

**DRAFT MINUTES  
TOWN OF SWANTON  
SELECTBOARD MEETING  
Town Office Building  
1 Academy Street, Swanton, VT 05488  
TUESDAY  
February 4, 2025**

Present: Earl Fournier-Vice Chair, Brendan Long, Nicole Draper, Brian Savage-Town Administrator, Cathy Fournier-Town Clerk, Christina Candels-Assistant Town Administrator, Chief Matthew Sullivan, Tim Smith

Zoom: Suzie Kelleher

Absent: Joel Clark

A. Call to Order

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

B. Pledge of Allegiance

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

C. Agenda Review

Mr. Fournier reviewed the agenda.

Mr. Savage said he would have two announcements under Any Other Necessary Business.

D. Meeting Topics

1. Minutes

a) Regular Selectboard Meeting of January 21, 2025

b) Joint Meeting with Planning Commission and Village Trustees of Jan. 22, 2025

**Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to approve the regular Selectboard meeting minutes from January 21, 2025, and the Joint with the Planning Commission and Village Trustees meeting minutes as written, seconded by Mr. Long. Motion carried.**

Mr. Bourgeois wanted to express how impressed he was with the Planning Commission at the joint meeting the knowledge and work they have done on these updates.

Mr. Fournier asked if the bylaw update be added to the digital sign in the park to notify people. Mr. Fournier would also like an update on how the Planning Commission will address HOA's in the Bylaw update.

2. Public Comments

None

3. Law Enforcement

a) Swanton Police Department

Chief Sullivan came before the board to share January 2025 incident analysis for Swanton Village Police coverage of the Town.

In January Swanton Village Police responded to 62 incidents. The top 10 incident types were:

12-traffic stops, 7 citizen assists, 5-alarm, 5-directed patrol, 3-juvenile problems, 3-crash, property damage, 3-animal problems, 2-suspicious person/circumstances, 2-information report and 2-vin number verifications and provided 7.5 hours of additional services.

The 12 traffic stops resulted in 9-tickets and 11-warnings. 8 of the tickets are associated with traffic stops. They resulted in 5 individual arrests and 6-charges. 2 of the arrests were associated with traffic stops.

Mr. Bourgeois asked if the arrests were of local individuals? Yes.

Mr. Fournier said one was for the sale of cocaine? Chief Sullivan said yes, it was part of an ongoing investigation since September. The sale took place in Swanton, but the individual is currently incarcerated, so they cited them in the correctional facility.

Chief Sullivan said it's important to know the officers do not determine if someone goes to jail for a crime, they have to follow a States Attorney and Judges order.

Mr. Fournier asked how staffing is? Have they hired an additional officer? Chief Sullivan said they are in the process of hiring a certified officer from Massachusetts who currently lives in New York. This will be a lateral move, a lot of paperwork/process. They also have another officer looking for Part-time work who is a certified officer. Things are moving forward.

#### b) Swanton Town Health Officer

Ms. Kelleher shared January information. Ms. Kelleher said she has no further update since January 31<sup>st</sup> from her report. She is still keeping an eye for garbage on the property she reported. She has been able to connect with the landlord and they are agreeable to ensuring the tenants keep the garbage cleaned up. Ms. Kelleher has not been able to make contact with the tenant.

Ms. Kelleher will continue to follow up with this property.

#### 4. Community and Economic Development

##### a) Mr. Tim Smith – FCIDC

Mr. Smith from Franklin County Industrial Development Corporation came before the board to share his annual update.

Mr. Smith thanked the board for the funding they provided each year to FCIDC. Mr. Smith said things are currently slow but that could be due to multiple factors. Mr. Smith said they had met twice with Vortex, who have just announced plans to expand in Plattsburgh, NY. They had wanted to come to this area but there is not currently any vacant space for them they can occupy. Plattsburgh had available space. The only vacant space currently in Franklin County is the former Vermont Brick in Highgate and the former Lucille Farms in Swanton.

Ms. Smith said the owner of Lucille Farms would like to sell the building; they have been in discussions about this. Recently they asked if the lagoons and the facility need to be subdivided? Mr. Savage said no they are two separate parcels. They also need to decommission the wastewater lagoons, which is not a cheap endeavor. FCIDC is going to contact environmental conservation to inquire if there is any brown field money available for the decommissioning. It is unlikely though.

Mr. Bourgeois asked if there was grant money/programs to split the building into smaller spaces? Ms. Smith said there are some small BGS grants. If they had plans possibly Northern Borders would provide grants, there's a lot of unknowns.

Mr. Bourgeois said it is a sturdy building that has everything they need, but it has been vacant a while.

Mr. Fournier asked if the equipment was still in there? Mr. Smith said the majority of it was auctioned off last year.

Mr. Smith said no one wants to buy the building with the lagoons, the decommissioning of them is going to be very costly, so it is good that they are separate parcels. Swanton Village is not interested in the lagoons or the solids in them. Mr. Smith said one thing they have learned is when the cheese plant started the State or Town should have required a certain amount of money each year to be put in escrow for decommissioning of the lagoons.

Mr. Savage said the plant and the lagoons are on one deed but two parcels. Mr. Smith said that it is a huge bonus. They are going to focus on the lagoons.

