

**TOWN OF SWANTON
MINUTES
SELECTBOARD MEETING
Swanton Town Office Building
1 Academy Street, Swanton, VT 05488**

Tuesday, November 18, 2014 @ 7:00 p.m.

Present: Dan Billado, Selectboard Chair; Joel Clark, Selectboard Vice Chair; John Lavoie, William Thompson, and James Guilmette, Selectmen; David Jescavage, Town Administrator; Yaasha Wheeler, Secretary; Cathy Fournier, Town Clerk; Derick Billado, Animal Control Officer; Cathy Messier and Bob Bessette, Swanton Public Library; Heather Buczkowski, Channel 16.

A. Call to Order

Mr. Billado called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

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

C. Agenda Review

Cathy Fournier added "School Orders" under Expenditures.

D. Meeting Topics

1. Minutes

a) November 5, 2014 Selectboard Regular Meeting Minutes

Mr. Lavoie made a motion, seconded by Mr. Guilmette, to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried.

2. Public Comments – None.

3. Old Business

a) Discuss Cat Provisions Enforcement

Mr. Billado stated that the last meeting had included a discussion with Rusty Posner of the Franklin County Humane Society, and that the cat issue was being kept alive at Mr. Thompson's request. Mr. Thompson noted that Ms. Posner had been excited to see Swanton do something about cats, and felt that it was long overdue that the Town did something about nuisance cats. He had done some research into the legality of registering cats, and found that it was indeed legal. Mr. Clark recalled that Ms. Posner had stated that the Humane Society had housed 34 Swanton cats since the first of January, 2014.

Mr. Lavoie was not in favor of registering cats, and was concerned about the issue of sheltering impounded cats. He also felt it would be a financial hardship on elderly citizens living on a fixed income and keeping several cats as pets. Mr. Thompson felt that the two options were to have a public hearing to eliminate cats from the ordinance, or to find a way to enforce the ordinance in regard to cats.

Mr. Lavoie made a motion to eliminate cats from the ordinance. Mr. Billado seconded. Discussion: Mr. Thompson pointed out that elderly people with companion dogs found a

way to register their dogs, so why not cats too? Mr. Clark suggested that someone “do some homework” on the practical side of enforcing the ordinance for cats, and return to the board with ideas and recommendations. Discussion concluded, the board voted, with Mr. Lavoie in favor of rewriting the ordinance and Mr. Clark, Mr. Billado, Mr. Thompson, and Mr. Guilmette opposed. Motion did not carry. The board discussed where to house impounded cats; perhaps in the garage, like dogs? Mr. Clark proposed that Mr. Guilmette and Mr. Derrick Billado (the new Animal Control Officer) meet together to come up with procedures and recommendations, returning with their findings at the next Selectboard meeting.

b) Discuss Revised Library Budget

Cathy Messier, library treasurer, and Bob Bessette, library trustee, came forward. Ms. Messier apologized that she had not attended previous meetings, as she did not know that she was requested to be present at them. She presented the revised budget, with a total of \$143,381.75 from the year 2014, and a requested total of \$147,095.14 for the year 2015. She anticipated a carryover in staff salaries, and informed the board of several renovations and expansions that were important to the library. Mr. Billado estimated that the budget asked for an increase of just under 2%. Cathy Fournier asked to receive the final, revised budget by January 9, 2015, and the board thanked Ms. Messier.

c) Discuss Fire Department Budget

Mr. Billado stated that he had spoken with Reginald Beliveau, Village Manager, and Lynn Paradis. He said that the budget he had seen showed a \$40,000 total increase in the budget, \$10,000 to be paid for by the Village and \$30,000 to be paid for by the Town. Given the significant increase (about 30%) the Selectboard requested to be able to talk with the fire department about the reason for the increase. Mr. Beliveau would meet with Pete Prouty and Tim Girard to prepare the budget for the Selectboard review, and the Village would be invited to a December meeting to discuss the fire department budget.

4. Economic Development

a) Discuss Northern Vermont Parcel Mapping Grant

Mr. Jescavage informed the board of an available grant to update Swanton’s topographical maps, to bring boundaries more into alignment, as some boundaries were incorrectly shown to cut right through existing garages and houses, and misaligned with the road right-of-way. This service was different than the yearly mapping service. The grant application was approved, but the town would need to pay \$4000 for its share of the grant. The maps were used for purposes of determining basic property locations, size, and information for the listers. The Selectboard asked Mr. Jescavage to speak to the listers to see if this updating mapping would be useful to them.

5. Animal Control Officer

a) Swanton Animal Control Officer Monthly Report

Mr. Derrick Billado came forward. He stated that he had completed his rabies vaccinations and trained with former Animal Control Officer Alan Laroche. He had dealt with complaints of dogs littering on neighbors’ lawns, and encountered an irate dog owner who refused to leash his dog and whose dog was not registered. He had picked up an at-large dog and returned it to his owner, and currently had a non-tagged pitbull at the Town garage. Mr. Guilmette asked Mr. Jescavage to ensure that Mr. Derrick Billado’s information was given to the appropriate authorities (state police, game warden, etc.).

