

**TOWN OF SWANTON
MINUTES
JOINT LEGISLATIVE BODY MEETING
Swanton Village Municipal Complex
120 First Street, Swanton, VT 05488
Wednesday, December 18, 2013 @ 7:00 p.m.**

Present: John Lavoie, Selectboard Chair; Dan Billado, Selectboard Vice Chair; Kathy Lavoie, Dick Thompson, and Joel Clark, Selectmen; Eugene LaBombard, Adam Paxman, and Chris Leach, Village Trustees; Reginald Beliveau, Village Manager; David Jescavage, Town Administrator; Ronald Kilburn, Village President; Ed Daniel and Andy LaRocque, Planning Commission; Tim Girard, Fire Chief; Yaasha Wheeler, Secretary.

A. Call to Order & Roll Call

Mr. Thompson called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Thompson led those present in the pledge of allegiance.

C. Minutes

- Approve Minutes of 9/24/13 JLB Meeting
- Approve Minutes of 10/23/13 JLB Joint Meeting

Mr. Labombard made a motion, seconded by Mr. Paxman, to approve both minutes. Motion carried. Mr. Billado abstained.

D. Public Hearing

Review and Adopt Proposed Amendments to the Southern Growth District of the Town & Village of Swanton Zoning Bylaws

Mr. Billado made a motion, seconded by Mr. Clark, to recess the JLB meeting and enter a public hearing for the Planning Commission at 7:04 p.m. Motion carried.

Mr. Daniel noted that the main change allowed for privately-owned sewer and water systems in the Southern Growth District, although this was in conflict with the Regional Plan, which requires use of municipal water and sewer, which was not currently available. Other changes included the addition of some uses under Conditional Use (see Exhibit A – Proposed Changes to Southern Growth District). Mr. Leach said that he understood that the Regional Plan would be updated to allow for private water and sewer in the absence of municipal services. Mr. Clark suggested that private water and sewer would be best if added to the district description, rather than placed as Conditional Use. Mr. Jescavage explained that having such systems under Conditional Use allowed for a private company to create a water/sewer system that would then be made available to developers, and also gave the Development Review Board a chance to set any conditions they felt necessary. Mr. Clark and Kathy Lavoie understood the reasoning in placing this item under Conditional Use, but felt that it should be added to the description as well. Mr. Jescavage advised to let the changes pass as presented, in order to get the ball rolling, and then fine-tune them in the future as other changes to the bylaws were made. Mr. Leach noted that, although the current proposal allowed for private systems, at some point if a municipal system were to become available, the language would have to be changed again to encourage use of the municipal system and to be more in compliance with the regional plan. The Regional Planning Commission was voting on the matter tonight, with wording to the effect that state approved private water/sewer systems would be allowed until municipal systems were available. Mr. Paxman asked if there had been any discussion with regard to impact fees, and Mr. Jescavage said that there had been none in regard to this amendment. Mr. Thompson added

that impact fees had been discussed numerous times, with the conclusion that such fees were not business-friendly.

Mr. Clark asked if remapping of the district near Aubuchon's was going to be included, and Mr. Jescavage said that that would be included as part of the greater amount of amendments, to be presented in about 2 months or so.

Mr. Clark made a motion, seconded by Kathy Lavoie, to accept the changes to Table 2.15 Southern Growth District as presented. Motion carried.

Mr. Labombard made a motion, seconded by Mr. Billado, to adjourn the Planning Commission hearing and resume the recessed Joint Legislative Body meeting at 7:18 p.m. Motion carried.

D. Meeting Topics:

1. Health Insurance Plans – Update

Mr. Jescavage stated that there were 8 people in the Town's insurance program, all of whom had opted to extend their current insurance until March 31st. A new person would be added into their program on January 1st. In February, if Vermont Health Connect became permanent, each person would have to register to be part of that program, which would become effective on April 1st.

Mr. Beliveau stated that the Village employees tried three times to get in, but were unable to get through. After speaking with Blue Cross Blue Shield, they opted to do a rollover until January 1st, which allowed them to keep the same premiums. Some people opted for the "cafeteria" plan, which would include more out-of-pocket expenses. The Village would contribute the same percentage as always.

