Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Board of Selectmen
Meeting – February 26, 2025
Whitcomb Hall
17 Main Street, Swanzey, NH

CALL TO ORDER
The meeting was called to order by Chair Sylvester Karasinski at 5:31p.m. at Whitcomb Hall, Main Street, Swanzey, NH. Present were Selectmen Sylvester Karasinski, W. William Hutwelker III, and James Tempesta. Also present was Town Administrator Michael Branley and Recording Secretary Meagen Kerris.

OTHERS PRESENT Mike Gomarlo, Mike York, Mike Kowalczyk, Emily Manns, Bob Audette.

MINUTES
- The regular meeting Minutes of February 19, 2025 were considered. There was a **motion** by Tempesta to approve the regular meeting Minutes of February 19, 2025. The motion was seconded by Hutwelker and there was no further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***
- The non-public meeting Minutes of February 19, 2025 were considered. There was a **motion** by Tempesta to approve the non-public meeting Minutes of February 19, 2025. The motion was seconded by Karasinski. Hutwelker abstained and there was no further discussion. ***Motion passed.***
- The Special meeting Minutes of September 23, 2024 were considered. There was a **motion** by Tempesta to approve the special meeting Minutes of September 23, 2024. The motion was seconded by Hutwelker and there was no further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***
- The Special meeting Minutes of January 6, 2025 were considered. There was a **motion** by Tempesta to approve the Special meeting Minutes of January 6, 2025. The motion was seconded by Hutwelker and there was no further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***
- The Special meeting Minutes of January 21, 2025 were considered. There was a **motion** by Tempesta to approve the Special meeting Minutes of January 21, 2025. The motion was seconded by Hutwelker and there was no further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***

CONSENT AGENDA
Motion was made by Tempesta to approve the Consent Agenda. There was a second by Hutwelker. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***
- Payroll Manifest
- Payables Manifest
- Special Event Permit #2025-02 – Feeding Tiny Tummies Touch a Truck
- Special Event Permit #2025-03 – Feeding Tiny Tummies Fall Festival
- Special Event Permit #2025-04 – Swanzey Snow Fest
- Personnel Action Report(s)

PUBLIC INPUT
The Chair asked for input from the public and there was none at this point.

NOMINATION
The Board considered the nomination of Angelo DiBernardo to the Economic Development Advisory Committee.

Tempesta **moved** to appoint Angelo DiBernardo as a full member to the Economic Advisory Committee

With a term ending Town Meeting 2028. There was a second by Hutwelker and no further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion Passed.***

NEW BUSINESS

Ashuelot Rail Trail Washout Repair & TAP Grant Update. After the Town re-directed the engineering study to repair the segment between Holbrook Avenue (near Summer Street). Kowalczyk updated the Selectmen on where the grant funds were. It was discussed that in 2026 the funds should be added in a warrant article and voted to continue using the money for the washout repairs. Hutwelker requested Branley add it to the calendar with correct wording and process for the incoming Town Administrator to be aware of.

2025 repairs include the road crossings and three areas along the rail trail that have metal culverts that need repairing due to the deterioration of metal, causing washout of the earth underneath the trail. Kowalczyk has been in communication with Department of Public Works Director, Joe DiRusso on the repairs and DiRusso suggested he would look at it to see if it was something his department could repair to save the town money. RTP approved hardpack on Cheshire Trail, DiRusso will also review the work, so the town won't need to get three quotes because the grantee (the town) will be doing the work.

Discussion followed with updates on trail improvements in other towns. Kowalczyk concluded with some possible ideas for funding to complete the remainder of repairs that the trail system will need on Swanzey Factory Rd.

Community Power Update – the Town's current joint purchasing agreement through Standard Power with the City of Keene and the Towns of Marlborough and Wilton is set to expire in December. Standard Power reached out in regard to being prepared for possible pricing in the spring (likely April). The Energy Commission has been discussing whether to stay with this group or explore joining the Community Power Coalition, the time to explore other options may have passed. If the Town delays much longer, the buying group may move on without Swanzey. Consensus to move forward with Standard Power and the current buying group should be sufficient to be revisited in the future.

