

**DRAFT MINUTES
TOWN OF SWANTON
REGULAR SELECTBOARD MEETING
Town Office Building
1 Academy Street, Swanton, VT 05488
In-Person & By Zoom
TUESDAY
December 17, 2024 – 6:00 pm**

Present: Joel Clark-Chair, Nicole Draper, Steve Bourgeois, Brendan Long, Earl Fournier-Members, Brian Savage-Town Administrator, Cathy Fournier-Town Clerk, Christina Candels-Administrative Assistant, Jacy Lunna, Catherine Dimitrik, Lynn Billado, Joshua Ramsdell, Danny Billado, Josh Aldrich, Gary Longe, Abigail Gaudette, Becky Rupp, Betsy Fournier, Robert Nielsen, Sam Wunsch
Zoom: Suzie Kelleher

A. Call to Order

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

B. Pledge of Allegiance

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

C. Agenda Review

Mr. Fournier & Mr. Bourgeois said he would have like to receive the budgets a few days prior to meetings to be able to review.

Mr. Savage requested adding under New Town Business a second letter of support for tree planting grant for Swanton Beautification. Mr. Savage said they have Legal and Personnel for Executive Session.

D. Meeting Topics

1. Minutes

a) Regular Selectboard Meeting of November 3, 2024

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to approve the Regular Selectboard Meeting of November 3, 2024, minutes as written, seconded by Mr. Fournier. Motion carried.

2. Public Comments

None

3. Law Enforcement.

a) Swanton Animal Control

Mr. Savage shared the report from Swanton Animal Control Officer for November 2024. Mr. Benson had multiple calls. One of the notes was in regard to an animal ingesting antifreeze that did not survive. Multiple rescue groups raised \$2000 for the animal's care.

4. Northwest Regional Planning Presentation – Catherine Dimitruc

Ms. Dimitruc came before the board to check in on the programs and resources they provide to the Town as well as the changes to implement Act 181 passed by the State. Ms. Dimitruc said Regional Planning is a governmental entity governed by a board of commissioners from each town. Swanton's representatives are Nicole Draper and Harold Garrett.

Ms. Dimitruc said one of the programs they work with is Brownsfield properties. Swanton has three properties they have been working with. These properties are Abenaki property, 124 First St and 6 River St. They are able to provide funds to assess and clean up properties for redevelopments. They have been able to provide about \$90,000 for these properties. Northwest Regional Planning has brought 6 million dollars into communities through this program.

Ms. Dimitruc said Swanton has a great Energy Committee. Ms. Dimitruc said they have assisted in the recent changes in the Village Designation area. This brings tax credits and grants to the community. Other grants include the tree planting grant.

In 2025 Northwest Regional Planning will move forward with the scoping study for the Bushey Rd/VT Route 207 intersection.

Northwest Regional Planning has a 3-million-dollar budget with 16 staff members and programs and grants.

Act 181

Ms. Dimitruc was passed last year that makes changes to how the State of Vermont does Act 250, State Designation Incentive Program and Regional Planning.

The new changes for Act 250 removes barriers for housing development. Previously, as it was written, if you had 10 units or more it triggered Act 250. The changes raise that to a trigger of 50 units on 10 acres or less if you're in a designated Village or within a quarter mile. Other exemptions are commercial conversions and accessory dwellings units. The goal of these changes is to not have Act 250 applied in areas that are planned for growth promoting housing growth. These changes are in place until 2027.

Long-term changes to Regional Plans will matter in Act 250 jurisdictions. This will require all regions to use the same way and use the same Land Use Categories. By doing this for Towns that opt-in will be allowed to leave that 50-unit housing rule to stay in place. Northwest Regional Planning will work with the Planning Commission to figure out how to map those areas in Swanton in 2025.

Ms. Dimitruc said another change is there is currently 5 State designation areas (Downtown, Village, Growth Centers, New Town Centers and Neighborhood Development) will now be shrunk to 2 Growth Centers and Neighborhood Development. This will now go through regional planning not the State.

Ms. Dimitruc said an important thing is that the area Swanton currently has designated Southern Growth District will not qualify to be a growth area under these new frameworks. This doesn't mean development can't happen there, it just won't fall into the planned growth area.

