SWANTON JOINT BOARD MEETING

**SELECTBOARD & VILLAGE TRUSTEES**

**DRAFT MINUTES**

### Swanton Town Office Building

**1 Academy Street, Swanton, VT 05488**

***Tuesday, December 18, 2018 @ 7:00 p.m.***

Present: James Guilmette, Selectboard Chair; Daniel Billado, Selectboard Vice Chair; Gary Centabar, Joel Clark, Selectboard Members; David Jescavage, Town Administrator; Cathy Fournier, Town Clerk; Elisabeth Nance, Administrative Assistant; Eugene LaBombard, Chris Leach, Adam Paxman, Board of Trustees; Reg Beliveau, Village Manager; Amy Giroux, Zoning Administrator; Derick Billado, Animal Control Officer; Lynn Paradis, Assistant Village Manager; Hank Lambert, Tree Warden; Rebecca Rupp, Kathy Kneebone, Swanton Public Library; Tim Girard, Chief, Swanton Fire Department; Jason Butler, Jason Cross, Daniel R. Chevalier, Swanton Fire Department

1. Call to Order – Chair Guilmette called the Selectboard meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. Mr. Leach called the Board of Trustees meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.
2. Pledge of Allegiance – Chair Guilmette led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Agenda Review
4. Any Other Necessary Business – Mr. Jescavage noted c) Accept Selectboard Member Resignation and d) Decision on Filling Selectboard Member Vacancy had been added since the original agenda was published.
5. Expenditures – Ms. Fournier informed the board she had requested e) School Orders be added since the original agenda was published.
6. Meeting Topics:
7. Minutes - December 4, 2018 Selectboard Regular Meeting

Mr. Clark made a motion, seconded by Mr. Billado, to approve the minutes of December 4, 2018 as written. Motion carried.

1. Public Comments – Chair Guilmette used this time as an opportunity to announce Selectboard member John Lavoie tendered his resignation effectively immediately due to conflicts with his work schedule. Chair Guilmette also stated he will not be running for re-election in 2019. Mr. Clark noted Mr. Lavoie had been on the Zoning Board of Adjustment prior to serving on the Selectboard, and so has served Swanton for many years. Mr. Billado thanked Mr. Lavoie for his service to the community.
2. Animal Control – Swanton Animal Control Officer Monthly Report – Mr. Guilmette informed those present that, due to the length of the agenda, ACO Billado would not be presenting his monthly report in person. ACO Billado did provide the Selectboard with a written report.
3. Budget Extras
4. Discuss Annual Town/Village Appropriation for Fireworks

Mr. Jescavage noted Mr. Lavoie had hoped the fireworks display would be an annual event and wondered whether the town and village could share the cost; Mr. Jescavage read a short statement from Mr. Lavoie in support of continuing the fireworks display.

In response to a question from Chair Guilmette, Mr. Jescavage stated he does not have an estimate on the cost for 2019 fireworks but there is a benefit to paying early. Mr. Clark stated he would be opposed to the village being asked to contribute because it is part of the general budget.

Mr. Billado stated he would like to see the fireworks as part of a larger event, maybe a BBQ.

Mr. Paxman thought it was a great turn-out and stated he had heard from many who watched from their own homes. Mr. Paxman suggested the fireworks be scheduled to coincide with the Arts Spectacular again.

Mr. Leach echoed Mr. Paxman noting many people in his neighborhood watched from there.

The Selectboard agreed to include $3,500 in the budget for 2019.

1. Discuss Tree Warden’s Town/Village Landscaping Budget Request

Mr. Lambert came before the Selectboard to discuss the Beautification Committee’s plan to plant trees along streets and in public areas, and noted the committee has received donations from several organizations to aid in these efforts. Mr. Lambert is before the board asking for a $2,000 appropriation to facilitate the planting of trees, which includes ongoing maintenance as well as the initial installation. Mr. Lambert also noted they are planting flowers but believe they can rely on private donations to purchase plants but are looking for ways to ease their long-term maintenance.

Mr. Beliveau stated there is a part-time parks department position in the proposed 2019 budget among whose tasks will be to help maintain the village’s tree and plant inventory.

Mr. Clark asked for clarification on the $2,000 figure. The Swanton Enhancement Project currently receives $1,500 annually from the town so he wondered if Mr. Lambert is asking for an additional $2,000. Mr. Clark suggested putting a line item on the ballot, asking the voters to approve a $3,000 allocation to the Swanton Enhancement Project, $1,500 of which would be earmarked for beautification. The Selectboard will entertain a motion at the January 8, 2019 meeting.

