

Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Board of Selectmen
Meeting – June 17, 2020
Whitcomb Hall, Main Street, Swanzey NH
and remotely using Zoom Meeting

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Selectman Kenneth P. Colby, Jr. at 5:30 pm at Whitcomb Hall Main Street, Swanzey, NH and remotely using Zoom Meeting. Present at Whitcomb Hall were W. William Hutwelker, Sylvester Karasinski and Kenneth P. Colby, Jr. Also present was Town Administrator Michael Branley. Recording Secretary Beverly Bernard was present via Zoom.

OTHERS PRESENT

Police Chief Tom De Angelis, Junior Swamp Bats President Jim Fennell, Fire Chief Bill Gould, Capital Improvements Program Committee Chair Steve Bittel, Code Enforcement Officer Mike Jasmin, Recreation Director Aaron Cherry,

MINUTES

- The regular meeting Minutes of June 3, 2020 were considered. There was a **motion** by Hutwelker to approve the regular meeting Minutes of June 3, 2020. The motion was seconded by Karasinski and there was no further discussion. All were in favor by roll call. **Motion passed.**
- The Non-Public meeting Minutes of June 3, 2020 were considered. There was a **motion** by Hutwelker to approve the Non-Public meeting Minutes of June 3, 2020. The motion was seconded by Karasinski and there was no further discussion. All were in favor by roll call. **Motion passed.**
- The special meeting Minutes of June 4, 2020, June 9, 2020, June 11, 2020, and June 16, 2020 (2 pm meetings) were considered. There was a **motion** by Hutwelker to approve the special meeting Minutes of all the above dates. The motion was seconded by Karasinski and there was no further discussion. All were in favor by roll call. **Motion passed.**

CONSENT AGENDA

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

- Payroll Manifest
- Payables Manifest
- Boundary Line Agreement with Kathy A. Nicholson
- Yield Tax Levy – Map 27 Lot 5-2; Map 9 Lot 10; and Map 54 Lot 1 & Map 54 Lot 2
- Intent-to-excavate – Map 24 Lot 58 & Map 86 Lot 2
- Intent-to-cut – Map 63 Lot 7 & Map 47 Lot 1
- Application for Residence in an Industrial or Commercial Zone Assessment
- Abatement #2020-28, 2020-33, 2020-34, & 2020-35
- Solar Tax Exemptions
- Personnel Action Report(s)

PUBLIC INPUT

The public was able to participate remotely over Zoom by going to www.zoom.us, using Zoom App on a cell phone, or on a landline calling 1 929 205 6099 and entering Meeting ID 235 370 4380#. If the public is unable to access the meeting, they are asked to call 352-7411 ext. 107. There was none at this time.

NOMINATIONS:

The Board considered naming David Hoitt as Stratton Free Library Trustee Alternate.

Hutwelker **moved** to appoint David Hoitt to serve as an alternate to the Stratton Free Library Board of Trustees for a term ending at Town Meeting 2021. There was a second to the motion by Karasinski and no further discussion. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

APPOINTMENTS

Police Chief Tom De Angelis – Department Update

An update for the department was presented to the Board by De Angelis. He said the main issue is lack of sufficient personnel. Two full-time positions are open and a part-time position as well. He noted they have been interviewing an individual. De Angelis said many area police departments are short of staff. Cruisers were discussed. He spoke about a new cruiser. Number four was sold to another town. The cars are more expensive now with larger tires. He said the department is still operating with COVID-19 procedures. He said minor infractions haven't been followed up for safety of officers. He said the department is going back to old time policing. Not using as much fuel during this time.

Colby asked about car number eight. De Angelis said it is not a patrol car but it used for investigative work. Colby asked about car number five. De Angelis said that car is an unmarked car but it is being using for patrolling. The car has a lot of miles on it. He said the car is still safe to use. There was a discussion about the cost of outfitting a cruiser.

Hutwelker asked about strategies for recruitment. De Angelis said the younger generation from which officers could be recruited are on social media and don't necessarily read newspapers. Hutwelker asked about folks moving north and whether pay scale works for them. De Angelis said the base pay is higher for some of those folks. Colby asked about the benefits plan being helpful to recruitment. De Angelis said the police have been beaten up so badly by the media that folks don't want to go into law enforcement.