Mr. Bourgeois asked how do they get there? Ms. Dimitruc said the two missing pieces are water/sewer and pedestrian connections/complete streets (Sidewalks).

Mr. Long asked if that means a sidewalk connecting the area? Yes, it would have to go from VT Route 7 (St. Albans) to the area.

Mr. Fournier asked if it must physically be there or part of the plan? It can be part of the plan if the financing is attached. That is a statutory language. It won't change what growth planning they have in place, what will mean is they will not be able to access the 50-unit Act 250 exemption.

Mr. Bourgeois asked if there had been any discussion on the conserved land? No

Ms. Dimituc said the only discussion was the change of tiers of places to conserve by the Agency of Natural Resources, They have discussed ways to ensure that no one Town bares to much of tier 3 conservation. Mr. Bourgeois said 52% of Swanton is conserved.

Mr. Fournier said they have to also consider the 18 acres for the State highway garage and the 40 acres for the National Guard. Maybe a sidewalk should be required.

Ms. Dimitruc will work with the Planning Commission on these changes, this will require Regional Planning to draft a new plan not the Town of Swanton.

5. Expenditures

a) General Orders

Ms. Draper made a motion to approve General Orders from 11/20/2024 to 12/17/2024 in the amount of \$193,420.21, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried.

Mr. Bourgeois asked for these orders prior to the meetings? Ms. Draper said they were emailed prior to the meeting, and she had reviewed them.

b) Highway Orders

Ms. Draper made a motion to approve the Highway Orders from 11/20/2024 to 12/17/2024 in the amount of \$57,451.56, seconded by Mr. Fournier. Motion carried.

Mr. Long asked if there is a reason why Comcast is separated out one each order vs a group contract. Ms. Cathy Fournier said they are broken down by location. Ms. Cathy Fournier will investigate this.

Mr. Fournier asked if they received three loads of de-ice on the same day or billed the same day? Yes, three loads.

c) Library Orders

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to approve the Library Orders from 11/20/2024 to 12/17/2024 in the amount of \$1,326.19, seconded by Mr. Long. Motion carried.

d) Highway/General Payroll Orders

Mr. Fournier made a motion to approve the Highway/General Payroll Orders from 11/20/2024 to 12/17/2024 in the amount of \$44,984.24, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

e) Library Payroll Orders

Mr. Long made a motion to approve the Library Payroll Orders from 11/20/2024 to 12/17/2024 in the amount of \$9,262.61, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried.

f) Special Orders

Mr. Long made a motion to approve the Special Orders from 11/20/2024 to 12/17/2024 in the amount of \$1,932.79, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

Mr. Clark said his name is on this because a couple pieces of the gutters for the Rec, he could not get locally so he picked them up at Home Depot and handed in the receipt.

6. Highway Department

a) Monthly Report on Highway Department Matters - Mr. Joel Clark

Mr. Clark said all the Highway vehicles are running well. They have hauled the sand they need. They have done the drainage work previously approved at Swanton Recreation.

Mr. Fournier had a question about Sholan road and what needs to be done to discontinue the road. Mr. Clark said there's a lot of steps to take to do that and they will work on that in 2025, and that it will continue to be a class 4 road. The State is required to maintain the road.

7. Old Town Business

a) Update on Fourth Street property

Mr. Clark discussed the proposal from Atlas Engineering. The three main issues found in The soil sample found PAHs, Vanadium and Lead. The proposal for remediation is based on the possibility of using the space for a ball field. Mr. Clark did ask if the remediation would be different if they put a building on the property instead. No.

Mr. Clark said this proposal states the cost for more testing and a corrective action plan that the State would have to approve before anything can be done with the property.

The estimate is \$30,616.95. Mr. Clark said he believes the cost included for Private Utility Locating (\$4,500) is very high, the Village can mark their lines.

Mr. Clark said for the Vanadium they will take soil samples of other areas (background levels) in Swanton, if the levels are the same this will not need to be cleaned up. If this is not from a spill if the levels are comparable in the area, it does not need to be cleaned up. This will bring the total closer to \$50,000 before anything can be done with the parcel.

