

Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Board of Selectmen
Meeting – September 9, 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 and Kenneth P. Colby, Jr. and Sylvester Karasinski. Also present was Town Administrator Michael Branley at Whitcomb Hall and Recording Secretary Beverly Bernard was present via Zoom.

OTHERS PRESENT

Sharon Greatbatch, Mike Gomarlo, Fire Chief Bill Gould, Police Chief Tom De Angelis

MINUTES

- The regular meeting Minutes of August 26, 2020 were considered. There was a **motion** by Hutwelker to approve the regular meeting Minutes of August 26, 2020. The motion was seconded by Karasinski and there was no further discussion. All were in favor. ***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. ***Motion passed.***

- Payroll Manifest
- Payables Manifest
- Public Assistance Lien Release
- 2020 MS 1 – Summary of Assessed Value
- 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 850 9383 8409#. If the public is unable to access the meeting, they are asked to call 352-7411 ext. 107.

Sharon Greatbatch spoke about a donation of land for parking at Whitcomb Hall which would provide 40 spaces. Mike Gomarlo said the site could also be used for Stratton library parking. Gomarlo said they need a little help from the Town of Swanzey to achieve this goal. And he is hoping the West Swanzey Sidewalk Committee could assist with paving. Greatbatch asked if the Town might help with a vegetative buffer as well to protect other landowners. Greatbatch also said that she would like to see Whitcomb Hall used for voting in the future and additional parking would help. Hutwelker said the building would be more marketable to larger groups if there was more parking available. Greatbatch said some cutting of trees might occur soon. Karasinski said that perhaps it would be good to have Code Enforcement Officer Mike Jasmin look at the site. Branley explained the process for the Town to accept a donation either using RSA 41:14 or Town Meeting. He said it takes a couple of months to complete the process. Consensus of the Board was to continue to pursue the idea.

Gomarlo spoke about the open house for Whitcomb Hall that is coming up. The Board agreed to say a few words at the event. There was a discussion about having a ribbon cutting at the event. There was a brief discussion about renovation of the barn behind the Hall.

APPOINTMENTS

Police Chief Tom De Angelis – Department Update

De Angelis spoke about trying to find officers to fill open positions and said they have had some positive responses with good quality civilians. They are operating on a skeleton schedule right now. He said they are three positions down, and Branley said they are actually five positions down including the part-timers. De Angelis said patrol is where the need is right now. He spoke about incentives to come on board. He said Swanzey offers a health insurance buy out that is better than many other towns. Branley said a number of applicants are working through the process. He said some folks don't have the physical ability but perhaps can work on that to be able to pass the test next time. He added the next class at the academy is in January.

De Angelis spoke about the School Resource Officer (SRO). He said they do have someone interested in the position. He said a seasoned officer is needed to work out problems. De Angelis said we are on a path to fill the open positions. With the SRO there will be 14 staff at the department eventually.

Brief discussion was held about cruisers for the department. De Angelis said one cruiser has many miles on it, but it is not a patrol vehicle and it is running well. He said they do a lot of preventative maintenance on the cars. He said one car is slated for purchase in 2021. There was a brief discussion about year 2022 and 2023 for purchasing new cars.

De Angelis said the negotiations with the School District went well for the SRO. He said the Selectmen should support the agreement for the SRO. De Angelis said he believes the people of the town support an SRO. Hutwelker told De Angelis that he is doing a terrific job. The Board thanked De Angelis and he left the meeting.

School Resource Office Memorandum of Understanding

Branley provided a Memorandum of Understanding approved by the School Board at their meeting on September 1st. He said it was the product of lengthy discussions between the Town and School District and all of the Town's revisions were accepted.

Hutwelker **moved** to authorize the Police Chief to enter into the School Resource Officer Memorandum of Understanding between the Town of Swanzey and Monadnock Regional School District. There was a second to the motion by Karasinski and no further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***

Public Hearing Pursuant to RSA 31:95-b regarding the unanticipated funds

Branley said the public hearing was posted in several places. The Chair read the notice aloud. Pursuant to RSA 31:95-b, acceptance and expenditure of unanticipated funds in the amount of \$107,367.60 from the Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) for the recruitment of volunteer firefighters.

Public hearing opened at 6:00 pm

Hutwelker asked Chief Gould how they planned to use the funds. Chief Gould noted funds to be used for advertising and recruitment. Branley said funds will also be used for turnout gear, uniforms, and training. Gould said advertising should reach more people. There was a discussion about places to

advertise and Hutwelker asked about the possibility for incentives for current staff to bring in new members. Gould said he didn't think there was extra funding for dollar incentives. Hutwelker suggested a \$50 gift card might work as an incentive. Colby asked for any comments from the public and there were none.

Public hearing closed at 6:05 pm

Hutwelker **moved** to accept and expend \$107,367.60 from the Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) for the recruitment of volunteer firefighters. There was a second to the motion by Karasinski and no further discussion. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

Pursuant to RSA 31:95-b, acceptance and expenditure of unanticipated funds in the amount of \$46,910 from the Land and Water Conservation Fund for improvements to the West Swanzey AA Memorial Park. Public hearing opened at 6:06 pm

Branley spoke about improvements such as better river access, a small basketball court and a pavilion is planned. Colby asked for further comments from the public and there were none.

Public hearing closed at 6:08 pm

Hutwelker **moved** to accept and expend \$46,910 from the Land and Water Conservation Fund for improvements to the West Swanzey AA Memorial Park. There was a second to the motion by Karasinski and no further discussion. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

Pursuant to RSA 31:95-b, acceptance and expenditure of unanticipated funds in the amount of \$15,616 from the State of New Hampshire Recreational Trails Program to rent an excavator to complete maintenance work along the Ashuelot and Cheshire Rail Trails.

