traffic stops. This month alone SVP has handled 57% of the calls while they cover 41.6% of the 24 hours.

Mr. Bourgeois combining the YTD that's a large increase. Chief Sullivan said yes and call volume in general has increased. They are on pace to have 3000 calls this year Town & Village. Mr. Bourgeois asked about the seriousness of the crimes?

Chief Sullivan said its fairly steady, but some are more complex/labor intensive.

Chief Sullivan said they have had one employee who wants to go from full time to part time. Staffing continues to be a struggle in law enforcement in general.

Mr. Bourgeois asked about incidents he has heard about and scene recently with people breaking into cars, these are new people to the community. Chief Sullivan

said they do have people moving into the community for example the Swanton Motel accepting vouchers. They do have interactions with these individuals. Chief Sullivan said property crime comes with the opioid crisis/substance use disorder.

Chief Sullivan said he heard about these incidents second hand via Facebook via the community page and shared how important it is to call the police and report these crimes. They can respond and document according.

Ms. Draper said she has received complaints that it is difficult to reach them through dispatch, is that the only way to reach you?

Chief Sullivan said yes central dispatch is the best way, they will triage to VSP or SVP. But they should immediately dispatch an officer.

Ms. Draper said she's hearing it's not being handled that way. Ms. Draper said they had a break in at the Rec dept recently and she waited quite some time before anyone came. Chief Sullivan will look into that.

Mr. Savage said this morning he was on the phone with a local business, and she is concerned that some of these new residents are camping out in the woods around Robin Hood drive and Hannaford. They are interacting with employees of businesses. Mr. Savage encouraged her to call Chief Sullivan. She is concerned because they operate 24 hrs.

Chief Sullivan said they have interacted with these individuals, and they have moved them out of those areas and will respond.

Mr. Fournier asked Chief Sullivan how the budget is, have you started working on the budget yet? Chief Sullivan said they should be good because they have not filled the full-time officer, they budgeted for to start in July. In 2022 & 2023 they have been under budget. Mr. Fournier asked if they plan for any changes in the new budget? Chief Sullivan said no major changes, they have been able to leverage equipment through Stone Garden grants they are 100% reimbursed. They have been able to enhance the training budget in the past years. Training puts stress on the department when officers are away but needed.

Mr. Clark asked if staffing is impacting them getting there 10 hour shifts right now? No. Is it impacting the officers because they have to work more hours to cover that? No because there's always two officers on shifts and the Town are always covered, it's a scramble for them in the Village if someone takes time off or is sick or training. Some officers are working quite a bit of overtime because there is no buffer.

Mr. Clark asked Chief Sullivan in the next two weeks can they do some speed enforcement at commuter time on Route 105.

b) Swanton Town Health Officer

Mr. Savage said they have had no new complaints for September. The prior sewer complaint for Platt Street has been repaired. The ongoing water test issue for a rental unit on St. Albans Rd, Ms. Candels and he went last week to get a water sample and dropped that off the Health Department. The lead paint issue has been turned over to the Asbestos and Lead Paint division of the Vermont State Department of Health. They did take outside pictures of the building the requested.

5. Highway Department

Mr. Clark shared the culvert has been patched on Maquam Shore Rd. and in good shape for the winter. They have started hauling sand today for winter. Working on ditch work and they have a long list of trees they need to remove. Some they can take care of themselves some will need to be contacted out. There is a lot of trees that need to be taken care of.

6. Old Town Business

a) Boundary Line Adjustment update

Mr. Savage updated that the DRB approved the boundary line adjustments last week. Day Surveying has placed the pins today. The mylars will be in to record soon. Mr. Savage will contact the attorney to draft the paperwork. It's been very straightforward. Mr. Clark asked if the Town attorney will do all three? No, the Town attorney will do ours and the school district and Mr. Rowell will use their own attorneys for the changes to the deed. The remaining 3.75 acres that will be conveyed will be done by our attorney. Mr. Clark said the conveyance needs to go through the waiting period of 30 days. This is good for the Town they are getting the land around the garage that's been needed for years. Mr. Fournier asked when this notice can be posted? Mr. Savage said once the mylars are recorded he will get the attorneys assistance for the wording. Mr. Fournier asked if Mr. Rowell was at the DRB meeting? Yes, so he knows his attorney needs to do quick claim deed. The attorneys need to work together.

Mr. Savage will post the notice as soon as possible.

b) Local Option Tax Legal Opinion

Mr. Savage said the attorney said he would have this for him today but has not yet. The question was how they will handle the Village/Town. Is there a provision in the law that allows one entity, one vote and the boards agree to split the proceeds.

c) 3-Acre Storm Water Update

Mr. Clark shared an update Northwest Regional Planning provided with the State. Mr. Clark said other towns are in the same situation for example Georgia. They have developments that do not have a HOA also and how to move ahead. The State is going to work with the Towns on how to move forward. The funding from the State for now has dried up. There is funding coming if construction is needed. Mr. Clark said he will set up a meeting with there representative on what 3-acre parcels this will affect.