Mr. Clark said he thinks this would be a good use of Special Funds. Mr. Bourgeois asked if there was an estimated time for completion? Mr. Clark said it should be a quick turnaround; they had planned to do it before the ground froze. With any luck it could all be completed in 2025.

Mr. Long asked about the addition of milage charges how many times they would come? If they did the underground marking, could it be done on one trip? This quote includes all the sampling on site and in Town, they listed the locations.

Mr. Fournier said they don't have any options. This work needs to be done if we're going to use the property, basically it's how we are going to fund it. Correct.

b) Update on boundary adjustment on First Street

Mr. Savage has spoken with the Town Attorney Brian Monaghan, and they are working on this. There was a delay in communication with one of the other property owners.

8. New Town Business

a) Proposed 2025 Budget Presentations:

1. Missisquoi Valley Rescue

Mr. Ramsdell and Ms. Billado came before the share the proposed budget for 2025. Mr. Ramsdell said the increase was about \$30,000 over last year, the largest part of that increase is payroll, utilities and dispatching. The payroll increase is due to new taxes and a 6th full-time employee due to an increase in call volume. Mr. Ramsdell said this year they are going to hit 1800 calls. Other increases are the bay rent from Swanton Village; this is out of their hands. Dispatching increased \$6,000.

Mr. Fournier asked if the increase request was from both Town & Village? Yes. Mr. Fournier asked about the increase in billings? That is an increase in revenue, due to Medicare rates and call volume.

Mr. Clark asked what the \$\$ amount they are requesting. Last year's request was \$229,761.00 the 2025 request is \$259,490 a 12.94% increase. Mr. Fournier asked about the payroll. This is due to an additional payroll for a 6th employee. Employees received a 2% annual increase. They are well staffed.

Ms. Draper said they are offering some great community training.

Mr. Billado said a paramedic will be reaching out for CPR training for employees. This also takes place at school.

They have no plans for the new facility, they are looking for grants for that.

Mr. Clark asked the board if they wanted to approve this budget tonight or come back for another meeting. Mr. Bourgeois would like time to review the budget.

Mr. Long asked if the lower budget for Maintenance & Janitorial vs 2023 & 2024 budget. Mr. Ramsdell said that is due to maintenance on their 3rd truck, its working/looking better now.

Mr. Billado said unexpected increases in rent and taxes are as level funded as they can be. The increased in Fire, EMS & Police is crazy. Some of these unexpected expenses are uncontrollable.

Mr. Bourgeois said they do a good job taking care of the community.

2. Swanton Public Library

Ms. Rupp and Ms. Gaudette came before the board to share their proposed 2025 budget. Ms. Rupp said their request is up \$10,000 from last year. Most of that increase is due to bookkeeping.

Mr. Fournier asked what the checkbook balance is. Ms. Rupp said \$20,000 something.

Mr. Fournier said there is nothing in there for revenue, Ms. Gaudette said they don't add that because they don't know what they will take in, its soft money. Mr. Bourgeois asked how much revenue they brought in in 2024? \$58,842. Ms. Rupp said they received a lot of grants. Ms. Draper clarified that \$58,842 is 2023, in 20224 they listed \$37,595.

Mr. Bourgeois asked what they are finding for grants/money? Ms. Gaudette said there are a few of the same small grants, but not as many of the big grants, they are very targeted.

Ms. Rupp said they are currently trying to get a grant for an automatic door opener. Ms. Gaudette said they are ineligible for a lot of grants because they are a Municipal Library not a 501c. Mr. Bourgeois asked if they could change that? They need a friend's group to do that.

Mr. Clark said they are working to get the windows weatherized and do they need to be able to open them? Ms. Gaudette said they open the upstairs windows in the spring, trying to wait as long as possible to turn on the air conditioning. Sometimes in the winter

exercise groups take place upstairs. Ms. Rupp said they are historic windows and that was part of the grant. They could pin some windows and leave some available to open.

Mr. Long asked what GMLC is? Ms. Gaudette said it's the online/e-books, they had a huge increase, and the percentage change is not correct.

Mr. Fournier said they do not have the repair/icing issue scheduled yet? No, they need to work on that after the first of the year.

Mr. Bourgeois asked about the percentage increase for staff? 4% the same as the Town.

