

**DRAFT MINUTES
TOWN OF SWANTON
REGULAR SELECTBOARD MEETING
Town Office Building
1 Academy Street, Swanton, VT 05488
In-Person & By Zoom
February 18, 2025 – 6:00 pm**

Present: Joel Clark-Chair, Earl Fournier, Nicole Draper, Brendan Long, Steve Bourgeois-Members, Brian Savage-Town Administrator, Cathy Fournier-Town Clerk, Christina Candels-Assistant Town Administrator, Heather Lavoie, Bill Sheets, Dan Chevalier, Troy Campbell

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

Ms. Draper requested to add two inquiries she received under Community and Economic Development.

Mr. Clark requested to move New Town Business up on the agenda after Public Comment.

Mr. Clark requested to add under Old Town Business Welcome to Swanton Signs update.

Mr. Savage requested to add under the Highway Department motion/sign the certification of highway mileage. Mr. Savage said under New Town Business Franklin County Field Day's will not be attending and to add Swanton Historical Society presentation/Heather Lavoie under New Town Business.

Mr. Savage requested to add under Other Necessary Business and appointment request to Swanton Recreation Board.

D. Meeting Topics

1. Minutes

a) Regular Selectboard Meeting of February 4, 2025

Ms. Draper made a motion to approve the minutes from the Regular Selectboard Meeting of February 4, 2025, as written, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried.

2. Public Comments

None

3. New Town Business

a) Swanton Historical Society

Mr. Clark said because this matter was not warned on the agenda the board cannot take any action tonight.

Ms. Lavoie came before the board requesting financial support and to share that the Swanton Historical Society was donated the old Roy's Insurance building from Mr. David Horton. Ms. Lavoie shared her history with the Historical Society and her search for a new space for them to relocate from the Swanton Public Library space they currently occupy.

Ms. Lavoie said they are going to do a brick fundraiser in the spring to raise funds. Ms. Lavoie shared how appreciative the Historical Society is of the current Railroad Depot building they have that the Town of Swanton maintains. Ms. Lavoie said there are no grants for them to do work in the newly acquired building, until they move into the building. Ms. Lavoie shared the cost estimates she has gathered for this work. The estimated cost is \$42,082.81.

After Ms. Lavoie shared her cost estimates the board members asked questions.

- Mr. Clark said budgets for this year are complete and to be voted on at the Town Meeting.
- Mr. Bourgeois asked if they were required to become ADA compliant? No if they do not do major renovations.
- Mr. Bourgeois asked if they have developed an annual operating budget? No, they do not. Currently they are funding utilities out of Railroad Depot funds. They are going to do fundraising.
- Mr. Long asked when a building like this is donated is the ownership on the Town or the Historical Society? Historical Society.
- Mr. Long asked how much they are anticipated to fundraise this project? Are they looking for dollars for a dollar match? Goals? If they can sell all the bricks for the fundraiser, they can make 100k-120k to be used for operating expenses.
- Mr. Fournier asked if the deed stipulates it needs to be used for this purpose? Yes. Mr. Fournier asked if they cannot pull this off, does it revert to the owner? Ms. Lavoie did not know.
- Ms. Draper shared some of the things listed could be done by volunteers looking to give back.
- Ms. Draper shared the importance of them developing a maintenance plan for the building. The Town maintains the Railroad Depot.
- Mr. Bourgeois said an operating budget will help them understand the costs. Ms. Draper offered Ms. Lavoie her assistance.

The board shared they are in agreement the Historical Society should do fundraising before the Town contributes money. The board shared the importance of the historical building in the Village and fully supports the idea. This can be added to the 2nd Marc meeting.

Ms. Lavoie's presentation documents are attached.

b) Swanton Fire Department

Mr. Chevalier & Mr. Campbell came before the board. Mr. Sheets said the Swanton Village Trustees have already reviewed this plan. This plan will downsize the fleet by one truck, opening up a bay for a gear room. This plan will eliminate the need for a bond request for a new truck until 2032.

Mr. Bourgeois asked what the fire rating/ISO is? Mr. Chevalier said 56.4 out of 100.

Mr. Chevalier shared the plans to purchase a mini-pumper truck.

Mr. Chevalier said the mini pumper can perform 90% of the engine truck they plan to replace it with, as well as cost savings in purchase, maintenance, and fuel.

Noted differences are.

Engine carries 6 people; mini pumper carries 5.

Engine carries 1,000 gallons of water; mini pumper carries 400 gallons of water.

Engine has 2,000 gallons a minute pump; mini pumper will have 1,500 gallon a minute pump.

The engine requires extensive training to drive; a mini pumper will not.

Mr. Chevalier said there are grants he is going to request Swanton Village apply for.

Mr. Clark asked if the gear room is required now? Mr. Chevalier said they would like that yes; this would take care of that need.

Mr. Long asked if decreasing their capabilities with this truck will it decrease their fire rating? Mr. Chevalier said no, but if they went down to one tanker truck it would.