6. Highway Department

a) Discuss General issues (Truck Purchase from Clark’s)

Mr. Clark stated that the truck had arrived at Clark’s Trucking Service and that he would work with Cathy Fournier, Town Clerk, and Harold Garrett, Road Foreman, about paying the invoice.

b) Any Equipment Issues

Mr. Billado asked if a sander had been bought for the one-ton and Mr. Clark replied that they were still looking.

c) Operation Issues – None.

d) Various Road Issues

Mr. Clark had driven with Mr. Garrett, and they had compiled a list of roads for 2015 paving. Mr. Clark would update the board as part of the highway budget process. He was meeting with Rob Hall from the state at the Montagne property on Route 207, and consider access from the property to the Southern Growth District. They would also look at Route 7 and the possibility of an extension from Robin Hood Drive.

Mr. Jescavage added that he had received information from Harold Garrett regarding the work on the culvert, and would send the information to receive the grant reimbursement. Mr. Garrett informed the board of a tree that he had taken care of on the roads on his own time, and the Selectboard reminded him to be sure to punch in the time, because of liability issues.

e) Other Updates

Mr. Guilmette thanked Mr. Garrett and the road crew for cleaning up Sweet Hollow Road. He added that a few trees on Viens Road still needed to be cut. He asked also that the boards with the nails should be cleaned up at the old garage, since they were a safety hazard. Mr. Garrett agreed to do so.

7. 2015 Budget

a) Adjust Schedule

Mr. Jescavage informed the board that the highway budget would be considered in December, and the Missisquoi Valley Rescue budget discussion had been scheduled in Highgate for December 4th.

8. Expenditures

a) General Orders (10/22/14 – 11/18/14)

Mr. Lavoie made a motion, seconded by Mr. Clark, to accept the orders as printed. Motion carried.

b) Highway Orders (10/22/14 – 11/18/14)

Mr. Clark made a motion, seconded by Mr. Lavoie, to accept the orders as printed.

c) Payroll (10/22/14 – 11/18/14)

Mr. Clark made a motion, seconded by Mr. Thompson, to accept the payroll as printed.

d) School Orders (10/22/14 – 11/18/14)

The total came to about \$1 million. Mr. Lavoie made a motion, seconded by Mr. Guilmette, to approve the school orders as presented. Motion carried.

9. Correspondence

a) Petition Request for Town to Accept Cedar Ledge Estates Road as a Town Road

The letter was dated October 9, 2014, and presented a request by the residents of Cedar Ledge Estates for the Town to take over the rights and duties of the road. Mr. Lavoie recalled that the request had been presented in the past, and the Selectboard had decided to deny the request for the time being because some of the properties were yet undeveloped, and because other requests had been ahead of them. Mr. Jescavage noted that the letter mentioned an undeveloped lot that the residents did not expect to sell because of the present market. Mr. Clark recommended inspecting the road.

b) Other Correspondence

Mr. Jescavage said that he had received a phone call from a Fourth Street resident who requested that the Town plow the recreational trail between Grand Avenue and Robin

Hood Drive in the winter. After discussion, Mr. Thompson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Clark, not to plow the trail. Motion carried.

10. Any Other Necessary Business – None.

11. Public Comment

Mr. Bob Bessette commented on the Vermont Parcel Mapping Grant, noting that a surveyor was usually hired when a house was sold, and much of the mapping was already done on the ground. Therefore, did the town need the other mapping? Was it worth it? The Selectboard thanked Mr. Bessette for his input.

12. Upcoming Events

- a) November 19, 2014 Swanton Enhancement Committee working meeting @ 6 p.m. in Town Office
- b) November 27-28, 2014 Thanksgiving Holiday/Town Office Closed
- c) December 2, 2014 Next Selectboard Meeting @ 7 p.m. @ Town Office
- d) December 4, 2014 MVR Budget Meeting @ 7 p.m. in Highgate Offices

13. Executive Session (Personnel)

Mr. Clark made a motion, seconded by Mr. Guilmette, to go into executive session at 8:29 p.m. for personnel, under the reasoning that the individual to be discussed would be placed at a disadvantage if the business were to be discussed under open session. Motion carried.

Mr. Clark made a motion, seconded by Mr. Lavoie, to exit executive session at 9:22 p.m. Motion carried. Action taken: The Selectboard would enforce the pending disciplinary action as discussed during executive session.

14. Adjournment

Mr. Clark made a motion, seconded by Mr. Lavoie, to adjourn at 9:25 p.m. Motion carried.

Typed on November 21, 2014
Minutes by Yaasha Wheeler
Received and filed by:

Cathy Fournier, Swanton Town Clerk

Date