Ms. Rupp said they did also add two summer camp employees, because they are very well attended. Mr. Bourgeois asked how that compares to Swanton Rec. Ms. Draper said they are more specific to the target of a different group. They are also grant funded and need to be provided for free. But grants cannot pay for salaries. Mr. Long asked if that is why the proposed cost for 2025 is zero for camps? Yes.

Ms. Cathy Fournier said she would also need to add the two camp employees to the budget she was unaware of that.

Ms. Gaudette said they find where they are over in the budget with grants and the trust.

Mr. Fournier asked if the trust's income is consistent? Fairly.

A large increase is also due to health insurance, both full-time employees have insurance, and part-time employees do not qualify for insurance. Mr. Bourgeois said a 32% increase is a lot. Mr. Clark said a lot of it is insurance and you can't control that.

Ms. Cathy Fournier said the building maintenance increase is due to the compressor (\$3760) needing to be replaced and sprinkler system (\$6590), so she included them in the budget.

Mr. Fournier said the combined budgets are \$380,000 how does that compare to other Towns this size? It's hard to tell because they are all over the place. Ms. Gaudette said they have a large building and staff compared to other libraries; they also are open for more hours than most.

Mr. Long said it would be good to know what programs are funded with the grants/soft money. If they didn't have those funds that money would have to come from somewhere else. Ms. Gaudette said a large part of that is summer camp without that money they couldn't do those camps. Ms. Rupp said also a large part goes to their book budget.

3. Swanton Recreation

Ms. Betsy Fournier came before the board to share the proposed 2025 Swanton Rec budget. Ms. Draper passed out an updated budget, not the one in the packet.

Ms. Betsy Fournier thanked the Town and Joel Clark for the work on their building.

Ms. Betsy Fournier said they've had a great year and growth. The community has been great, and a lot of people are offering to volunteer. Football and Field Hockey programs are great feeder programs for the High School. They have teens who have helped with many activities, for example writing grants, new groups, clubs and games. They received a grant for a pizza oven. Great things for the community.

Ms. Betsy Fournier said they have an increase in their request, last year they requested \$149,562 for 2025 the request is \$239,602. This increase is mostly due to the fact the surplus they had is gone. Mr. Bourgeois asked how much they have in their reserve fund? \$60,000.

Increases noted are the health insurance, because one employee has health insurance, and they are going to budget for the second. They have two full-time employees.

Also noted is the cost for the new tractor/lawn mower they purchased. The previous tractor was 2001. They are also looking to hire a part-time employee in the spring for evening and weekend coverage. Mr. Fournier asked if the increase in salaries is due to the 4% increase and the part-time employee? Yes.

Mr. Clark asked if the new tractor is listed in the budget? Or another tractor? No that is the new tractor they already purchased they pay for each month.

Mr. Bourgeois asked if they have authorization to go into debt without going to the Selectboard? They never have had to before. Ms. Draper and Ms. Betsy Fournier said they would not do that. Mr. Bourgeois said what they did was the right thing. Ms. Betsy Fournier said if they had to make a large purchase they would come to the board for guidance. Mr. Bourgeois asked why they didn't take the money out of the reserve fund for it? Ms. Betsy Fournier said they have always added it to the budget because of its town equipment. The \$6,000 in the budget is to repair any other equipment plus the payment for the new tractor. Ms. Betsy Fournier said if they needed to make a purchase, and they don't have the money in the budget they would take it out of the reserve fund. Ms. Betsy Fournier said the new tractor was purchased from United Ag and Turf. They did not ask for anything. Mr. Bourgeois asked if they would default on the loan, they have obligated the Town. Ms. Betsy Fournier said anything in the Town, Library or Rec If they don't have the money the Town has to cover the cost as a Town funded program. Mr. Clark said what this brings up is Swanton Recreation needs a copy of the Town's Purchasing Guidelines. That dollar amount should have come before the board for approval. This would protect everyone in the future. Mr. Fournier said a policy of over \$2,500 for example needs to be approved. Ms. Draper said they spend \$2,500 in a season on uniforms. Mr. Long said but, are you taking out a loan for that? No.

Mr. Clark said that is a easy fix going forward. Mr. Bourgeois said a policy would tighten it up.

