

**DRAFT MINUTES
TOWN OF SWANTON
REGULAR SELECTBOARD MEETING
Town Office Building
1 Academy Street, Swanton, VT 05488
In-Person & By Zoom
TUESDAY
January 21, 2025 – 6:00 pm**

Present: Joel Clark-Chair, Steve Bourgeois, Earl Fournier, Nicole Draper-Members, Brian Savage-Town Administrator, Cathy Fournier-Town Clerk, Christina Candels-Assistant Town Administrator

Absent: Brendan Long

Zoom: Jon P

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. Clark said after speaking with another board they will postpone Swanton Recreation Bylaw's updated conversation until a later date.

This will give the Selectboard members time to review the current and the proposed new bylaws.

Mr. Bourgeois would like to add Budget Overage under New Town Business.

D. Meeting Topics

1. Minutes

a) Regular Selectboard Meeting of January 7, 2025

b) Special Selectboard Meeting of January 16, 2025

Ms. Draper made a motion to approve the Regular Selectboard Meeting Minutes of January 7, 2025, and the Special Selectboard Meeting Minutes of January 16, 2025, as written, seconded by Mr. Fournier. Motion carried.

2. Public Comments

None

3. Law Enforcement.

a) Swanton Animal Control

The board reviewed the report from ACO Jim Benson with no concerns or questions. Ms. Draper said Mr. Benson will be out of town for three weeks on vacation and she will be as well at the end of the month, and confirmed any problems/questions should be directed to Mr. Savage.

4. Expenditures

December 18, 2024, to December 31, 2024

a) General Orders

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to approve the General Orders for December 18, 2024, to December 31, 2024, in the amount of \$107,416.81, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

Mr. Fournier asked what year audit the payment to A.M. Peich was for? 2022, they are finishing up that year.

b) Highway Orders

Ms. Draper made a motion to approve the Highway Orders for December 18, 2024, to December 31, 2024, in the amount of \$21,988.71, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried.

Mr. Bourgeois asked if the payment to Unifirst is for uniforms & are they provided heavy duty/warm clothing? The Unifirst bill is for uniforms and mats, and they are provided with warm winter uniforms.

Mr. Clark said the payment for East Engineering is for work on Swanton Hill Road, and less than the quoted price.

c) Library Orders

Mr. Fournier made a motion to approve the Library Orders for December 18, 2024, to December 31, 2024, in the amount of \$4,393.81, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

d) Highway & General Payroll Orders

Ms. Draper made a motion to approve the Highway & General Payroll Orders for December 18, 2024, to December 31, 2024, in the amount of \$19,496.59, seconded by Mr. Fournier. Motion carried.

e) Library Payroll Orders

Ms. Draper made a motion to approve the Library Payroll Orders for December 18, 2024, to December 31, 2024, in the amount of \$4,231.67, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried.

January 1, 2025, to January 20, 2025

a) General Orders

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to approve the General Orders for January 1, 2025, to January 20, 2025, in the amount of \$52,749.69, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

Mr. Clark noted the cost of the monthly health insurance. Ms. Cathy Fournier said yes, it was also a partial charge for 2 new employees who was added for December. (These are existing employees who were previously insured under another plan)

b) Highway Orders

Ms. Draper made a motion to approve the Highway Orders for January 1, 2025, to January 20, 2025, in the amount of \$301,949.57, seconded by Mr. Fournier. Motion carried.

This includes the payment to pay for the new highway truck. Mr. Fournier confirmed it was paid for according to the previous plan? Yes.

c) Library Orders

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to approve the Library Orders for January 1, 2025, to January 20, 2025, in the amount of \$573.84, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

Mr. Bourgeois asked how often the fire alarms are tested? Once a year.

d) Highway & General Payroll Orders

Mr. Fournier made a motion to approve the Highway & General Payroll Orders for January 1, 2025, to January 20, 2025, in the amount of \$29,662.31, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

Mr. Bourgeois asked if this represents yearly salary increases? Yes, and some highway overtime. Mr. Clark said this is also a longer work period.

e) Library Payroll Orders

Ms. Draper made a motion to approve the Library Payroll Orders for January 1, 2025, to January 20, 2025, in the amount of \$4,304.90, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried.

5. Highway Department

a) Monthly Report on Highway Department Matters

Mr. Clark shared the highway guys have been busy with little storms, not any huge storms, but keeping the highways safe.

The 2005 dump truck is having a problem with the hydraulic pump, they highway guys have been working on it to repair it. The truck also has an issue with the electric clutch, it is back ordered.

Last week they had a flat tire on the 2015 truck that damaged the rim, it has been replaced.

The new 2024 western star dump truck is ready to pick up this week.

They have done some blade repairs on the trucks.

The Swanton Hill project has a drawing showing what is needed for blasting.

The next step is construction easements for the two landowners.

Brooklyn Street project, Mr. Clark has been working with East Engineering, requiring three easements as well. Those will be done in the coming months.

The highway guys will continue with snow removal and trees they can do in house.

Employees are doing well. Mr. Bourgeois asked if they have steady employees? Yes good team.

6. Old Town Business

a) Swanton Rec. By-Laws update.

Postponed until a later date.

Mr. Bourgeois said he has a series of questions and recommendations. Mr. Bourgeois suggested anything they would like, added to the policies send Mr. Savage & Mr. Clark then they can have a meeting with Ms. Betsy Fournier. The current bylaws are 15 years old they have time.

Mr. Fournier asked if the Recreation Commission adopted the 2024 bylaws they are reviewing? Ms. Draper said that's a question for Ms. Betsy Fournier, her understanding is they came to the Selectboard before they adopt them. The Commission has reviewed them, but they need Selectboard approval for them.

