Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Board of Selectmen
Meeting – June 25, 2025
Whitcomb Hall
17 Main Street, Swanzey, NH

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair W. William Hutwelker III, at 5:30 pm at Whitcomb Hall, Main Street, Swanzey, NH. Other members present were Selectmen James Tempesta and Mark LaBelle. Also present were Town Administrator Lori Rautiola and Recording Secretary Susan Ells.

OTHERS PRESENT

Garrett Ranney with FACT TV, Assistant Town Planner Stephon Mehu, Jim Jarzabek, Jane Kennedy, Michael York, Julianna Kendall, Mark Scalera, Asst Fire Chief Vincent (Mick) Sanchez, George Hoffman Sr, George Hoffman Jr., and Dylan Dickson, Ali Kreutz, Nick Raymond, and Allyce Romanuck from The Honey Bee Hollow Children Center.

MINUTES

- The regular meeting Minutes of April 23 and June 4 were considered. There was a **motion** by LaBelle to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Tempesta and there was no further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***

- The non-public session Minutes of June 11 #1 and #2 and June 17 were considered. There was a **motion** by LaBelle to approve the non-public session Minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Tempesta and there was no further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***

CONSENT AGENDA

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

- Payroll Manifest
- Accounts Payable Manifest
- Special Events Permit – Potash Bowl – Lee Dunham
- Gravel Tax Levy – Operation #21-441-07-E, Map 210 lot 8
- Open Container Permit, Whitcomb Hall October 18, 2025 – Jackelyn Salisbury

PUBLIC INPUT

- Jane Kennedy from Sawyers Crossing Road spoke regarding the new white line on Matthews Road; she was hoping for a reflective stop sign at the same place. Hutwelker stated that DPW Director Joe DiRusso had planned to be here tonight, but he couldn't attend. Hutwelker said it is a State Road and advised her to take up the concern with the State. Kennedy said she will follow up with DiRusso.

APPOINTMENTS

- Assistant Planner, Stephon Mehu:
    - Requested permission to submit a *Letter of Intent* for Land & Water Grant - Phase 1 (of possibly 3) for Brown Memorial Field to improve the softball field, cook shack, garage, and restrooms for $1.6 million; full cost could be around $5 million. Grant split is 50/50 with the Town; he will be requesting $500,000 from this grant and would be seeking other grants to reduce the amount the Town would need to invest. It would need to be on the warrant for 2027. This is not committing the Town; the first step is submitting a letter of intent. It is

important to be clear on the scope of the project because it needs to be followed. ***Agreed by consensus***.

- Stratton Library wants mini splits installed – this was reviewed in November 2024 when the Selectmen met at the library and had agreed then. The money is in the budget; the first quote was just under $12,000.
  - **Motion made** by LaBelle for Mehu to issue an RFP to install a mini-split/heat pump system at Stratton Library. The motion was seconded by Tempesta and there was no further discussion. All were in favor. **Motion passed**.
  - When the bids are received, Mehu will return to request approval to spend the funds.
- Discussion on SAFER Grant (Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response) – this will be pursued at a future meeting.
- Provided an update about the MAST Grant for Crosswalk lights

NEW BUSINESS

- **Abatements: Map 110 Lot 80, Map 232 Lot 27, Map 110 Lot 52, Map 209 Lot 13, Map 106 Lot 14, Map 217 Lot 21**
- ***Motion*** made by LaBelle to accept the recommendations from Marazoff Assessing Services for the following abatement applications for 2025: Map 110 Lot 80, Map 232 Lot 27, Map 110 Lot 52, Map 209 Lot 13, Map 106 Lot 14, Map 217 Lot 21. The motion was seconded by Tempesta and there was no further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***
- **Update on Rural Development PPG funds**
  - Rautiola gave an update on the West Swanzey Water Study – this is a grant that would pay for that study. The Engineering fee increased to cover some RD coordination. This is a $25,000 grant, our portion would be $11,600 which is up from $9,000. Table until July 9th to determine where additional funds will come from.
- **Update on Website Redesign**
  - Rautiola reviewed the proposal to redesign, update and improve the website. Suggestion was made to expand the calendar to allow people to schedule appointments with Town employees. Mark Scalera reminded the board that Cathy Bergstrom offered her assistance to improve the website. ***Agreed by consensus***.
- **Cemetery Perpetual Care Policy**
  - Rautiola read aloud the proposed policy regarding the Cemetery Perpetual Care funds. Hutwelker explained to those present the challenge to administer the funds.
  - **Motion** by LaBelle to accept the policy as of 1/1/2025. The motion was seconded by Tempesta and there was no further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***

OLD BUSINESS

- **Funding for Town Hall Renovations & Painting**
- **Motion** made by LaBelle to rescind the vote authorizing funds from Town Hall Maintenance, and to further authorize $20,000 for the painting of Town Hall and $9,573 for the security door for town hall, with the funds to come from the InvestNH. The motion was seconded by Tempesta and there was no further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***
- **Funding for Carpenter Home Repairs**
- Rautiola reported that the cost of the work done so far has come from the General budget. Further repairs might need to come from other funds.
- **Wilson Pond Association Request**
  - Rautiola reported that she had a meeting with Jay Ward regarding the Wilson Pond Association's request for help with the problems at the boat launch which was discussed at the

previous meeting. She said she would investigate who to contact and what the ordinance states, and who has enforcement authority. Ward also spoke with Chris Levy, Code Enforcement Officer, who told him to speak with Fish & Game. Table this subject to July 9th.