Mr. Long asked what the \$5,000 for capital improvements is used for? Ms. Betsy Fournier said they have been asking for that for a while and that the money goes into their special funds account. Building upgrades, field maintenance, field repairs, community garden, grant money.

Mr. Bourgeois asked if they had any discussion about taking money from the reserve fund to lower the ask, from the taxpayers? No, that fund is for anything they don't budget for. Mr. Bourgeois said they have no control over their expenditures, should they have a say if they spend large amounts of it? Mr. Clark said it would fall out of the same criteria. If they buy down this budget with that money next year they will have less in the reserve and still, ask for that amount. Mr. Clark said the policy should cover it. Mr. Clark asked if they get quarterly reports? No. Ms. Draper said they can. Mr. Bourgeois said it should include what's in the reserve. What kind of earnings are you getting on that money? It's in a money market checking account. Mr. Bourgeois asked if they would be entitled to the Towns at the same rate? Ms. Cathy Fournier can find out? She will also find out the rate.

Mr. Clark asked what is the amount being asked for this year? \$239,602 a 60% increase. Mr. Fournier said that's up almost \$100,000. Ms. Draper said that is due to health insurance, cost of goods, additional position. Mr. Long asked what happens to the funds if no one picks up the insurance? It would bring down the ask for next year. Ms. Cathy Fournier said if they don't use it they will keep the line item the same next year but the

leftover would lower the amount to be raised by taxes. The group discussed how the budget for 2024 was \$240,520 but the ask was \$149,562. This plus carryover and the revenue added together make up the budget. Ms. Betsy Fournier will have a revised budget that shows these details. The increase in expenses is due to the increased cost of everything. Mr. Fournier asked if it's due to increased participation? Minimally it's due to the increase in goods, and they shop for the prices.

Mr. Long said the budget for football is \$4,000 but they spent \$12,000 this year, is that enough? Yes, because it was a startup program and they have what they need, plus they did substantial fundraising.

Ms. Betsy said they have a vacancy on the Recreation board, and they have an interested person. His name is Ben Kaufmann and he came to the last meeting. He is new to Swanton and has young children. The board would like to have him on the board, but the Selectboard has to appoint him. Mr. Bourgeois asked if he lives in Swanton? Yes, he was previously a sports reporter. Ms. Betsy Fournier said he will bring a lot to the board.

Mr. Fournier made a motion to appoint Ben Kaufmann to the Recreation Board, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried. Ms. Draper abstained.

Mr. Bourgeois asked for an update on the recreation bylaws? This was discussed early in 2024. Mr. Clark said they will review and add as a action item. The discussed policy will need to be added.

4. Discussion of Town Highway Budget

Mr. Clark said they discussed it at the last meeting, they now have the final numbers. Mr. Clark said changes include lower salary increase (lower budget for overtime), stone decrease, increase in road line painting, leave road surfacing at \$450,000, increase in garage maintenance to pave the parking lot, decrease equipment rental, increase tree service, decrease in storm water permits (carry over \$19,998.60), decrease in road improvements (carry over \$162,000) no line for Brooklyn St Stormwater (carryover Mr. Fournier asked what the rotation is to line paint roads? It depends on the road; they are trying to do 13 miles next year. Mr. Long asked about cross walks? That is done by the Village.

Mr. Clark said if they can pave roughly 3.8 miles of road each year, they can repave most roads on a 15-year cycle. Mr. Long asked if this is class 3 roads? Class 2 & 3 roads. Class 2 roads are striped by the State. Class 2 roads connect communities.

The carryover of \$218,000 will still allow for a carryover in the budget, and a similar budget next year. Mr. Fournier asked if they needed to make a motion for the carryover?

Mr. Clark said if they approve this budget part of that motion would approve the carryover. This budget is -9.35% from last year.

Mr. Long asked if they are comfortable resurfacing roads every 15 years? It will depend on the road but yes.

Mr. Fournier made a motion to approve the 2025 Highway Budget as presented, seconded by Mr. Long. Motion carried.

5. Discussion of Town General Budget

Ms. Cathy Fournier said the budget has the 4% approved salary increases, the increase for FICA/Medicare, VMERS, increase in printing (newspaper ads), decrease in election expenses, water, sewer & electricity rate increase, janitorial decrease.