Mr. Chevalier said they have things to update that should help with the rating too.

Mr. Chevalier said the estimated cost of the new truck would be \$430,000.

With the funds in the replacement fund, grants and selling of engine one they would make profit.

Mr. Clark said he thinks it is a great plan. This will give them the capabilities needed at savings to taxpayers.

Mr. Bourgeois said he cannot thank the Fire Department enough for what they do, salaries for them would be a lot more expensive than the equipment.

Mr. Long asked if they do get grant money, would that be towards the gear room or the future equipment/truck fund? Mr. Chevalier said it should go towards the truck, lowering the amount needed saving for the future need.

Mr. Fournier thinks it's a great proposal for the needs; you always need to upgrade your equipment.

Ms. Draper appreciated the work they had put into it.

Mr. Sheets said the critical need is for the gear room, and like all grants right now everything is on hold.

Mr. Clark said the Swanton Fire Department's presence in 2024 was above and beyond what they are asked to do.

Mr. Chevalier shared the 2024 breakdown of calls in the Town.

Mr. Chevalier's information is attached.

c) Town Re-appraisal Requirement

Mr. Savage said they have not had a full Town appraisal since 2007. The State of Vermont has now said it is required. It is going to take until roughly 2029 to get a firm to start it and will take roughly 3 years. The Lister are looking for the Selectboards support to start inquiring with a couple of local firms to see if they have the availability to do it and an estimated cost. There is not very many firms around that do appraisals in the State. The law has changed re-appraisals will be required every six years.

Swanton is the first Town to get this notice from the State.

Mr. Savage said the state did give a list of recommended firms. Some of the recommended firms are out of State, the Listers would like it to be done by someone in state, out of State have a much hire expense cost. One company is in Fairfax they will contact.

If the Town starts the process that will satisfy the State. Mr. Fournier asked what the penalties are if they don't? The State can withhold funds.

Mr. Clark & Mr. Fournier would like the Listers to come to the Selectboard the 1st meeting in April with there findings.

Mr. Savage said they do have \$660,000 saved currently for the reappraisal/ Ms. Cathy Fournier said the State sends money to the Town every year, so much per parcel. Swanton has roughly 3,600 parcels.

4. Law Enforcement

a) Animal Control

Mr. Savage reviewed the report from Mr. Benson for January 2025.

Ms. Cathy Fournier believes the unlicensed dog has been registered.

Ms. Draper said April 1st is the deadline to have your dog licensed.

5. Expenditures 1/22/2025 to 2/18/2025

a) General Orders

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to approve the General Orders for 1/22/2025 to 2/18/2025 in the amount of \$65,527.84, seconded by Mr. Fournier. Motion carried.

Mr. Clark asked for clarification on the notes for credit card services, they are broken down by the department.

b) Highway Orders

Ms. Draper made a motion to approve the Highway Orders for 1/22/2025 to 2/18/2025 in the amount of \$61,058.78, seconded by Mr. Long. Motion carried.

Mr. Fournier asked how they are doing on salt? They are doing good.

c) Special Orders

Mr. Long made a motion to approve the Special Orders for 1/22/2025 to 2/18/2025 in the amount of \$7,639.46, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

Mr. Long asked what Iron Box LLC was? That was the purchase of the storage container for Swanton Recreation, part of the \$20,000 approved for upgrades to the building.

d) Library Orders

Ms. Draper made a motion to approve the Library Orders for 1/22/2025 to 2/18/2025 in the amount of \$2,997.71, seconded by Mr. Fournier. Motion carried.

e) Highway/General Payroll Orders

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to approve the Highway/General Payroll for 1/22/2025 to 2/18/2025 in the amount of \$40,150.33 (\$936.04-checks, \$39,214.29-direct deposit), seconded by Mr. Long. Motion carried.

f) Library Payroll Orders

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to approve the Library Payroll Orders for 1/22/2025 to 2/18/2025 in the amount of \$9,284.33, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

6. Highway Department

a) Monthly Report on Highway Department Matters

Mr. Clark said vehicles are running well. The sand/salt shed is half full, with spare sand available if they need to mix more.

In the coming weeks they will progress with the plans for Swanton Hill and Brooklyn St.

Mr. Clark said they will develop the RFP for paving in the coming weeks, if anyone has suggestions let them know. The class 2 road improvements grant applications are due in April.

The Barry Rd culvert they are going to look for a grant for that.

b) Certification of Highway Miles

Mr. Savage said the State requires this to be certified each year. This year they have no additions/deletions. They are working on fixing Robinhood Drive on the State milage map.

Mr. Fournier made a motion for the Selectboard to sign the Certification of Highway Milage, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

7. Old Town Business

a) Swanton Rec. By-Laws update.

Mr. Clark said board members have sent their comments and shared. Mr. Bourgeois would like the Town Administrator to take the comments and add them to the Swanton Recreation By-Laws, Mr. Clark would like to see the Swanton Recreation review and adjust them.