The rest of the industrial park is occupied.

Mr. Smith said they are also spending time on workforce development. FCIDC is organizing manufacturing/business tours for high school students. They want to inform them of the jobs available locally, in hopes they will stay local after high school.

They have high school tours planned with Ray's Tubing, Ben & Jerrys, Barry Callebaut and Viatrix.

Mr. Bourgeois said there are good paying jobs throughout the county, and he wishes there is a way to get that message out.

Mr. Smith said they will be having an apprenticeship fair at MVU also. Mr. Smith said they are also trying to get high schools to survey graduating students. The response from 185 BFA students was 45% are going onto college. That used to be a lot higher number. If the whole county could do that, they could take that to business, there would be a workforce out there.

Mr. Fournier shared the importance/need for tradesman. Mr. Long asked if they are doing job fairs in the community as well.

Mr. Smith said the apprentice fair as well as job fair in Taylor Park was not well attended. Ms. Draper said the timing of the event is key with everything they are involved in. Also incentivizing, kids will come when there is free food. Ms. Draper said MVU has a job fair as well, she offered to assist Mr. Smith.

Mr. Smith shared they held a Tec discovery day with 180 8<sup>th</sup> graders at the complex, to introduce technology & chemistry. The kids said it was the best day they've had.

Mr. Smith also shared Pizzagalli & ReArc are renting a building for construction building trades in Winooski to learn building trades. The director will be from Swanton. This is an excellent plan and needed to train people in trades.

Mr. Fournier suggested something like this be done for dairy farming. Mr. Smith said they coordinated business visits with farms, business and border patrol last August. They took 120 teachers from MVU on tours. This was so teachers could understand and convey the opportunities to students.

Ms. Draper said she can make connections for students who want to move in this direction.

Mr. Fournier said you need good people for the dairy industry.

Mr. Smith said they are working to build a spec building in St. Albans industrial park. Mr. Smith said for the Southern Growth district, the St. Albans City council has approved Richard Cumming's water allocation. Wastewater is not there.

Mr. Smith said they are still pushing for a welcome center on the interstate. He has just received a letter from Joe Flynn, Secretary of Transportation, regarding the State looking for land.

Mr. Bourgeois asked if they found land that was conserved, could they build on that? No.

Mr. Bourgeois, shared at the recent joint meeting with the Planning Commission & Village Trustees, he learned they could meet with them and ask them not to conserve anymore in Swanton. Mr. Parent said at the meeting that has happened in other Towns.

Mr. Fournier asked Mr. Smith to keep working on the cheese plant and keep them updated.

#### 5. Old Town Business

##### a) Update on Fourth Street Property

Mr. Savage said the plans to deal with the vanadium in the soil was sent to the State and they have approved the plan with a couple changes. The change will add \$41.40 to the cost. Mr. Savage asked them to move forward with the testing.

Mr. Fournier asked when the samples would be taken? Mr. Savage will follow up.

#### 6. New Town Business

##### a) New Road Name

Mr. Savage said the new road from Highgate Road to the new AOT facility needs a new name. The State has provided three choices. Mr. Savage showed the current Sholan Rd. that needs to be renamed. This will fix that.

Mr. Fournier said there is also a short section of the road they still need to close off. Mr. Savage is still researching this; it may be better to make it a trail vs discontinuing.

The board viewed the road on the map. By naming the driveway, more development could also change the class of the road. The name will be for the driveway from Vt Route 207 to the rail trail.

**Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to approve the name State Drive, seconded by Mr. Long. Motion carried.**

#### 7. Any Other Necessary Business

Mr. Savage said they had to order a new computer for the Town Clerk as the present one has died, it has been ordered and there is money in the budget.

Mr. Clark called and asked to remind the board members that any suggestions for the Recreation Bylaws be sent by Friday February 7<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Candels said Mr. Clark also said to inform the board the new highway truck will be out for its maiden voyage today; Pat will be driving. Mr. Clark said they have had 16 inquiries on plans and specs for the LVRT, the bid opening is February 18<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Fournier thanked Ms. Cathy Fournier for adding overtime to the highway budget, they have been busy. Mr. Long said the team has done a phenomenal job keeping the roads clean. Ms. Draper said the previous night Town roads were better than the State roads. Great Job.

8. Correspondence

None

9. Public Comment (Reprise)

None

10. Upcoming Events

- a) Tuesday, February 11, 2025-MVSD School Budget Informational Meeting-MVU Library 7 pm.
- b) Monday, February 17, 2025 – Presidents Day Holiday – Office and Operations are CLOSED.
- c) Tuesday, February 18, 2025 – Regular Selectboard Meeting – 6:00 pm  
Town Offices
- d) Monday, February 24, 2025 – Joint Town/Village Informational meeting – 7:00 pm – Village Complex, 120 First Street and on “TEAMS”
- e) Thursday, February 27, 2025 – DRB Meeting – 6:00 pm – Town Offices

11. Executive Session (if needed)

Not Needed

12. Adjourn

**Ms. Draper made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:02 pm, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried.**

Respectfully Submitted by,  
Christina Candels-Assistant Town Administrator