

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

Tuesday, November 17, 2015 @ 7:00 p.m.

Present: Dan Billado, Selectboard Chair; Joel Clark, Selectboard Vice Chair; James Guilmette and William "Turk" Thompson, Selectmen; David Jescavage, Town Administrator; Yaasha Wheeler, Secretary; Ronald and Sandra Kilburn; Maurice Jettie; Derick Billado, Animal Control Officer; John Davis; Mike Cota; Marka Cheney; Betsy Fournier; Adam Paxman; Robert Cyr.

A. Call to Order

Mr. Billado called the meeting to order.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

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

C. Agenda Review

Mr. Clark suggested moving 4(b) to the first item in the agenda. Under Highway, he added Covey Road, Bachand Road, Hog Island Road, and Bushey Street Sidewalk. Mr. Billado added an item under Any Other Necessary Business: (b) Late Fees on Taxes and (c) Irasburg Letter. He also added (g) Bollard Removal under Highway. Mr. Jescavage added (h) Signing Right-of-Way Permits for Vermont Gas under Highway.

D. Meeting Topics

4. Old Business

b) Presentation of Service Awards for Ron Kilburn & Moe Jettie

Mr. Billado offered Moe Jettie, former highway crewmen; a gift on behalf of the Selectboard: "You were a huge asset to our town. You're a good man and you're going to be greatly missed." Mr. Jettie responded: "The people of Swanton have been good to me." Mr. Clark read the following into the record:

Resolution of Recognition and Appreciation for Maurice "Moe" Jettie

WHEREAS, Maurice "Moe" Jettie served for over fourteen years as a Town of Swanton highway maintenance Operator from June 11, 2011 to the November 4, 2015, and

WHEREAS, Maurice "Moe" Jettie provided professional service to the Town as well as members of the public in helping to maintain Town roads in a safe and travel worthy condition, and

WHEREAS, Maurice "Moe" Jettie distinguished himself as an exemplary employee of the Town of Swanton Highway Department, and

WHEREAS, the Swanton Selectboard members want to extend their sincerest best wishes for every happiness in the future to Maurice "Moe" Jettie,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town of Swanton Selectboard recognizes and appreciates the dedicated service of Maurice "Moe" Jettie and wants to make that recognition

and appreciation a matter of public record for posterity and wishes him well in all future endeavors.

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town of Swanton Selectboard directs that this Resolution of Recognition and Appreciation for Maurice "Moe" Jettie be duly recorded in the minutes of the Selectboard's regular meeting on this the 17th day of November, 2015. Adopted by the Town of Swanton, Vermont Selectboard on this 17th day of November, 2015.

Mr. Guilmette made a motion, seconded by Mr. Thompson, to sign the resolution in recognition of Maurice Jettie.

Mr. Billado offered Ron Kilburn, former Zoning Administrator, a gift on behalf of the Selectboard: "We greatly appreciate all you've done for us." Mr. Thompson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Guilmette, to sign the resolution in recognition of Mr. Kilburn. Mr. Kilburn: "I appreciate having worked with all you guys... It's been a pleasure."

Resolution of Recognition and Appreciation for the Honorable Ronald F. Kilburn

WHEREAS, Ronald R. Kilburn served for over twelve years as the Swanton Zoning Administrator for October 23, 2003 to October 31, 2015, and

WHEREAS, Ronald F. Kilburn provided professional service to the Development Review Board and Planning Commission as well as members of the public, and

WHEREAS, Ronald F. Kilburn engaged in extracurricular civic and historical endeavors that provided a lasting benefit to the Swanton community, and

WHEREAS, the Swanton Selectboard members want to extend their sincerest best wishes for every happiness in the future to Ronald F. Kilburn,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town of Swanton Selectboard recognizes and appreciates the dedicated service of Ronald F. Kilburn and wants to make that recognition and appreciation a matter of public record for posterity and wishes him well in all future endeavors.

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town of Swanton Selectboard directs that this Resolution of Recognition and Appreciation for the Honorable Ronald Fr. Kilburn be duly recorded in the minutes of the Selectboard's regular meeting on this the 17th day of November, 2015.

Adopted by the Town of Swanton, Vermont Selectboard on this 17th day of November, 2015.

1. Minutes
a) November 3, 2015 SLB Regular Meeting

Mr. Guilmette made a motion, seconded by Mr. Clark, to approve the November 3, 2015 Selectboard minutes. Motion carried.

