

Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire  
**Board of Selectmen**  
Meeting – January 8, 2020  
Town Hall  
620 Old Homestead Highway  
Swanzey, NH

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Selectman and Chair W. William Hutwelker at 5:30 pm at 620 Old Homestead Highway, Swanzey, NH. Present were Selectmen Hutwelker, Sylvester Karasinski and Kenneth P. Colby, Jr. Also present was Town Administrator Michael Branley and Recording Secretary Beverly Bernard.

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Interim Fire Chief Eric Mattson, Residents Gus Lerandeau, Jane Johnson, and Jodi Turner

**MINUTES**

- The regular meeting Minutes of December 18, 2019 were considered. There was a **motion** by Karasinski to approve the regular meeting Minutes of December 18, 2019. The motion was seconded by Colby and there was no further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***
- The Non-public meeting minutes #1 and #2 of December 18, 2019 were considered. There was a **motion** by Karasinski to approve the Non-public meeting Minutes #1 and #2 of December 18, 2019. The motion was seconded by Colby and there was no further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***
- The special meeting Minutes of December 30, 2019 were considered. There was a **motion** by Karasinski to approve the special meeting Minutes of December 30, 2019. The motion was seconded by Colby and there was no further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***

**CONSENT AGENDA**

**Motion** was made by Karasinski to approve the Consent Agenda. There was a second by Colby. There was no further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***

- Payroll Manifest
- Payables Manifest
- Report-of-Cut – Map 23 Lot 10
- Low-Income Housing Assessments Pursuant to RSA 75:1-a
- Property Tax Abatements #2019-9, #2020-1, #2020-2, & #2020-3
- Release of Assistance Lien
- Amended Health Regulation
- Personnel Action Report(s)

**PUBLIC INPUT**

There was none at this time.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Cost Estimates for Improvements to Golden Rod Grange Hall for Possible Warrant Article**

Branley noted that Code Enforcement Officer Mike Jasmin provided information for the Board's consideration of a possible article to fund improvements towards this building as requested at previous

meeting. Hutwelker noted the estimates from Jasmin and pointed out that although Jasmin tried to get a contractor to look at the building for an estimate, no contractor was available to provide estimates. He added that the estimates from Jasmin were in the neighborhood of about \$15,000 and a number is needed for the budget hearing. Branley said he needs to know if the Selectmen want a Warrant Article prepared for 2020. The Board agreed that at the Budget Hearing someone from the committee should make a case for repairing the Grange Hall. Branley said he agreed that it would be appropriate to discuss the item further at the Budget Hearing. The Board decided to table the idea of putting improvements to Golden Rod Grange Hall on the Warrant Article until next week.

## **APPOINTMENTS**

### **Interim Fire Chief Eric Mattson – 2020 Fire Department Budget**

Mattson was present to discuss an idea for how to cover the expenses for the ladder truck transmission repair. The Budget for the Fire Department was passed out to assist in discussions. Cost is \$18,000 – \$20,000 for the repair. Mattson said about \$10,000 can come from two months of the full-time Chief's position being while Mattson is serving as interim chief and his position is unfilled. The Board previously encumbered \$5,000 from the 2019 budget. The additional \$5,000 could come from the Vehicle Maintenance line item for 2020. Vehicle Repairs line item will be left with \$38,000. Hutwelker asked if we will expect to overspend the line item for vehicle maintenance with that amount and Branley said it probably will, but the Fire Department will be spending less for full-time salaries due to the vacancy in the Fire Chief position.

Hutwelker asked what loss might be involved if the decision was made to push off for one year for PT Shift Coverage Wages. Mattson said the weekends have been a problem to cover for a while. Discussion was held to add dollars to PT Shift Coverage Wages. The Board agreed to budget \$10,000 for weekend shift coverage and get the overall budget increase under 5%.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Home Based Business Application – Map 52 Lot 11.**

Branley informed the Board that the Director of Planning and Economic Development stated that this application will go to the Planning Board and abutters will receive notice. The Board said their concern was about noise generated by the presence of dogs and they wanted to make sure abutters would be notified.

Karasinski **moved** to qualify as a Home Based Business the proposed use of a portion of an existing home at 114 Base Hill Road (Map 52, Lot 11), subject to Planning Board review, all limitations specified in the application, and continued compliance with all applicable provisions of the Town Zoning ordinance, and furthermore to authorize the Chairperson to execute any necessary documentation on behalf of the Board related to this decision. There was a second to the motion by Colby and no further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***

### **Completion of Rabbit Hollow Road Bridge Project**

The Board reviewed correspondence from Josif with Hoyle Tanner, noting this project has been completed slightly under budget. Branley said the guardrail has been painted.