Hutwelker asked if the State police might provide part-time coverage. De Angelis said Swanzey is too large for that. He said the Sheriff's department has taken over covering some towns. De Angelis said if they lose one person, they will be in trouble. De Angelis spoke about the Administrator working from home and providing good service to the department, although it means other staff is doing tasks such as answering the phones.

Hutwelker asked about drugs – De Angelis said he thought there would be a surge but it didn't happen. He said the police are out in the town being visible. He noted police patrolling at Richardson Park quite a bit. The Board asked what they can do to help and De Angelis said they can't do more than they are doing in support of the department. He said looking for personnel is nothing new but recruitment has become more difficult. De Angelis said the problem is all over the country. There was a discussion about military veterans. He said he is open to suggestions. He said calls are down due to COVID-19. He said he is concerned about returning to normal and not having sufficient staff when calls go back up. The Board thanked De Angelis and he left the meeting.

Junior Swamp Bats President Jim Fennell – Possible Recreational Use of Homestead Woolen Mill & Possible use of Brown Field.

Fennell was present via Zoom to discuss with the Board the Board's possible interest in using the Homestead Woolen Mill for recreational programs and possible use of Brown Field. Branley said use of Brown Field has been sorted out but discussion went on with Fennell about the mill. Fennell said recreational space is at a premium. He spoke about 11,000 – 12,000 square feet being used at the mill. He said there is potential as a real athletic center for the mill. He said they do not have control of the whole building, but he is working on it. He said he understands budgetary constraints. He said one solution is someone who is willing to donate indoor turf for 32,000 square feet, which could be used for a lot of programs like soccer, dodge ball, lacrosse and other games for after school. He said he feels indebted to the town and willing to do whatever it takes to move along.

Colby asked if turf is fire rated. Fennell said yes it is. He said it was used in the fall for spring teams to work out. They would roll it out and roll it up. He said it is in good shape. The donor is a professor at Dartmouth. They have the fire report.

Colby asked Gould if he had been in the mill and Gould said he has not. Hutwelker said the Swamp Bats did a terrific job there. The area being discussed is the new section up by Swanzey Street. There are sprinklers there. Hutwelker asked Fennell how the Town can participate. Fennell said he would like to see private/public financing. He said he is not a developer but this is a great facility for families. Fennell said he has a five-year lease and they want to see other groups in the mill. He said it is gem for the kids. He said he is willing to donate his time to get things going. Colby asked about parking. Fennell said there is plenty of parking. Colby asked about noise. Fennell said he didn't think noise was an issue. Colby said some residents were concerned in the past so we wanted to mention it. Fennell said any issues that arise could be easily addressed. Fennell said the office part of the building could be a home for the Swanzey Recreation Department and would make them an anchor along with the Swamp Bats.

Aaron Cherry spoke about talking to Fennell about the building. He said his recommendation is not to use turf right away, but first hire a contractor to estimate how much it would take to convert into a gymnasium with some sort of multi-use flooring. He said he understands turf is available, but might not be as great as flooring for public use. He said with flooring the mill could be used for pickle ball, basketball. But if you want an athletic facility, you could use the turf. It depends on the Board desire to move forward. Cherry said that for his public use for recreation, he prefers gymnasium type flooring. Cherry said he researched flooring companies but recommended hiring someone professional to determine what would be best. Cherry said there are plastic materials that would be more flexible than concrete. He recommended putting in basketball courts for Swanzey public use.

Colby asked if you could use turf for soccer. Cherry said he is using Cutler for basketball program and there are only two hoops available now. If you have multiple courts then you can have more people playing. If you put down turf, you cannot use it for some uses like volley ball and pickle ball. Colby asked if the turf can be rolled up. Colby said 32,000 square feet of flooring would be costly.

Fennell said 18,000 square feet is side where there is concrete. Other side is about 12,000 square feet that Junior Swamp Bats use. He noted other sections as well. 15,000 to 18,000 is proposed with turf. This is the open space available now. Colby said there needs to be a plan that can be presented to the Board.