2. Public Comments

Mr. John Davis, resident of 21 Covey Drive, stated that the situation with the water line had occurred once before. When he bought his house 15 years ago, there was no mention in the deeds that the water line belonged to the homeowners. About 8 years ago, the homeowners chipped in to dig up the line, but they discovered that it was someone else's line. This time, he found it "highly offensive" that if the waterline was not fixed by December 1st, the homeowners would have liens put on their house. Mr. Billado explained that when the first incident happened, the line got repaired and there was no mention back to the town that it wasn't a main line. If the Selectboard had known that, the letter could have been worded differently. "We still really don't know until we dig it up." It was noted that the line had been leaking for months.

Mike Cota, from 18 Covey Drive, said that he would certainly fix a line from his house to the main line, but trying to get everyone in the development to chip in to fix a line in front of another person's house would be difficult. Mr. Davis asked: "Why isn't this stated in the deed?" Mr. Billado said that that was nothing to do with the town, but he understood their concerns. He explained that the town did not own the line, but had taken over the road only to maintain the road.

Mr. Clark said, "How long will we let this leak, because it's wasting water? And how long until the Village shuts off the water because it's ruining the road? But it's kind of no-man's line as far as who owns the line." Mr. Billado recommended getting the development together and petitioning the Village to take over the line. Mr. Davis said that he had broached the subject to the Village, and had been told that it would cost too much for the Village to upgrade the line. Mr. Davis and Mr. Cota agreed that they would fix their own lines, but they did not feel it was fair to fix their neighbor's lines.

Mr. Billado suggested that the Town and Village should get together, dig up the line, and determine exactly whose line it was. If it were the main line, then the Village could fix the line, and bill the homeowners for their individual portion. Everyone agreed that they were "losing the road" if something was not done about the leaking line.

Mr. Davis and Mr. Cota thanked the Selectboard for their time and consideration.

3. Economic Development - None.

4. Old Business

a) Discuss 4th Street Property

Mr. Guilmette asked to know how the asking price was arrived at, and Mr. Billado said that they had compared it to a property of similar value. The Selectboard agreed not to change the price, and discussed considering a more aggressive realtor.

b) Discuss Swanton Recreation Budget

Mrs. Betsy Fournier and Mrs. Marka Cheney came forward. Mrs. Fournier stated that the budget had not changed from last year. She detailed some of the upcoming changes, such as the ability to register and pay on their website; this resulted in \$2500 in web maintenance, from \$150 last year. In order to keep the budget level-funded, they did not change much, and they raised most of their money through registration and fund-raising. The percentage increase was 0%.

Mrs. Fournier stated that Linda Cross was now the new athletic director, and the Recreation Department planned to hire an intern over the summer, to help with maintenance, scheduling, and supporting the athletic director. Also, there were two vacant board positions, and the board met once a month.

Mr. Thompson stated that "you guys never cease to amaze me with the work you do." He asked to see sometime "some addition to this," and felt that "for what you guys do, I think the taxpayers would give you more money." Previously, the Selectboard had been viewed as "anti-hockey" and Swanton currently did nothing to support hockey players. Mrs. Fournier stated that Highgate did a good job with offering tri-town hockey for Swanton residents. Mr. Thompson felt it was "long overdue that the Town of Swanton did something for male and female hockey players." He advocated adding some money to the budget in support of hockey. Mr. Clark said that it was worth considering what the need may be. Mr. Billado said that he liked the level-funded budget: "I kind of agree with Turk, but we also pay for a number of other things." He supported keeping taxes as low as possible. Mr. Guilmette asked, "How do we support MAHA when you have so many other sports that are supported?" Mrs. Fournier said that supporting hockey was a discussion worth starting now for next year or the year after that.

Mr. Thompson stated that he believed that not getting into the Tri-Town Arena Project was one of the best business decisions Swanton made, but it had contributed to a perception that the Selectboard was anti-hockey. He wanted to dispel that myth.

5. Community Development
a) Update on MUMC Parking Lot Agreement

Mr. Adam Paxman and Mr. Robert Cyr came forward. Mr. Paxman stated that there had been a meeting on Veteran's Day. He was concerned about having to deal with the snow removal, but it was a "necessary evil." Mr. Billado said that the bucket loader had to plow, because the snow was so heavy when it came off the roofs. Mr. Paxman stated that the idea was to have Grand Avenue as exit only, with an entrance in front of the library. That would allow diagonal parking, and result in 6 to 8 other spaces. Mr. Billado was concerned about exit only onto Grand Avenue, because of the traffic near the intersection, and preferred having that as the entrance only. Mr. Paxman and Mr. Cyr agreed that that would work. The board discussed with Mr. Cyr the traffic flow and logistics in the parking lot.