Karasinski **moved** to accept the construction of Rabbit Hollow Road Bridge as complete and authorize the Town Administrator to sign any necessary documents. There was a second to the motion by Colby and no further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***

## **November Expenditure & Revenue Report**

Hutwelker asked if the numbers for the end of the year should be available at the Budget Hearing and Branley said preliminary numbers should be ready.

#### **Accept unanticipated funds per RSA 31:95-b**

The Board was asked to accept money as follows, totaling \$15,085.00 in donations:

- \$25.00 to Fire Tools & Equipment Non-Restricted Account (in memory of Robert Goodale Jr.)
- \$15,060.00 to Whitcomb Hall Non-Restricted Account (Gomarlo Family Challenge)

Karasinski **moved** to accept the funds as listed and to remit them to the custody of the Treasurer to be held in the General Fund or to the Trustees of Trust Funds to be held in the appropriate account. There was a second to the motion by Colby and no further discussion. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

#### **Review of Petitioned Warrant Articles - Informational**

Branley informed the Board that the Town has received two petitioned warrant articles so far. They increase tax credits related to veterans; from \$250 to \$500 for the general veterans tax credit and from \$2,000 to \$4,000 for veterans with a service connected disability. In 2019 the Town had the following:

- Service connected disability tax credits – 25 (increased cost if approved of up to \$50,000)
- Veterans' tax credits – 308 (increased cost if approved of up to \$77,000)

#### **Town Fire Warden Recommendation**

Branley referred to an email from Forest Ranger Adrian Reyes requesting that the Town name a fire warden since the position was made vacant when Chief Skantze left.

**Motion** was made by Karasinski to name Eric Mattson as Town Fire Warden. There was a second by Colby and no further discussion. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

##### **Whitcomb Hall Rehabilitation Project Update**

Discussion was held about the importance of scheduling for the Whitcomb Hall project. Branley said planning is going smoothly as well as lining up of sub-contractors. He said the contractors are well aware of the scheduling issues and are working on meeting the Board's schedule for the project.

##### **Christian Hill Road Bridge Reconstruction Status Update**

Branley informed the Board that he has been working closely with Hoyle Tanner regarding this project and added that the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NH DOT) has decided to allow the Town to reduce the height of the bridge to 12 feet. This brings the project cost down to \$925,000 from a possible high of \$2.25 million. This project is currently scheduled for State FY 2024 but could potentially be constructed sooner since the bridge has been closed if the Town wants to front the money and wait for reimbursement. Karasinski asked about a box culvert being a possibility given the reduction in height and Branley said he would discuss it with Hoyle Tanner.

##### **2020 Town Meeting Warrant**

Branley provided an updated draft. Contribution to Trust Funds was discussed. Branley noted that the proposed amount of \$522,000 is down about 20.8% from 2019, largely offset by increases to debt service by bond's that have been approved.

##### **Flooding Near Rose Lane in Keene**

Branley spoke briefly about the City of Keene suggesting that repairs the Town made at the Diversion Dam were causing flooding near Rose Lane and that the Town needed to take some action to prevent future flooding. Branley said that he informed them that the property is not in Swanzey or owned by Swanzey so flooding is not Swanzey's responsibility.

### **PUBLIC INPUT**

#### **Otter Brook**

Lerandeau noted water being sent downstream from the dam at Otter Brook is likely causing the flooding. He said the Town should be asking what is going on there.

#### **Swanzey Now**

*Swanzey Now* TV shows have been completed with Jodi Turner and Branley. Turner said anyone can go to YouTube and ask for *Swanzey Now* to see the shows. One show is on general issues and the second is about the Fire Station. Turner said they will be doing more shows and they will be posted on YouTube. She suggested getting people used to visiting the YouTube site for information about goings-on in Swanzey. Colby suggested the videos go on the Town website and Facebook page.

#### **Golden Rod Grange**

Johnson said \$300 was raised by the last raffle for the Grange. She said she feels the Town should do some basic repairs so that the building doesn't fall down. Turner said that the door with a hole in it could be repaired so it won't fall down. It was noted that the estimate from Jasmin did not include plumbing. It only included basic repairs to stabilize the building. Branley said he would send a copy of the estimates to Johnson. Turner noted there are a lot of places where Swanzey should be putting money, so right now she would like enough funding just to keep it from falling down. Johnson said if the building isn't stabilized then it will fall down. She said this is the center of town and part of the history of the town includes the Grange Hall. She said it is important to preserve it. For those who do not agree about preserving, she would like to know what the vision for the site would be.

Hutwelker said the position of the Board was to see that the building was cleaned out, which was done. Now the idea would be to stabilize the building, if that is what the voters want.