Hutwelker said the Board is not in a position to select programs; they want Cherry to do that and would like to know what Cherry's vision is for Recreation. Hutwelker said he would like to see a plan as well. Branley said tonight was to gauge general interest. Karasinski said he would not be in favor of flooring without a plan because it would be a significant investment in a building the Town does not own. Hutwelker said it must be self-funded. Colby agreed that the Board should be able to review a plan and show self-funding.

Cherry asked the Board to be more specific about a plan. He said he could give them a plan as to the programs that could be utilizing the space. Hutwelker encouraged Cherry to gather information about groups willing to pay for use. Hutwelker said Fennell is trying to act as a catalyst to get the Town involved. Fennell said proposing the turf is not a long term solution but could get a program going, once you know the interest of renting space, a better decision can be made. Karasinski said he is thinking that Cherry could come up with ideas about what he could do with it and how much you would have to charge per player or sport and amount of time to be used, which would get a start on a recreational plan. Cherry agreed. The Board thanked Fennell and Cherry and they left the meeting.

Fire Chief Bill Gould – Requested Vehicle Purchases

Branley informed the Board that Chief Gould is recommending the purchase of a forestry truck, an Emergency Response vehicle, and improvements to Squad 1. He recalled that late in 2019 the Board expressed support for replacing Squad 3. He provided to the Board Minutes from December 11, 2019 meeting and June 19, 2019 Minutes. Branley reported the Chief has taken this input into account and is recommending the purchases outlined. Total cost of \$146,000 is under the \$150,000 in the CIPC for the brush truck replacement proposed by Chief Skantze. The Fire Trucks Capital Reserve Fund has an estimated balance of \$172,107.17.

Gould spoke about three separate items. The first was a brush/forestry truck. Pick-up type chassis for multi-use and this vehicle has a utility bar that could add a skid unit. There is a crew cab for personnel. If something happens to the truck, the skid unit is portable and can be placed on another truck. It is a one-ton vehicle, single axle. The cost came in around \$80,000, less than what was programmed in the capital improvement plan for a forestry truck. \$146,000 is for all three vehicles. He noted this vehicle will be able to helpful for Fairground use or for small fires. Gould said everything is included for that vehicle, including lettering.

Steve Bittel via Zoom spoke. He said he saw the Chief's proposal and he concurs with it fully. He said it is innovative. He asked about operational costs for second vehicle and asked about use for it.

Gould said Captain Matson will be using it for investigations and it will be used for towing trailers and used at events. He said he wants to keep an extra vehicle in town. It is a pick-up as well and can be used for multi-uses. Colby asked if there is enough room in the second vehicle for equipment. Gould said basic support equipment would be available. Bittel asked about this and Gould said it is an added vehicle. Utility vehicle would replace Squad 3 but this would be an added vehicle.

Gould spoke about lighting need for safety of responders. Karasinski made some suggestions about lighting. He said this would be the first brush truck purchased new. He said the one 3500 truck could do both jobs. The brush truck could be the emergency response vehicle. He said we only get a few brush fires per year on average.

Gould said he has communicated with Yale Forestry about perhaps getting some assistance for acquiring a new brush truck since they open significant forests in Town. But he learned the forestry school do not

get much funding so that was a no-go. Gould said two vehicles increase the operational capability. Another staff vehicle is needed so personal vehicle doesn't have to be used when the other vehicle is away.

Karasinski said it isn't a good idea to spend that money now. Hutwelker asked if Gould has considered Karasinski's suggestion or using the proposed brush truck as an emergency medical response truck as well. Gould said he didn't think about that. He said he thought of a brush vehicle as being only that. Gould said he isn't saying it cannot work. Colby said he understands rationale for keeping three vehicles, but he suggested capping operational expenses for that extra vehicle. Gould said if another vehicle is in for maintenance, then this vehicle would be useful.

Hutwelker said he doesn't think personnel should be using their personal cars for Town business. Hutwelker asked the impact of not having Squad 3 vehicle and only having the brush truck to be the utility vehicle. Karasinski said it would be a light vehicle with brush capability. He asked about the lighting package. Gould said upgrade would be for the light bar and sidelights. Colby said the old Suburban could be used for transportation. There was a discussion about which vehicles he would end up with. Colby said to put a cap on maintenance for Squad 3.