The church was amenable to merging the parking lot. The church was not interested in paying for the striping, sealing, etc. and felt that they had served the community in a number of ways already. Mr. Billado was concerned that paving the parking lot was a "huge expense. Why couldn't they throw \$500 at it?" Mr. Cyr stated that the church felt that it was the leasee's job to repair. Currently, the church was paying 10% of the cost of plowing with the library.

The Selectboard was comfortable with moving forward with the church and the lease, and working out the details as they came up. Mr. Clark was in favor of the Town and Village alternating the plowing responsibilities every year.

Mr. Clark made a motion, seconded by Mr. Guilmette, for the Town to enter into a lease with the church for the parking lot and access as discussed, contingent upon the Village and the Town alternative plowing responsibilities. Discussion: Mr. Clark asked Mr. Jescavage to draft a contract amongst the parties. Discussion concluded. Motion carried.

b) Discuss Swanton Enhancement Funding Request for New Community Development Position

Mr. Jescavage had presented a job description for a community and economic development coordinator from Johnson. Mr. Clark's main concern was how to fund this position and where the salary expense should be added to the budget. Mr. Billado felt that they should not start with a full-time position, but agreed that the Town should move forward with this endeavor. Mr. Thompson was "dead-set" against adding an employee: "I don't think we're there yet." He suggested adding hours to the Town Administrator and Zoning Administrator. Mr. Clark asked if Mr. Jescavage had the time to offer to a position like that. Mr. Jescavage said that he currently worked a four-day week; he would have to work a 5-day week to fulfill that duty. Mr. Clark said he also saw this as a "special thing that we're trying to do. When it competes against other things that [the Town Administrator] or [Zoning Administrator] does, will it get enough attention?" Although he understood the concerns, he supported a separate position.

Mrs. Buczkowski noted that hiring someone impassioned for the project would get more done, instead of simply adding more hours to someone else's existing job. Mr. Billado noted that bringing on another employee would be another addition to taxes. He saw all the sides of the issue, but Swanton had to start with "baby steps."

Mr. Clark suggested continuing to "chew on this" and deciding by December. Mr. Jescavage said that the job position in Johnson was grant-funded, and said he could call to find out what kind of grants were taken advantage of. Mr. Clark noted that some money would be needed to "seed" this position. Mr. Thompson said he was in favor of moving forward if the taxpayers approved a line item for the position.

6. Animal Control Officer Report

Mr. Derick Billado came forward with his report. There were only a few incidents, and there was only one dog bite this month. The dog was confined to the house for ten days.

The Selectboard recommended moving animal control up in the agenda, and thanked Mr. Derick Billado for his service to the town.

7. Expenditures

a) General Orders (October 21, 2015 to November 17, 2015)

Mr. Clark made a motion, seconded by Mr. Thompson, to approve the General Orders. Discussion: Mr. Clark and Mr. Ronald Kilburn had attended a VLCT renewable energy siting workshop and felt that the \$180 was well worth the information. Mr. Billado explained the health care deductibles for Mr. Guilmette. Discussion concluded. Motion carried.

b) Highway Orders (October 21, 2015, to November 17, 2015)

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

c) Payroll (October 21, 2015 to November 17, 2015)

Mr. Guilmette made a motion, seconded by Mr. Clark, to approve the payroll as printed. Motion carried.

RESULTS OF ENERGY VOTE

Assistant Town Clerk Tanya Dufresne offered the votes from the articles on the energy vote:

There were 895 votes in total.

Article 1:

731 – Yes (to oppose Swanton Wind LLC)

160 – No (to support Swanton Wind LLC)

Article 2:

744 – Yes (to support local control of such projects)

142 – No (not to support local control of such projects)

Mr. Billado stated that “hopefully this sends a strong message to Montpelier, to the developer, and to other projects coming into Swanton.” Mr. Freedom asked if this would influence the Selectboard’s position in moving forward. Mr. Billado referenced the newest information from FAA, and stated “I would hope that something as serious as that” would prevent the Selectboard from having to hire lawyers to fight the project. “Montpelier needs to get the message and hear it loud and clear. Period. This is not the right thing for our community. And it doesn’t mean that the Selectboard or this community is against renewable energy. We’re against big projects like this that is going to bring our communities down, cost us money, and affect the quality of life of the people who live in our communities.” Mr. Clark noted that the formal application of Swanton Wind LLC had not been submitted yet, and hoped that the project “never makes it.” But if the project did move forward, he felt that the Selectboard should at least go on record with their opposition. With the results being about a 5-to-1 ratio, it sent a strong message about what the people of Swanton felt about the project. Mr. Freedom asked if the Selectboard had looked into the cost of opposing the project in front of the PSB. Mr. Clark said that “we haven’t gotten there yet.”