Ms. Cathy Fournier said she is still waiting for the notice for Franklin County Tax. For allocations Ms. Cathy Fournier said she has removed the Foster Grandparent & MVU Graduation Celebration because they don't exist anymore. This is causing a decrease in the appropriations. Mr. Long asked how the groups request appropriations? They request and send a letter back. Mr. Clark said any new requests they ask them to come to a meeting to request. Mr. Bourgeois said he thought they were going to pull these out? Mr. Fournier said we could take them all out if we wanted to? But not something they want to do.

Mr. Long said he knows nothing of these programs, but is the request still the same today? Some of these organizations report for the Town Report to.

Mr. Savage has received three new requests and an increase from Northwest Access TV

Northwest Access TV

Mr. Savage read the email received previously from Northwest Access TV in their request for an increase from \$1,500 to \$4,000 annually. At the time the board decided to wait until drafting 2025 budget. Northwest Access stated it costs \$4,000 annually to cover Swanton meetings.

Mr. Bourgeois asked how people get on the appropriations list? Mr. Long said they should send a letter of request to get on the list and to remain on the list. Some of these have been on the list for years, Mr. Fournier said.

Ms. Cathy Fournier said most of them have letters this year for 2025 requests.

Mr. Savage read the letter of request from Northwest Access. Mr. Bourgeois asked if the Village had an increase as well? Yes, and they paid for it when it came in July. Typically, the Village directs people to the Town because appropriations come out of the General Fund budget. Mr. Bourgeois asked if they didn't provide the service, are we obligated by law? Mr. Savage was unsure. Ms. Candels said these are all recorded on Zoom and that's how they are uploaded to the Town's YouTube, then added to the website. There are a lot of people who watch Northwest Access recordings on channel 15. Mr. Fournier said they won't stay in business long if they ask for \$4,000 and we only give them \$1,500. Mr. Clark said they said in the letter they understand not every town can pay for the increase. Mr. Long said we are providing a service to the community by having Northwest Access. Mr. Fournier said its important, and said he would go to \$3,000.

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to increase Northwest Access recording appropriation to \$2,500, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried. Mr. Fournier apposed.

Mr. Savage read a letter of appropriation request from Franklin County Senior Center. The letter shared the needs of FCSC and what a appropriation would help fund in 2024-2025. Mr. Savage said he is aware of Santonian's who use FCSC as there is not a center

in Swanton. Ms. Draper shared the programs offered in Swanton. Mr. Bourgeois said we need to show some support. Ms. Cathy Fournier asked if they are looking for a one-time donation? Mr. Savage said the letter says, "token donation". Mr. Clark suggested \$200 out of the Miscellaneous Budget.

Ms. Draper made a motion to offer a donation of \$200 from the Miscellaneous Line item out of the General Budget, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried.

Mr. Savage read a letter of request from Vermont Family Network for \$250.

No Action Taken

Mr. Savage read a letter of request from Cat Crusaders of Franklin County for \$500. Mr. Long said that would serve 62 ½ cats, is there that many feral cats in Swanton? Mr. Fournier said there are a lot of cats. Ms. Draper said with working with AOC there are pockets in the community with large amounts of feral cats in Swanton. Mr. Clark asked if have worked with this organization? No, but they are trying to curb the feral cat population in Franklin County. Swanton AOC only addresses dogs.

No Action Taken

Ms. Cathy Fournier said they will work to contact those whom they have not received letters of request from. Mr. Fournier suggested leaving appropriations in the budget for 2025 and proceed with letter requirements next year. Mr. Bourgeois asked what if someone votes no for the budget because they don't like one of the appropriations. Mr. Clark agreed to leave them in with a letter process moving forward.

b) Update on Promote Swanton Activities

Ms. Draper stated Mr. Fournier, Ms. Kelleher and herself had met with Paul from Ecopixel on changes they would like to see on the website to be more user friendly and Promote Swanton more. Ms. Draper had a list of events to share on the website. The board reviewed the suggestions for the website. About Us, Visitors, Community Calendar, Business Directory, Eat, Shop, Sleep, Recreate.