Chair Guilmette asked if there are any areas in the town that could benefit from plantings. Mr. Lambert detailed several areas on the edge of the village and town that could benefit from the addition of trees and flowers, particularly Robin Hood Dr. and transitional locations along Route 78 and Route 7.

1. Old Business
2. Review Fire Department 2019 Budget

Chief Girard, Mr. Butler, and Ms. Paradis came before the boards. Ms. Paradis provided an updated budget spreadsheet. Ms. Paradis stated she had asked the initial payment for the trucks be pushed to next year so there will be two interest payments, which are reflected in a new budget line item totaling $54,330.

Ms. Paradis stated the proposed budget also represents cuts to specific line items, including vehicle maintenance given two of the trucks will be new.

The overall fire department budget represents a $33,360 increase, with $25,114 coming from the town.

Chair Guilmette asked the $58,000 capital expense line item. Mr. Butler stated it has long been used to make a truck payment. Ms. Paradis stated the village will have a fund built toward paying for the next truck replacement which is due in 2026.

There was discussion on how the air packs were originally budgeted but in the end it was determined the $50,000 over five years was built into the budget; Mr. Billado stated he believes the voters need to have a say at the end of the five years.

Mr. Centabar asked about how much the village expects to get back on the current trucks that are listed for sale. Chief Girard stated there has been some interest expressed and Ms. Paradis stated any money from the sale of the trucks would go into a savings account because a bond cannot be paid in advance.

Mr. Clark asked to spend a minute on the $54,330-line item, noting the amount spent on a $200,000 home is $93.00/year, amounting to an $.80/month increase, which is a small amount for the improved safety of Swanton residents and business owners.

Mr. Clark stated he does not see the need for a separate line item for the truck replacement. Mr. Billado stated he has heard from Swanton community members who are concerned that town residents were not able to vote on the truck replacement line item. Mr. Billado stated he believes the town voters should have a say on an expense as large as two trucks. In response, Mr. Clark noted the number of meetings where the truck replacements were discussed, and that the majority of resident have not voiced any concerns. Mr. LaBombard and Mr. Leach noted the village carries the risk and the trucks in question benefit the town more than the village as the latter has hydrants. Mr. Leach believes the village manages the fire department budget well.

Chair Guilmette asked why the fire department budget uses the rolling 5-year average of the Grand List. Ms. Paradis stated it has been done that way for more than 20 years although she is unclear as to what led to the change back then. Mr. Paxman noted impact fees were another option, which was quickly discouraged.

Chief Girard confirmed the town’s insurance rating could be affected by the age of the trucks.

Mr. Leach stated it is not meant to be weighted toward either the town or the village and the grand list seems to be the fairest.

In response to a question from Mr. Clark, Ms. Paradis stated, because the village owns the fire department, village residents must vote on the fire department budget. The town voters do vote on the contract with the village. Ms. Paradis noted the village is on the hook for the bond debt, not the town.

In response to a prompt from Mr. Billado, Mr. Butler informed those present he had purchased a St. Albans boat which was recently at auction and subsequently donated it to the Swanton Fire Department for its use where the current boat is not appropriate.

1. Review Police Department 2019 Budget – Mr. Beliveau noted the police budget was increased from the budget previously provided by a “couple hundred dollars” to $115,743.64 mainly due to worker’s compensation. Mr. Billado asked for a copy of the village police budget.

Mr. LaBombard made a motion at 8:08 p.m., seconded by Mr. Paxman, to adjourn the Board of Trustees meeting. Motion carried.

1. Discuss Library Insurance Topic (Executive Session – Personnel)

Mr. Clark made a motion at 8:10 p.m., seconded by Mr. Billado, to enter Executive Session to discuss personnel issues that premature general public knowledge of would clearly place the public body or a person involved at a substantial disadvantage. Motion carried.

Mr. Centabar made a motion at 8:45 p.m., seconded by Mr. Billado, to exit Executive Session. Motion carried. No action taken.

1. Community & Economic Development – Economic Development Coordinator Updates

Ms. Nance gave a brief update on the USDA meeting with the Board of Trustees on Monday, December 12th. Mr. Jescavage noted that very few municipalities have taken advantage of this program in the 20 years it has been offered, specifically only one in New Hampshire. Ms. Nance noted that in North Dakota more than 100 applications have been processed, but the village is still just pursuing more information to see how it could be used here.