Mr. Thompson said that a news reporter recently had stated that “this project was dividing Swanton.” He reminded the public that the Selectboard had called for a vote to determine what the taxpayers wanted. “Whether you support this project or not, the Belisle family is not a bad family. They have a large business, they employ a lot of people here... The Bourbeau family are good people... This is just a business transaction. As business people, they have a right to do what they think is right for them. When I heard that this project was dividing Swanton, that’s the last thing I want to see. It’s not personal. It doesn’t make anyone bad people... When I heard that, that got under my craw. I’m very proud to be a Swantonian.”

Mr. Guilmette said that the Selectboard wanted the residents' opinion, and were glad that they got it. Mr. Clark agreed with Mr. Thompson that this vote was not intended to divide Swanton. He respected the opinions of both sides. He noted that he wrote two very strong editorials but did not attack any persons.

Mr. Preedom and the Selectboard agreed that this had been a very good turnout, with 895 votes out of 3657 registered voters. Mr. Billado thanked Mr. Preedom for his "utmost professional manner."

8. Highway Department

a) Street Updates - Bushey Street Memorandum of Understanding

Mr. Clark said that he has spoken with Mr. Porter and determined that Swanton road crew did not take any sand to use as part of the project, and they agreed that, in the spring they would touch it up, and they agreed to work with Mr. Porter to relocate the driveway as required. Mr. Guilmette made a motion, seconded by Mr. Clark, to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the Town and Mr. Porter.

b) Other Updates

Mr. Clark mentioned that he had visited the site of 2 Bachand Road, and did not feel that the excavator had harmed the drainage pipe. He would visit the site again next week.

On Hog Island Road, he had viewed the ditch excavated by the property owners, who now have a "duck pond." He explained to the owners that they should have had a permit, and had discussed the slope of the drainage with them. The area was very flat.

There was additional cost incurred to put the sidewalk through the driveway along Bushey Street. He asked the board to approve up to \$3000 in this particular project. Mr. Thompson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Guilmette to approve Mr. Clark for \$3000 for this particular project.

It was noted that there were sufficient vehicles for the winter.

9. Correspondence

Mr. Jescavage informed the board of an upcoming WorkSafe visit to the Swanton Town Garage. He had asked WorkSafe to visit the Town Offices as well. The report would be free and confidential.

10. Any Other Necessary Business

a) Review of Highway Maintenance Operator Applicants

This discussion was tabled until the second meeting of December.

b) Letter Regarding Taxes

Mr. Billado said that a woman from Mountain View Drive had been charged delinquent tax fees, because postmarks were not accepted when tax bills were expected to be paid by October 15th.

c) Irasburg Letter

Irasburg was facing a similar renewable energy project as Swanton was now facing. They asked for Swanton to support them in asking the state to give local control over such projects. Mr. Jescavage would draft the letter, and the Selectboard would review and approve it before sending it.

11. Public Comments - None.

12. Upcoming Events

- a) Thursday, November 19, 2015 DRB @ 7 p.m. @ Town Offices
- b) Thursday/Friday, November 26-27, 2015 Thanksgiving Holiday, Town Offices Closed
- c) Tuesday, December 1, 2015 Next SLB Finance Meeting @ 6:30 p.m. @ Town Offices
- d) Tuesday, December 2, 2015 Next SLB Regular Meeting @ 7 p.m. @ Town Offices

Swanton Arts Council is hosting the 1st Annual Arts & Craft Show on Saturday, November 28th, at the Holy Trinity Church 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Swanton Arts Council welcomes you to stop by and support your local artisans.

The Selectboard agreed to meet on the 15th.

Mr. Clark stated that they were “thinking of our brothers and sisters overseas” in France.

Mr. Billado thanked the 895 people who voted on the Wind Project. “We know where our community stands now.”

E. Adjournment

Mr. Guilmette made a motion, seconded by Mr. Thompson, to adjourn at 8:55 p.m.

Received and filed by:

Cathy Fournier, Swanton Town Clerk

Date