Public hearing opened at 6:08 pm

Branley said the matching funds for the Town will be provided by volunteer labor to work on the trail. Hutwelker said congratulations go to Mike Kowalczyk and Bruce Bohannon and the rest of the committee for making this grant happen. Colby asked if there were public comments and there were none.

Public hearing closed at 6:10

Hutwelker **moved** to accept and expend \$15,616 from the State of New Hampshire Recreational Trails Program to rent an excavator to complete maintenance work along the Ashuelot and Cheshire Rail Trails. There was a second to the motion by Karasinski and no further discussion. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

Colby said he appreciates the effort that is made obtaining grants for the Town and he thanked Branley for his work in this regard.

NEW BUSINESS

Award of Contract – Fire Station #3 Improvements

Branley provided a memo from Code Enforcement Officer Jasmin. The Fire Stations and Related Facilities Expendable Trust Fund has an estimated balance of \$1,446.77 and the Fire Stations Capital Reserve Fund has an estimated balance of \$157,024.02. Branley said the low bidder was Griffin Construction. He added that Jasmin spoke to them to ensure they understood the work requirement.

Hutwelker **moved** to approve the expenditure of up to \$15,000 for building improvements to Fire Station #3 with \$1,446.77 from the Fire Stations and Related Facilities Expendable Trust Fund and \$13,553.23 from the Fire Stations Capital Reserve Fund and authorize the Town Administrator to enter into contract documents with Griffin Construction. There was a second to the motion by Karasinski and no further discussion. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

Possible sale of pump near Thompson Covered Bridge and demolition of pump house

Branley informed the Board that the Town has received interest from a party about buying the pump and some related equipment currently housed in the pump house next to the Thompson Bridge. The pump has been inoperable since the dam was removed from the river several years ago. Staff is not sure if the pump can be removed without damaging the building and since it currently serves no purpose maybe this is an opportunity to demolish it. Branley said research is on-going about this item. He emphasized the pump is not serving any purpose and asked for the Board's position on the idea. Hutwelker said he would like to retain the building if possible. Discussion was held about the value of the pump. Consensus was to get rid of the pump and save the building.

2020-21 Heating Season Oil and Propane Bid

Branley noted he bids received in response to our request for proposals are as follows:

	Oil	Propane
Davis Oil	\$1.6100	
Dead River	\$1.6082	\$1.6814
Discount Oil	\$1.4990	\$1.1890
Swanzey Oil	\$1.5470	

Hutwelker **moved** select Discount Oil / L&G Propane for heating oil and propane for the 2020-21 heating season and authorize the Town Administrator to enter into contract documents. There was a second to the motion by Karasinski and no further discussion. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

Update on Meeting with Monadnock Regional School Board regarding using School Property for Future Elections.

Branley said he attended the Monadnock Regional School Board meeting on September 1st to request the district consider allowing the Town use school property for future elections. He said he did not feel the request was given much consideration and was fairly strongly denied. The Board expressed dismay at the attitude of the School Board.

Letter of Resignation – Recreation Director Aaron Cherry

The Board read the letter of resignation From Cherry.

Hutwelker **moved** to accept the resignation of Recreation Director Aaron Cherry effective October 31, 2020. There was a second to the motion by Karasinski and no further discussion. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

Re-establishment of E-911 Committee

Branley said he envisions a committee that would not be as active as the prior effort a few years ago, but there are some streets that need to be considered from this point of view. The Board discussed some of the streets that need names to be changed. A discussion about roads in general occurred,

especially old roads that serve only a few houses. Hutwelker suggested maybe expanding some roads to open them up for future development.

Hutwelker **moved** to approve the charge for the E-911 Committee as proposed. There was a second to the motion by Karasinski and no further discussion. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

Follow Up on Solar Tax Exemptions

Branley reported that based on his knowledge of residential solar arrays Dave Marazoff has capped the residential solar exemptions at \$35,000 of value for use at the site. He suggested a possible amendment to our solar exemption at a future Town Meeting so that having a capped value may eliminate any questions that might arise by homeowners. Branley said if there is a dispute, the property owner would need to prove that the higher value is for use at the property. Branley explained how the value is determined in relationship to the value of the home based on electricity used on site. Branley said the assessor has a spreadsheet with data on the array for each home that he uses to determine the value. The Board agreed by consensus.

Resignation of Trustee of Trust Funds

The Board discussed the replacement for Ed Morenz who has resigned from serving as a Trustee of Trust Funds for the Town. Branley said that Alternate Fred Peters has agreed to serve as a fulltime Trustee to the end of Morenz's term.

Motion was made by Hutwelker to accept the resignation of Ed Morenz as a Trustee of Trust Funds effective September 30th and appoint Fred Peters as Trustee of Trust Funds to fill out the remainder of Morenz's term. The motion was seconded by Karasinski and there was no further discussion. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

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

Motion by Hutwelker to enter Non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3II(b) , Hiring of Public Employee(s). The motion was seconded by Karasinski. The Selectmen voted unanimously by roll call to go into non-public session at 6:31 p.m. **Motion passed.** Present were the Board members Sylvester Karasinski, Kenneth P. Colby, Jr., and W. William Hutwelker, III, Town Administrator Michael Branley and Recording Secretary Bernard was present via Zoom.

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 6:37 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. **Motion passed.** Adjournment occurred at 6:38 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Beverly Bernard, Recording Secretary
Approved on September 23, 2020