Mr. Bourgeois said Ms. Candels can take the suggestions and add them in italics in one document.

b) LVRT bid opening update

Mr. Clark said they had five contractors submit bids as follows:

ECI \$ 691,990.79

Wrights Excavating \$ 458,466.99

Munson Earth Moving \$ 656,141.50

Dirt Tech \$ 1,074,741.99

GW Tatro \$ 942,104.99

The apparent low bidder is Wrights Excavating. The next step is to work with the engineer to evaluate the bids. If the bid is correct, it will be awarded to the lowest bidder. The bid had a work completion date of August 1st.

c) Welcome to Swanton Signs update

Mr. Clark said they did not receive any submissions for the RFP for graphics of the Welcome to Swanton signs. Mr. Clark asked the board if they are ok moving forward with the photo of the Library, Church and trees. Mr. Clark will move forward with this.

8. Community and Economic Development

Ms. Draper shared she has heard from someone regarding building a multi-recreational facility for martial arts in the Southern Growth District having trouble getting in touch with landowners in the Southern Growth District. Ms. Draper will refer him to Mr. Savage.

Ms. Draper shared she has heard people are having difficulties finding lodging when they want to use the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail. Ms. Draper wanted to ensure that it is on people's radar for economic development there is a need for lodging in the community. Swanton has two campgrounds, Air B&B's, but no hotels.

Ms. Draper shared there is a shuttle for the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail, they are anticipating a significant increase in usage this year.

Mr. Savage said he has received a phone call from a home improvement show inquiring if permits were needed. They intend to tape a show on Lakewood Dr.

9. Renewals of Liquor and Tobacco Licenses

Ms. Draper made a motion to recess the Regular Selectboard Meeting and convene the Liquor Control Board meeting at 7:26 pm, seconded by Mr. Fournier. Motion carried.

1. Renewals of Liquor and Tobacco Licenses

a) North Country Bait and Tackle

b) R. L. Vallee, Inc.

Mr. Fournier made a motion to approve license renewals for North Country Bait & Tackle and R. L. Vallee Inc, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried. No violations of either company.

Mr. Fournier made a motion to adjourn the Liquor Control Board and Re-Enter the Selectboard Meeting at 7:27 pm, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

10. Any Other Necessary Business

a) Discussion of Joint Information Meeting of 2/24/2025

Mr. Savage will have the power point completed for them to review by the end of the week. Mr. Clark said Mr. Savage did great last year's presentation and he could this year. Mr. Savage will refer questions to the Selectboard.

Ms. Draper shared Promote Swanton has been working on a calendar of 2025 Save the Date's to share at the Joint meeting & Town Meeting Day.

Mr. Fournier will not be able to attend the Joint Informational Meeting.
Mr. Clark asked Mr. Cathy Fournier to break down the tax rate for board members to share with those who inquire about budgets.
The Town as well as the School District is projecting a tax decrease this year.

b) Swanton Recreation

Mr. Savage received an email from the Swanton Recreation Chair, Ms. Betsy Fournier requesting to appointment of Katie Underwood as treasurer.

Ms. Draper made a motion to appoint Katie Underwood as treasurer to Swanton Recreation board, seconded by Mr. Fournier.

Mr. Bourgeois asked Ms. Draper if she abstained from this vote? Mr. Clark said it is not a budget or policy item she does not need to abstain.

11. Correspondence

None

12. Public Comment (Reprise)

Mr. Long said in the event this was his last meeting, he wanted to thank the board for his appointment. The board thanked him and appreciated his input and wished him well during the election process, stay involved.

Mr. Bourgeois said he had sent an email with his regards concerning the loan the Rec department took out and policy developments around the reserve account. The board agreed that it should be part of the update. Mr. Bourgeois would like them to discuss sooner. They can be added to the 2nd meeting in March.

13. Upcoming Events

- a) Thursday – Feb. 20, 2025 – Planning Commission – Town Offices – 11:00 am
- b) Saturday – Feb. 22, 2025 – Pizza & Skate-Swanton Recreation—12pm-2pm
- c) Monday – Feb. 24, 2025 – Franklin County Legislative Breakfast – 8:00 am
Village Municipal Complex
- d) Monday – Feb. 24, 2025 – Town/Village Jt. Informational Meeting – 7:00 pm
Village Municipal Complex
- e) Thursday – Feb. 27, 2025 – DRB – Town Offices – 6:00 pm
- f) Tuesday – Mar. 4, 2025 – Town Meeting – Polls open from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm
Swanton Village Municipal Complex
- g) Wednesday – Mar. 5, 2025 – Special Organizational Selectboard Meeting
6:00 pm – Town Offices

14. Executive session (Personnel)

Ms. Draper made a motion to enter executive session at 7:44 pm, Roll Call Vote all Iyes.

Mr. Fournier made a motion to exit executive session at 7:51 pm, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

No Actions Taken

15. Adjourn

Mr. Bourgeois made a motion to adjourn at 7:51 pm, seconded by Mr. Long. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted by
Christina Candels-Assistant Town Administrator