The estimate to complete this is \$3929 for implementation. Mr. Fournier said that it includes the website. Mr. Fournier suggested the Town General Budget fund this as it benefits all of Swanton.

Mr. Clark also would like to see adding a way for the community to give feedback on the website. Ms. Candels said we could ad a link for people to submit a question and or suggestion that would be sent.

Mr. Long asked if we would have a subscription service for people to be sent on the community calendar? No, they would be able to view it online. One of the things that Paul is going to do is work on a combined community calendar to include events and local meetings. Mr. Long asked if we could be proactive with this. Ms. Draper said the Rec Department sends updates to people via email. The Community Calendar is not set up this way currently.

Mr. Fournier said we need to do more promoting and marketing. Ms. Candels shared the Ecopixel data that shows the traffic on the website. Mr. Long asked if we are marketing this website, or if this is organic? This is organic traffic.

Mr. Fournier said they are looking to fund this update and an additional \$1,000 for brochures, plus a consulting to promote. Mr. Fournier would like to add this to the budget for next year.

Mr. Clark recommended taking it out of the Special Funds.

c) Discussion of Special Funds

Mr. Clark reviewed what is in the Special Funds and what is committed. Currently there is \$369,129.84 uncommitted. Mr. Clark reviewed what previous boards and current Selectboard have committed and what has been expanded. The board discussed using some of these for Library Insulations/Weatherproofing, 4th Street Contamination Study, LVRT Trail Head, Promote Swanton and Capital Improvements. If it is earmarked now, they won't spend it.

Mr. Fournier asked about the grant matching for LVRT? Mr. Clark will follow up on this with the reimbursements.

Mr. Long asked where the Special Funds came from to begin with? This was the American Rescue Funds the Federal Government sent; Swanton received \$1,249,506.37. Mr. Long asked if this is in a Money Market or savings? Ms. Cathy Fournier said it is all in one account, she will check the interest rate.

The board discussed allocation of the Special Funds as listed and the remaining balance will go into Capital Improvements.

Mr. Fournier made a motion to allocate up to \$6,000 of Special Funds for the Website/Promote Swanton updates, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried.

Mr. Fournier made a motion to approve up to \$60,000 for the 4th Street Contamination cleanup of Special Funds, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

Ms. Draper made a motion to commit \$20,000 additional out of the Special Funds for the LVRT project, seconded by Mr. Long. Motion carried.

Mr. Clark will get clarification of what was spent and what will be reimbursed.

d) Letter of Support for Canada Streetscape Grant for the Village of Swanton

Mr. Savage read the drafted letter of support to the board of the Village Transportation Alternatives Application for a grant.

Mr. Fournier made a motion to approve the letter of support, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

e) Letter of Support for of the Tree Planting Grant for the Village of Swanton & Swanton Enhancement Project

Mr. Savage read the drafted letter of support.

Mr. Fournier made a motion to approve support for the Vermont Urban and Community Forestry Program Grant request for the Swanton Enhancement Project, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

9. Community and Economic Development

None

10. Any Other Necessary Business

None

11. Correspondence

None

12. Public Comment (Reprise)

None

13. Upcoming Events

a) December 24 & 25, 2024 – Christmas Holiday – Office and Operations Closed

b) December 31, 2024, and January 1, 2025 – New Year’s Holiday – Office and Operations Closed

c) January 6, 2025 – Planning Commission – 5:00 pm – Town Offices & Zoom

d) January 7, 2025 - Regular Selectboard – 6:00 pm – Town Offices and Zoom

14. Executive session (Legal & Personnel)

Ms. Draper made a motion a motion to enter executive session at 9:08 pm, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried. Roll call votes all Iyes.

Mr. Fournier made a motion to exit executive session at 9:20 pm, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

Actions Taken:

Ms. Draper made a motion to change Ms. Christina Candels job title to Assistant Town Administrator, seconded by Mr. Long. Motion carried.

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to hire an attorney to work with the listers on a retail tax exempt issue, to spend up to \$5,000, seconded by Mr. Fournier. Motion carried.

15. Adjourn

Mr. Fournier made a motion to adjourn at 9:22 pm, seconded by Mr. Long. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by
Christina Candels-Assistant Town Administrator