Steve Bittel said we have needed a new brush truck for a while and he is in favor and now there is a controversy and if it is a robust vehicle go for it. We should ponder what our options are that we don't know, that we should exhibit some caution. Colby said he thought everyone was in agreement to go for the 3500. Hutwelker suggest go ahead with the GMC 3500 and cap repairs for Squad 3.

Gould said the 2500 was proposed because it would eventually replace Squad 3. Hutwelker suggested that replacing the squad vehicle go to CIPC for discussion. Colby said he doesn't want to see Squad 3 be costly. Gould referred to be an addition to the vehicles in the department, not a replacement.

Hutwelker **moved** to authorize the expenditure of not-to-exceed \$80,000 to purchase and outfit a GMC 3500 to replace the brush/forestry truck from the Fire Trucks Capital Reserve Fund and to authorize the expenditure of not-to-exceed \$6,000 to upgrade emergency lighting on Squad 1 from the Fire Trucks Capital Reserve Fund and to recommend the Fire Chief meet with the CIPC to discuss a multi-use vehicle and also there be a cap of \$1,500 per year for maintenance on Squad 3 vehicle. There was a second to the motion by Karasinski and no further discussion. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

NEW BUSINESS

Recycling Center Facility Improvements

The Board reviewed a request from Solid Waste Manager Josh Whipple for \$3,000 for electrical work to relocate the recycling balers. It was noted the Recycling Center Revolving Fund has an estimated balance of \$490,913.92.

Hutwelker **moved** to authorize the expenditure of \$3,000 for electrical work at the Recycling Center from the Recycling Center Revolving Fund. There was a second to the motion by Karasinski and no further discussion. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

The Board reviewed the request of Jasmin and Whipple for \$12,500 for architectural and engineering work at the Recycling Center. Branley said Jasmin did attempt to contact the original contractor for the existing building without success. Hutwelker asked about the Request for Proposal (RFP) which would

take time and going for this now would allow the Town to apply for COVID-19 reimbursement funding. Branley confirmed that was the goal.

Hutwelker **moved** to authorize the expenditure of \$12,500 for architectural and engineering work to make facility modifications at the Recycling Center in response to COVID 19 from the Recycling Center Revolving Fund. There was a second to the motion by Karasinski and no further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***

Golden Rod Grange Hall Improvements

Branley referred the Board to a memo from Code Enforcement Officers Mike Jasmin in regard to possible further work on this building this year. The Golden Rod Grange Hall Capital Reserve Fund (CRF) has a balance of \$17,000. Branley said this would make the building moderately safer.

Hutwelker **moved** to authorize the expenditure of \$2,000 for electrical work at the Golden Rod Grange Hall from the Golden Rod Grange Hall Capital Reserve Fund. There was a second to the motion by Karasinski and no further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***

Branley spoke about doors and windows needing to be replaced. He asked Board about their direction for further expenditures. Jasmin said the doors costs were less than he thought. But he was not sure about the windows. Karasinski said he would like to see doors done but leave windows as is for now unless they get broken. He said if the Grange does get refurbished, the windows would be the last to be replaced. Hutwelker said he agreed that the goal is to get the building ready for further consideration and nothing more at this time. Consensus of the Board was to replace broken panes of glass and replace doors and thresholds and also have the front of the building painted, as funds allow. The Board thanked Jasmin.

Ashuelot Branch Railroad Corridor Proposed Crossing Agreement

Discussion was held regarding New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NH DOT) approval for construction of drainage improvements within the Rail Trail's right-of-way to improve the reconstruction of Pine Street. The improvements should also improve rail trail drainage. Branley asked the Board to authorize him to enter into the crossing agreement with NH DOT and approve funding the \$400 application fee. He noted that the Town Roads Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Expendable Trust Fund (ETF) has an estimated balance of \$272,113.50. He said this will allow improvements that will prevent the pooling of water on the road near to the rail trail.