Selectboard members need to have comments/questions to Mr. Savage by February 7th, for the board to review at the February 18th meeting. Mr. Bourgeois would like to include the loan that was taken out. Mr. Fournier stated they cannot take out loans for the Town without voter approval either. Ms. Cathy Fournier & Mr. Clark said they can for the Highway if needed but only for a term less than 5 years. Longer than that they need voter approval. Ms. Cathy Fournier will get the statute perimeter for them to review.

Mr. Bourgeois would like the loan payment/interest added as a budget line items, not under equipment repairs. Mr. Clark said there was no bad intent on that loan, but they can amend the purchasing policy for this.

b) LVRT update

Mr. Clark said the new advertising bids have gone out. Bid opening will happen February 18th at 2:30 pm. Mr. Clark said four contractors have been contacted for quotes.

Mr. Clark would like the bids awarded this spring for the project completion of August 1st.

c) Swanton Public Library Attic Insulation Project update

Mr. Savage shared he has had a conversation with Mr. Scangas, he is going to send a list of what they need done as well as contacting Alliance Mechanical who put the heating system in and has service contract for the library to move the ductwork Mr. Menard will begin the weatherization work February 10th.

Mr. Fournier asked if Mr. Menard is doing the elevator work also? No Mr. Menard is only doing the windows and doors weatherization. Mr. Scangas will include the elevator work in his list.

d) 2024 Audit Request for Proposal

Mr. Savage drafted a Request for Proposal for the board to review from VLCT. Mr. Savage will send it to four accounting firms.

Mr. Fournier said this would be a 5-year agreement? Yes, you can go less but 5 would be the maximum you want to go. There is a screening process in place for that, but the longer the contract is usually better.

Mr. Fournier asked when they normally start an audit? Ms. Cathy Fournier said they usually like to start in April.

Would Mr. Bourgeois like to still have a meeting with A.M. Peich?

Mr. Fournier made a motion to use the Request for Proposal as presented, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried.

7. New Town Business

a) Review of the Town of Swanton Purchasing Policy

Mr. Clark said the current purchasing policy does not include the Recreation Department, and should they wait to discuss that with the bylaws.

Mr. Fournier does not include everyone, for example the Recreation Department.

Mr. Clark said the current 2010 Recreation Bylaws state they can spend up to \$250, so the lawn tractor did not fall under that. Mr. Bourgeois said there new policy (Recreation) suggests allowing to spend up to \$6,000 for equipment. This can all be discussed that they follow the Towns policy.

Mr. Bourgeois said the Assistant Town Administrator should be added as well.

Mr. Bourgeois asked how often the spending authorization is used? Not often in the General fund, but on the Highway, it is used often. These purchases are only made if the money is in the budget. For example, tree removal. In the event of an emergency, they would get the board together to approve.

They will review and add the Recreation Director and Chair.

Ms. Draper said, for example, uniforms are budgeted items or payout to instructors.

Those are approved by the Recreation Commission prior to purchasing.

b) Municipal Code of Ethics Discussion

Mr. Savage said the State of Vermont has passed a bill requiring the municipal code of ethics. This has been sent to the board already.

This is online training. Current employees/board members have until September 1st to complete this.

Ms. Draper has already completed this training.

Mr. Savage said the State laid out people who are required and who are recommended to take the training.

Mr. Savage said the first thing the Selectboard needs to do is appoint a liaison to the State Ethics Committee for the Town of Swanton. This person will keep track of who is required to take the training and keep others up to date.

Mr. Savage suggested Ms. Christina Candels assume this role. Mr. Savage will assist in this.

Mr. Fournier asked if it was one-time training? No, it will need to be renewed.

Mr. Bourgeois asked who else should take this training? The State has developed a list of people who are suggested & required to take the training.

Mr. Clark said he's comfortable with the Planning Commission not take the training but suggests the Road Forman take the training.

Ms. Draper read a list from the State statute. Ms. Draper said it's beneficial for people to take the training.

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to appoint Christina Candels as the Ethics liaison/monitor, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

c) Budget Overage Discussion

Mr. Bourgeois said he realizes everyone works hard on these budgets, but if an unexpected expense comes up that is not budgeted for do they need to come back to the board? Do they have to take the money out of another line item? Do they add it to what they ask for the following year?

Mr. Fournier said historically they have other funds they could draw from to cover unexpected expenses. But they would come to the Selectboard for guidance.

Mr. Clark said they live within the budget and come back to the board if something happens with the Highway department. They would also cut from another line to cover, staying within the budget.

Mr. Clark said that is why as a board they want to see the budgets quarterly.

Mr. Savage said they have also been lucky with mother nature.

8. Community and Economic Development

Mr. Bourgeois said the Cody's Restaurant is open serving breakfast and lunch. The restaurant was closed for a while and it's nice to see it open again.

Mr. Savage said Tim Smith will come to the first meeting in February to give his annual report.

9. Any Other Necessary Business

None

10. Correspondence

None

11. Public Comment (Reprise)

None

12. Upcoming Events

- a) Wednesday – 1/22/2025 – 5:30 pm – Joint meeting of the Planning Commission, Selectboard and Village Trustees – Swanton Village Complex – 120 First St.
- b) Thursday-1/23/2025 – 6:00 pm – DRB Meeting – Town Offices – 1 Academy St.
- c) Tuesday-2/4/2025 – 6:00 pm – Regular Selectboard Meeting – 1 Academy St.

13. Adjourn

**Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to adjourn at 6:54 pm, seconded by Ms. Draper.
Motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted by
Christina Candels-Assistant Town Administrator