Mr. Fournier asked if they're making the Towns responsible for these permits because there on Town roads or landowners? If the Town has taken over the road, they want the Town and the HOA if they have one. The ones that don't they could have a HOA just for the storm water permit. They want Towns and HOA's to work together. They also have no enforcement in this right now.

Mr. Savage said they did not mention it but there are also stormwater utility districts for this purpose. St. Albans does this. Mr. Clark said they mentioned it a little to create funding its essentially another tax on the homes. Mr. Bourgeois asked if it is

a sunset fee? No because there is an annual fee. This is all to clean up impaired waterways.

Mr. Fournier said they may need to look into these stormwater districts because we don't want residents in other parts of the Town to have to pay for these permits. This would only attach to those specific homes. Mr. Clark said they will set up a meeting. Swanton has 12 developments. Ms. Kelleher said the Village has Jones Court. But it is also for adjacent homes to Jones Court too.

Mr. Savage said yes, he received a phone call from a resident not even in a development who received a letter from the state because there adjacent to them.

7. New Town Business

a) Village Trustee Kelleher on Hometown Heros Banners

Ms. Kelleher came before the board to share Hometown Heros Banners. This has been approved by the Village Trustees. These banners are to recognize active, current, veterans, those who died in service. They will be placed on Swanton Village Electric poles. They will stay on the main route but out of the way of tractor trailers.

Ms. Kelleher is seeking the Selectboard approve to place the form at the Town Office for people to purchase these. They cost \$175 and will stay up year around. The form would be submitted to the Village Clerk, payable to Swanton Village. Mr. Bourgeois asked how many poles they can use? They are in the process of figuring that out. They will not put them around the park they think trucks would take them out and not down First Street because they use them for holiday decorations. They are shooting to start with 75.

Mr. Bourgeois asked what the life expectancy is of them? Ms. Kelleher said she was told 10 years.

Mr. Fournier if the people who buy them will replace them in 10 years or will the Town or Village be responsible for that? Ms. Kelleher said no cost will be occurred by the Town or Village. Veterans or families will pay for their own. Ms. Kelleher has spoken to one Veterans organization who has donated \$350 for two at need Veterans, and plan to reach out to others. The committees meet tomorrow night to discuss.

Mr. Fournier said he thinks it's a great thing just wants to make sure it set up right for the future. Ms. Kelleher plans to oversee the program if she can even if she is not a Trustee. Ms. Kelleher has also been working to find old pictures for these to help people and will help other families if they don't have a photo. As these banners fade, she would reach out to families to see if they want to replace them or other organizations. Fundraising is an option to. Ms. Kelleher would like to see everyone who wants one to be able to have one.

Mr. Clark asked about the brochure listing first responders? That is an error will be fixed. Mr. Clark said other towns like Rouses Point have a process they could help. Ms. Kelleher said she is going to reach out to Enosburg they have the program as well. Ms. Kelleher will reach out to both towns before the meet.

c) Town Office repairs

Mr. Savage said everyone received an email last week with the discovery of a drainpipe in the kitchen leaking for some time and has created significant damage to the floor and beam under the kitchen and in the clerk's office.

There is no basement under that part of the building only a crawl space. The floor became spongy. The highway guys came down and pulled up the carpet. We have reached out to a couple of contractors come look at it and give estimates. Emmet Mathieu and Patrick Menard.

The highway guys moved the cabinet in the kitchen and Mr. Mathieu cut away parts of the floor. These are guestimate until the start the work what they may encounter. All the work will need to be done from above due to a underneath being a confined space. Both estimates are for doing the work after business hours. Mr. Savage said they could give them access to the building after hours. Mr. Menard thought the job could be done in 3-4 days.

Mr. Bourgeois said this is an overview because you don't know what they will encounter. Mr. Bourgeois asked what they think the final cost would be? That is hard to say. Mr. Clark said he is comfortable select one of these two knowing it may cost more. Any contractor if you asked for a firm quote would bid very high like 15k to be sure. Mr. Clark thinks it's straight forward what is needed.

Mr. Fournier asked what the bids were? Mathieu's is \$9,200 and Menard is \$8740.

Mr. Bourgeois said this needs to be fixed, can they have a maximum price. Usually, things like this are time and materials. Mr. Clark asked if they have experience with either contractor? Menard has done work at the Swanton Public Library the Town has paid for.

Mr. Fournier said we don't know the extent of what needs to be done? Mr. Clark said they need to cut back the floor, fix the beam, fix kitchen. Mr. Fournier asked if anyone had been down there to make sure. Mr. Savage said it's a confined space. Mr. Clark said its about 2.5' deep, and Ms. Cathy Fournier said some places its only about 12". They will check it from above. Mr. Fournier said they should get references from the contractors. Mr. Menard has done satisfactory work at the library and the vault at Riverside Cemetery. The low bidder is Menard Handyman.