Hutwelker **moved** to authorize the Town Administrator to enter into a Crossing Agreement with the State of New Hampshire related to drainage improvements as part of the Pine Street Reconstruction and expenditure of \$400 for a permit fee from the Town Roads Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Expendable Trust Fund. There was a second to the motion by Karasinski and no further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***

Display Sign for Town Hall

Discussion was held about the possibility of a new electronic sign for the front of Town Hall, primarily for improved ability to get out COVID-19 messages to residents. Branley noted that the Town Hall Repairs, Maintenance and Improvements ETF has an estimated balance of \$90,463.77. Hutwelker asked about motion signs in the Zoning Ordinance. The sign would be in State right-of-way. Branley said he doesn't have any idea of costs for installation or solar powering. Karasinski asked about the idea of sharing a sign with the library. Colby suggested following up. There was a brief discussion about solar power. Bernard asked if software for running the sign should be considered. There was a discussion about how

the sign meets the Zoning Ordinance, installation, and whether they are run by solar panels on the sign. Branley was given the go ahead to research further.

2020 Shim / Overlay Project – Award of Contract – Bids opened June 15, 2020

- All States bid - \$148,255.00
- BDM Sweeper/Arlington Paver bid - \$165,761.25
- Brox Industries bid - \$189,122.50

Branley noted the low bidder was All States Asphalt. Paving will include Katie Lane, a portion of Carlton Road, and shims for portions of Talbot Hill Road, Marcy Hill Road, and Fox Run Road.

Hutwelker **moved** to authorize the Town Administrator to enter into contract documents with All States Asphalt, Inc. for the 2020 Shim / Overlay Project and authorize the expenditure of \$148,255 from the operating budget. There was a second to the motion by Karasinski and no further discussion. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

April Expenditure & Revenue Report

Branley said the Board had the report and there were no comments by the Board.

July Meeting Schedule

Branley asked the Board how they wanted to meet in July. Hutwelker said he is in favor of continuing using Zoom with the meetings. Colby agreed. Colby said he was okay with ceasing the scheduled 2 pm meetings and instead use them for emergency situations. He said the information could be posted on Town website if there a situation that warrants it. Branley noted a lot more face time with the Town's State Representatives since the Town has been using Zoom. He also noted the State of Emergency continues, while the Stay-at-Home order has been changed to an advisory. Hutwelker said that has been a bonus with Zoom meetings to have the ears of the State Representatives. Colby said staff should encourage the State Representatives to continue to keep in touch. Branley spoke about reminders being worthwhile. The Board agreed by consensus to have one more 2 pm meeting on Thursday, June 18th and no further unless the situation warrants it.

The Board discussed their meeting schedule for July, meetings to be held:

- July 1
- July 15
- July 29

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATE

Karasinski spoke about the projects being reported.

NON-PUBLIC SESSION(S)

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 Hutwelker to enter Non-public 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. The motion was seconded by Karasinski. The Selectmen voted unanimously by roll call to go into non-public session at 7:25 p.m. **Motion passed.** Present was Kenneth P. Colby, Jr., W. William Hutwelker III, and Sylvester Karasinski. Also present was Town Administrator Michael Branley and Recording Secretary Bernard.

Motion was made by Hutwelker to leave non-public session and return to public session. The motion was seconded by Karasinski, with all in favor. **Motion passed.** Non-public session ended at 7:28 p.m.

Motion was made by Hutwelker to seal the minutes of the non-public session. The motion was seconded by Karasinski. The Selectmen voted unanimously by roll call to seal the minutes. **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 Hutwelker to enter Non-public 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. The motion was seconded by Karasinski. The Selectmen voted unanimously by roll call to go into non-public session at 7:28 p.m. **Motion passed.** Present was Kenneth P. Colby, Jr., W. William Hutwelker III, and Sylvester Karasinski. Also present was Town Administrator Michael Branley and Recording Secretary Bernard.

Motion was made by Hutwelker to leave non-public session and return to public session. The motion was seconded by Karasinski, with all in favor. **Motion passed.** Non-public session ended at 7:37 p.m.

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

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Hutwelker. The motion was seconded by Karasinski without further discussion. All were in favor by roll call. **Motion passed.** Adjournment occurred at 7:37 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Beverly Bernard, Recording Secretary
Approved on July 1, 2020