2. 2014 Fire Department Budget Concerns

Mr. Beliveau presented a budget draft and stated that he felt it was important for the Town and the Village to feel that they had more unity in relation to the fire budget. The dispatcher fee was just an estimate as yet. \$800 had been added to fire prevention as a new line item, property insurance and property tax had also increased, while worker's comp had decreased. Overall, the Town's contribution would increase by \$3647 in 2014. The truck replacement cost (\$475,000, with a down payment of \$274,000) had been included in the budget. The line item for "outside services" included things like attorney fees, or the survey done by the radio group to fix a problem with the antenna. Kathy Lavoie expressed her support of discussion between the Town and the Village, which brought a level of comfort to the Selectboard. Mr. Beliveau said they were still waiting on final costs for property insurance and dispatch costs.

Mr. Billado said that, in the past, Chief Peter Prouty had presented a budget, even if it were not complete. Kathy Lavoie observed that it seemed the Village had believed that the Town expected a final number, but all the Town was asking for was information on whatever costs were known. Mr. Paxman agreed that more communication was needed, and that they should look at the budget quarterly to ensure that they were on track. The Town and Village could start planning for the new fire budget in October. The JLB agreed that that was a good idea.

Mr. Clark went over a few items, regarding rent (charged for the use of the municipal building), capital expenditures (for equipment), and the truck purchase (\$475,000). He asked if there was a capital reserve fund for truck replacement. Mr. Girard said there was not a capital reserve fund at the moment, but there would be one. Mr. Clark added that it would be nice to see the carryover amounts, for informational purposes.

Mr. Girard stated that funds would have to be gathered for personal protective equipment, which was becoming more expensive and had to be replaced every 3 years or so. He had submitted a request for a fire safe grant to replace the air compressor, in order to get an industrial washer and dryer to wash the gear, and to get new airpacks. The match is 5% and the amount would be for \$168,000. Mr. Billado noted that revenue from the towers donated by Homeland Security could be used to offset fire expenses. Kathy Lavoie added that, since the

tower had been donated to both the Town and the Village, it would be nice if both entities benefitted from any revenue. Mr. Beliveau said he could look into that.

The Joint Legislative Body discussed dispatching fees, which they felt were high, and decided to invite those responsible for the dispatching to a Joint Legislative Body meeting, to explain the process by which Swanton's contribution was determined. Mr. Beliveau said that he would extend the invitation.

3. Discuss Water & Sewer Lines at 4th Street Garage

Mr. Jescavage explained that the Fourth Street garage was on the market, but they did not know what a developer would plan to put in that property. When could the property's water and sewer services be disconnected so that the Town would not have to continue paying for services it was not currently using? Mr. Beliveau replied that a service fee to maintain the line would continue to be charged; only if the building were removed could the services be completely discontinued.

E. Any Other Necessary Business

Mr. Paxman said that at a Swanton Downtown Development Meeting, he had felt that the biggest concern coming out of this grassroots committee was the lack of action. Swanton needed a passionate, knowledgeable person to take ideas and grow them from the inside out. Mr. Thompson noted that a ballot item for an executive director for downtown development had failed in the past; however, that had been 10 years ago. The JLB agreed that the position should be paid, and needed to be full-time for it to be attractive. Could the Town afford this? The Town also should have specific projects or types of projects in mind to aim for. One of those items should be pursuit of grant monies available for various needs in the community. Mr. Leach was in favor of presenting the need for such a position on the March ballot, since special votes did not attract many voters, and the next regular vote would be in a year.

Mr. Kilburn suggested that a "baby step" might be to look for a professional grant writer who could be paid by the hour to find and apply for various grants for Swanton. Mr. Leach felt that creativity and vision were also important to Swanton. Most people tried to fix old systems to work better, but he felt it was best to "chuck it" and get a new system that worked. Mr. Paxman agreed to pursue the idea of a position for an executive director of development.

The JLB discussed the types of businesses that Swanton did or did not have a market for, as well as the potential of having an informational or welcome center.

Mr. Beliveau informed the JLB of a predicted ice storm for the weekend and said that preparations were being made.

F. Executive Session

No executive session.

G. Adjournment

Mr. Billado made a motion, seconded by Mr. Paxman, to adjourn at 8:39 p.m. Motion carried.

Typed on December 19 & 21, 2013

Minutes by Yaasha Wheeler

Received and filed by:

Cathy Fournier, Swanton Town Clerk

Date

Dianne Day, Swanton Village Clerk

Date