Ms. Cathy Fournier said if they come every night to work the office area would need to be completely covered up because of the computer systems, servers and towers they cannot get dust. Who is going to cover it and clean it. Mr. Fournier asked if all the work was in the kitchen? No, the clerk's office needs roughly 4'x 6' of floor replaced also. Mr. Bourgeois asked Ms. Cathy Fournier if the machinery was covered property could your staff uncover it? There is a lot of mold and it will be all disturbed and Tamar is already struggling with the mold. Ms. Cathy Fourier suggested instead of them coming each night for a few hours could they do a weekend and if worst case close Monday to get it all done. Vs each night and it being disturbed, it needs to be clean stirring up all that mold. Mr. Clark asked if both of them could be relocated and a professional cleaning after.

Mr. Fournier maybe they should relocate to another area. Mr. Clark said can it be scheduled when the vault is open, can also build a temporary wall around the vault door for access.

Mr. Clark proposed scheduling a week to give the area to the contractor, relocating all the computers. Ms. Cathy Fournier would like to wait until after taxes are due the 15th. Mr. Savage said they will get Mr. Smith to come and relocate the computers.

Mr. Fournier agreed with Ms. Cathy Fournier he is allergic to mold and does not want them moving things and exposed to mold and dust.

Ms. Draper said if were talking about mold and water damage why are we not looking into a company like ServePro who specializes in this especially being a historic building.

Mr. Clark said this is similar to someone's home where a toilet has leaked and caused damage. Repair and good clean up after. A company like that would cost 2-3 times the amount. Mr. Clark suggested going with one of the local contactors and give Mr. Savage authority to oversee. And hire a professional cleaning service to come in after. Mr. Bourgeois said they need to make sure not to close the office down.

Mr. Savage said they have also filed a claim with the insurance company and the adjuster came today. They may get reimbursed for some of the cost.

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to allocate up \$15,000 giving Mr. Savage authority to negotiate to get this done, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried. Mr. Fournier apposed.

Mr. Fournier asked how much was in the budget for repairs to the Town Hall?

Ms. Cathy Fournier will find out. Mr. Clark said they also have capital fund and special funds. Mr. Fournier would like the motion to say where the funds will come from. Mr. Bourgeois said available funds that can be sorted out. Mr. Clark said they can discuss that.

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to go with the lowest bidder Menard Handyman and Property Maintenance LLC for repairs, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

c) Approve new street name -MVU alternative entrance

Mr. Savage said the DRB approve the boundary line adjustment, but the access road needs to be named. School buses and traffic use the road every day.

We gave the school district the option to give their suggestions and they like Ball Park Drive.

Ms. Draper made a motion to approve the street name of Ball Park Drive entering MVU from Frontage Rd, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried.

8. Community and Economic Development

None

9. Any Other Necessary Business

None

10. Correspondence

VELCO has sent written notice that they will begin construction on the lines. Mr. Bourgeois asked if we receive tax dollars from them? Yes.

11. Public Comment (Reprise)

Ms. Draper said the LVRT has put out a user's survey. It can be found online, Facebook. Swanton Recreation Basketball has opened today for ages 3 to 4th grade. Swanton Public Library is part of the public library crawl in association with libraries in Franklin County, Grand Isle County and New York. Mr. Savage said the LVRT survey is on the website also.

Mr. Brosseau shared Halloween in the park will be October 26th at 5pm. Swanton Historical Society will be doing a presentation about Hotel Riviera at the Georgia/Franklin/Grand Isle Historical Society meeting.

12. Upcoming Events

- a) Monday-October 13, 2024, Wildlife Fair at Louis Landin 10am-3pm
- b) Tuesday - October 15, 2024 - Property Taxes Due - 5:00 pm
- c) Tuesday - October 15, 2024 - Selectboard Meeting - 6:00 pm
Town Offices and Zoom
- d) Tuesday - October 22, 2024 - Planning Commission-5:00 pm
Town Offices and Zoom
- e) Thursday - October 24, 2024 - DRB - 6:00 pm - Town Offices
and Zoom
- f) Saturday-October 26, 2024, Halloween in the Park-5pm

13. Executive session (Personnel, Legal)

Ms. Draper made a motion to enter executive session at 7:42 pm, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried.

Ms. Draper made a motion to exit executive session at 8:23 pm, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried.

No action was taken in legal issue.

Ms. Draper made a motion appoint the candidate agreed upon in executive session to be announce tomorrow 10/2/24 by noon, seconded by Mr. Fournier. Motion carried. Mr. Bourgeois opposed.

14. Adjourn

Ms. Draper made a motion to adjourn at 8:23 pm, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted by,
Christina Candels-Administrative Assistant

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