Emily Manns from Standard Power discussed the next steps in the process of renewing the contract. Keene is willing to lead the buying group again. Pricing is set to be reviewed in April, Manns is hoping the best prices will be reflected at that time. She explained the benefits of fixed pricing and how customers appreciate the predictable cost for the duration of the contract. Discussion of the contract terms between Hutwelker and Manns continued. The terms are April through December (30 months). Swanzey is up for renewal. In reflection of participation numbers in the town, Hutwelker questioned the reason for a 400-resident decrease since the start of the contract. Manns said decreases can be due to people moving or rates with Eversource could be cheaper. Currently, Eversource is slightly cheaper than Community Power.

Bob Audette from the Energy Commission was called up to be part of the conversation. He stated there had been much discussion among the Energy Commission about what would be the best recommendation to the Selectmen and the Board. Audette felt a secure price for 30 months is reassuring to residents. It is an option for residents to sign up with the Community Power plan and they have the same option to opt out at any time. If a resident is enrolled with Community Power and moves, the agreement is void and the new occupant will need to enroll with Community Power. Discussion surrounding fees of those enrolled in Community Power came up and what those fees would mean with public assistance and the town. Audette said there will be an Energy Commission Meeting March 10th, at which time they will vote on a recommendation. No vote was made.

PUBLIC INPUT

Branley thanked everyone and is trusting that things will continue to move in a positive direction for Swanzey.

NON-PUBLIC SESSIONS

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

Motion was made by Tempesta to enter nonpublic session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II(b) Hiring of public employee(s), seconded by Hutwelker. All in favor by Roll Call and the ***motion passed*.** The Board entered nonpublic session at 6:50 p.m. Present was James Tempesta, W. William Hutwelker III, and Sylvester Karasinski. Also present was Town Administrator Michael Branley, Recording Secretary Meagen Kerris, and Deputy Fire Chief Vincent Sanchez.

Motion was made by Tempesta to come out of non-public session, seconded by Hutwelker. All in favor by Roll Call and the ***motion passed***. Non-public session ended at 7:03 pm.

Motion was made by Tempesta to seal the minutes, seconded by Hutwelker. All were in favor and the ***motion passed***.

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

Motion was made by Tempesta to enter nonpublic session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II(b) Hiring of public employee(s), seconded by Hutwelker. All in favor by Roll Call and the ***motion passed*.** The Board entered nonpublic session at 7:04 p.m. Present was James Tempesta, W. William Hutwelker III, and Sylvester Karasinski. Also present was Town Administrator Michael Branley, Recording Secretary Meagen Kerris.

Motion was made by Tempesta to come out of non-public session, seconded by Hutwelker. All in favor by Roll Call and the ***motion passed***. Non-public session ended at 7:08 pm.

Motion was made by Tempesta to seal the minutes, seconded by Hutwelker. All were in favor and the ***motion passed***.

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

Motion was made by Tempesta to enter nonpublic session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II(b) Hiring of public employee(s), seconded by Hutwelker. All in favor by Roll Call and the ***motion passed*.** The Board entered nonpublic session at 7:09 p.m. Present was James Tempesta, W. William Hutwelker III, and Sylvester Karasinski. Also present was Town Administrator Michael Branley, Recording Secretary Meagen Kerris.

Motion was made by Tempesta to come out of non-public session, seconded by Hutwelker. All in favor by Roll Call and the ***motion passed***. Non-public session ended at 7:21 pm.

Motion was made by Tempesta to seal the minutes, seconded by Hutwelker. All were in favor and the ***motion passed***.

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

Motion was made by Tempesta to enter nonpublic session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II(c) Matters which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person, other than a member of the public body itself, seconded by Hutwelker. All in favor by Roll Call and the ***motion passed*****.** The Board entered nonpublic session at 7:22 p.m. Present was James Tempesta, W. William Hutwelker III, and Sylvester Karasinski. Also present was Town Administrator Michael Branley and Recording Secretary Meagen Kerris.

Motion was made by Tempesta to come out of non-public session, seconded by Hutwelker. All in favor by Roll Call and the ***motion passed***. Non-public session ended at 7:35 pm.

Motion was made by Tempesta to seal the minutes, seconded by Hutwelker. All were in favor and the ***motion passed***.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Tempesta. The motion was seconded by Hutwelker without further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.*** Adjournment occurred at 7:36 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Meagen Kerris
Recording Secretary

Approved on March 11, 2026