1. Expenditures
2. General Orders – Mr. Clark made a motion, seconded by Mr. Billado, to approve General Orders dated November 21, 2018 to December 18, 2018. Chair Guilmette asked for clarification on the $3,000 business card services. Ms. Fournier stated most of the expense was to replenish envelopes used to mail tax bills. Motion carried.
3. Highway Orders – Mr. Billado made a motion, seconded by Mr. Clark, to approve Highway Orders dated November 21, 2018 to December 18, 2018. Mr. Clark confirmed the town had gotten a couple loads of salt, and some sand. Motion carried.
4. Payroll – Mr. Clark made a motion, seconded by Mr. Billado, to approve Payroll dated November 21, 2018 to December 18, 2018. Motion carried.
5. School Orders – Mr. Billado made a motion, seconded by Mr. Centabar, to approve School Orders dated November 21, 2018 to December 18, 2018. Ms. Fournier stated this represents the final payment to the school. Motion carried.
6. Request Approval for Renewal of Credit Line – Mr. Billado made a motion, seconded by Mr. Clark, to approve the renewal of the credit line with Peoples Trust Co. Motion carried.
7. Highway Department
8. Other Updates – Mr. Clark noted trucks have been going out around 4:00 a.m. if there is at least an inch of snow to take care of intersections and to ease commuter travel instead of waiting for the minimum 3 inches as specified in the Snow Removal Ordinance. Chair Guilmette “fully agrees” with this policy while Mr. Billado thought it was wise to stay ahead of any dangerous conditions. Mr. Centabar concurred.

Chair Guilmette asked for clarification on the Hazard Rd. signs because he was unaware the town would not maintain it. Mr. Clark stated they town would still plow the road.

Mr. Jescavage provided the board with information on the directional signs at Missisquoi St. and Route 78. One sign has been removed and there appears to be some confusion about who will reinstall the missing sign. Mr. Jescavage is working with Jim Cota of VTrans to get clarification.

1. Correspondence – Mr. Jescavage noted Kathy Messier has resigned as Library Treasurer
2. Any Other Necessary Business
3. Accept Development Review Board (DRB) Member Resignation – Mr. Clark made a motion, seconded by Mr. Billado, to accept Gabe Liegey’s resignation effective December 5, 2018. Motion carried.
4. Appointment to Fill DRB Vacancy – Mr. Jescavage informed the board there is one applicant but that there has been interest expressed by others in the position. Mr. Clark and Mr. Billado asked that the vacancy be posted until the end of January.
5. Accept Selectboard Member Resignation

Mr. Clark made a motion, seconded by Mr. Centabar, to accept John Lavoie’s resignation effective immediately. Mr. Billado noted this resignation represents the loss of a good man with a lot of knowledge. Motion carried. Mr. Billado noted for the record his “aye” was reluctant.

Mr. Clark informed the board he is “on the fence right now” about running for re-election in 2019 and would like to encourage anyone interested in running for the Selectboard to do so. Chair Guilmette noted there are a number of vacancies on multiple boards.

1. Decision on Filling Selectboard Member Vacancy – The Selectboard authorized Mr. Jescavage to publicize the vacancies on the website and electronic sign.
2. Public Comments (Reprise) – On behalf of the Swanton Playground Fund, Mr. Clark provided a sample brick that can be purchased for a $100 contribution to the community playground. The sample and order form can be found at the Town Clerk’s office.
3. Upcoming Events
4. December 22, 2018, Daylight Savings Time ends
5. December 24 & 25, 2018, Christmas Holiday, Town Offices & Operations Closed
6. December 31, 2018 & January 1, 2019, New Year Holiday, Town Offices & Operations Closed
7. Tuesday, January 8, 2019 @ 7 p.m., next Selectboard Meeting, Town Offices, 1 Academy Street
8. Wednesday, January 16, 2019 @ 7 p.m., next Planning Commission Meeting, Town Offices, 1 Academy Street
9. Wednesday, January 24, 2019 @ 7 p.m., next DRB Meeting, Town Offices, 1 Academy Street
10. Adjournment

Mr. Billado made a motion at 9:14 p.m., seconded by Mr. Billado, to adjourn. Motion carried.

Mr. Clark, on behalf of the Selectboard, wished everyone in Swanton “Happy Holidays.”