### **NON-PUBLIC SESSION(S)**

#### **Non-public session(s) per RSA 91-A:3II(b) Hiring of Public Employee(s)**

**Motion** was made by Karasinski to enter nonpublic session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II(b) Hiring of Public Employee(s) seconded by Colby. All in favor by Roll Call and the ***motion passed***. The Board entered nonpublic session at 6:23 p.m. Present was Kenneth P. Colby, Jr., W. William Hutwelker III, and Sylvester Karasinski. Also present was Town Administrator Michael Branley and Recording Secretary Beverly Bernard.

**Motion** was made by Karasinski to come out of non-public session, seconded by Colby. All in favor by Roll Call and the ***motion passed***. Non-public session ended at 6:26 p.m.

**Motion** was made by Karasinski to seal the minutes because divulgence of the information likely would affect adversely the reputation of a person other than a member of this board, seconded by Colby. All were in favor and the ***motion passed***.

#### **Non-public session(s) per RSA 91-A:3II(c) Matters which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person, other than a member of this board**

**Motion** was made by Karasinski to enter nonpublic session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3II(c) Matters which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person, other than a member of this board, seconded by Colby. All in favor by Roll Call and the ***motion passed.***

The Board entered nonpublic session at 6:26 p.m. Present was Kenneth P. Colby, Jr., W. William Hutwelker III, and Sylvester Karasinski. Also present was Town Administrator Michael Branley and Recording Secretary Beverly Bernard.

**Motion** was made by Karasinski to come out of non-public session, seconded by Colby. All in favor by Roll Call and the ***motion passed.*** Non-public session ended at 6:33 p.m.

**Motion** was made by Karasinski to seal the minutes because divulgence of the information likely would affect adversely the reputation of a person other than a member of this board, seconded by Colby. All were in favor and the ***motion passed.***

#### **Non-public session(s) per RSA 91-A:3II(b) Hiring of Public Employee(s)**

**Motion** was made by Karasinski to enter nonpublic session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II(b) Hiring of Public Employee(s) seconded by Colby. All in favor by Roll Call and the ***motion passed.*** The Board entered nonpublic session at 6:33 p.m. Present was Kenneth P. Colby, Jr., W. William Hutwelker III, and Sylvester Karasinski. Also present was Town Administrator Michael Branley and Recording Secretary Beverly Bernard.

**Motion** was made by Karasinski to come out of non-public session, seconded by Colby. All in favor by Roll Call and the ***motion passed.*** Non-public session ended at 6:37 p.m.

**Motion** was made by Karasinski to seal the minutes because divulgence of the information likely would affect adversely the reputation of a person other than a member of this board, seconded by Colby. All were in favor and the ***motion passed.***

#### **Non-public session(s) per RSA 91-A:3II(e) Consideration or negotiation of pending claims or litigation**

**Motion** was made by Karasinski to enter nonpublic session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II(e) Consideration or negotiation of pending claims or litigation), seconded by Colby. All in favor by Roll Call and the ***motion passed.*** The Board entered nonpublic session at 6:37 p.m. Present was Kenneth P. Colby, Jr., W. William Hutwelker III, and Sylvester Karasinski. Also present was Town Administrator Michael Branley and Recording Secretary Beverly Bernard.

**Motion** was made by Karasinski to come out of non-public session, seconded by Colby. All in favor by Roll Call and the ***motion passed.*** Non-public session ended at 6:39 p.m.

**Motion** was made by Karasinski to seal the minutes because divulgence of the information likely would affect adversely the reputation of a person other than a member of this board, seconded by Colby. All were in favor and the ***motion passed.***

#### **Non-public session(s) per RSA 91-A:3II(a), Personnel Matter(s)**

**Motion** was made by Karasinski to enter Non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3II(a) , Personnel Matter (s). The motion was seconded by Colby. The Selectmen voted unanimously by roll call to go into non-public session at 6:40 p.m. **Motion passed.** Present were the Board members Kenneth P. Colby, Jr., Sylvester Karasinski, and W. William Hutwelker, III, Town Administrator Michael Branley, and Recording Secretary Bernard.

**Motion** was made by Karasinski to leave non-public session and return to public session. The motion was seconded by Colby, with all in favor. **Motion passed.** Non-public session ended at 6:44 p.m.

**Motion** was made by Karasinski to seal the minutes of the non-public session. The motion was seconded by Colby. The Selectmen voted unanimously by roll call to seal the minutes. **Motion passed.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion** to adjourn the meeting was made by Karasinski. The motion was seconded by Colby without further discussion. All were in favor. **Motion passed.** Adjournment occurred at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Beverly Bernard, Recording Secretary

Approved on January 15, 2020

Unsealed on