- **Heat Wave Alert this week**
  - The Police Chief and Town Administrator took the initiative to open Whitcomb Hall for a cooling station during the heat wave but there was no one to staff it, so they moved it to the Town Hall. They had refreshments and water available, but no one participated. Hutwelker asked for a special public meeting for an Emergency Management Practices and Policy review. Tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, July 1st at 4pm at the fire station at Town Hall.
- **Lucy Carpenter Trust Fund**
  - Edna Coates, the Town's Human Services Coordinator, reviewed the proposed policy and had several suggestions and concerns. Hutwelker requested a meeting for the committee to review and then come to the Board with suggestions.
- **Honey Bee Hollow Child Care Center**
  - Allyce Romanuck, owner, and board members Dickson, Kreutz and Raymond presented the board with the history of the business. They reported that they have been there since June 2022. They have grown, with trials and tribulations and wonderful experiences as well. They love the location. They have 54 children enrolled – some full, some part time; some are just for the summer. 34 of the children live in Swanzey and their parents work in Swanzey. They have 12 employees; 5 of them live in Swanzey. Some of the town's teachers are clients. Their priority is enrolling children of Swanzey residents. The wait list is currently at 83. The building is constructed with several small rooms which require 1 staff per room, which requires more staff than what would be needed if there were larger rooms or if they were able to increase the sight lines to be able to see the children (such as larger doorways). They are looking for partnership with the Town to help make this business succeed. Grants are not available because they don't own the building. Hutwelker stated the prior request for grants was contingent on a 20-year lease which the Town was not able to provide. He offered to have Stephon Mehu work with them on the Town getting grants. Alice explained that she started her business as an after-school program, then grew into a family childcare on Spring Street (13 children). They moved to a bigger home; grew to a center for 20 children; then homeowner's insurance dropped them for family childcare, so they moved to Carpenter home with the 20 children. They have since become Non-Profit.

PUBLIC INPUT

- Julianna Kendall – Sawmill Drive - moved here with her family about 5 years ago. She would like to propose a plan for an inclusive playground for Swanzey. She provided copies to the Board of a similar park. She has investigated a grant to pay for this which would be a 50/50 split with the Town. Hutwelker thanked her for bringing this to the board; the board can't move on anything regarding this at this point, but he asked the Recreation Director to contact her and suggested she contact Stephon Mehu, Rautiola and others that can help her create a plan to submit. This would be a warrant article in March, so he gave her the timeline to get prepared.
- George Hoffman Sr asked about the Cooling Station – wondered why there was a staffing issue. It was explained they didn't have the staff to supervise the building, so they moved it to the Town hall where there was staff already there. Hoffman expressed concern about the changes to the Town Hall and security measures being put in place. What precipitated this? Tempesta said he witnessed that people just come in and interrupt business. It is also for the protection of the staff. Hoffman said he had a medical emergency, and he had to wait a long time for an ambulance that eventually came from Keene. Swanzey PD and FD did not arrive. George said he didn't get a follow-up from Rautiola from a

previous conversation. He didn't want to discuss this in public but wanted to remind her. Then he told the board that he saw someone park outside his house yesterday who went into the woods, then back to his vehicle; after that, someone on a bike did the same thing. He would love to have a streetlight installed. Hutwelker said he'd like more information on the streetlight; Hoffman said he had already given that information that it is on Holbrook/Swanzey Lake Road outside a person's driveway. Tempesta defended the police and fire employees – they are struggling to find help. Asst Fire Chief Vincent (Mick) Sanchez spoke from the audience and said that in the last 13 days they had 50 calls not including mutual aid. Rautiola asked Hoffman to send an email so she can reply. Explained that when they spoke it was in the first couple weeks of her starting the job and that it was a lot to manage.

- George Hoffman Jr spoke – he graduated from MRHS in 2021 and graduated college with a civil engineering degree. He asked what the school bill was; Hutwelker explained the default budget. He said when he graduated from MRHS his education did not prepare him for college. He took a gap year. Hutwelker encouraged him to attend the deliberative session in February to speak about this subject. He can go to school budget and school board meetings to express his concerns.
- Vincent (Mick) Sanchez, Asst Fire chief, updated the board on hiring staff. The advertising signs around Town have been working. People see the new fire station plans and want to be part of it. They have been getting 4-5 applications per week. Trying to streamline the process to get folks hired within 2 weeks. They would be hired on a 1 year probation. 2 applications provided today. Available for July 9th for a meeting with the board.

NON-PUBLIC SESSIONS

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

Motion was made by LaBelle 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 a person., seconded by Tempesta. All in favor by Roll Call and the ***motion passed*****.** The Board entered non-public session at 7:35pm. Present were W. William Hutwelker III, James Tempesta and Mark LaBelle. Also present were Town Administrator Lori Rautiola and Recording Secretary Susan Ells.

Motion was made by LaBelle to come out of non-public session, seconded by Tempesta. All in favor by Roll Call and the ***motion passed***. Non-public session ended at 8:38pm.

Motion was made by LaBelle 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 Tempesta. 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 a person

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Motion was made by LaBelle to come out of non-public session, seconded by Tempesta. All in favor by Roll Call and the ***motion passed***. Non-public session ended at 9:08pm.

Motion was made by LaBelle 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 Tempesta. All were in favor and the ***motion passed***.

Non-public session(s) per RSA 91-A:3, II (e) Consideration or negotiation of pending claims or litigation threatened in writing or filed by or against the public body, or by or against any member because of his or her membership in such body.

Motion was made by LaBelle to enter nonpublic session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (e), seconded by Tempesta. All in favor by Roll Call and the ***motion passed*.** The Board entered non-public session at 9:09pm. Present were W. William Hutwelker III, James Tempesta and Mark LaBelle. Also present were Town Administrator Lori Rautiola and Recording Secretary Susan Ells.

Motion was made by LaBelle to come out of non-public session, seconded by Tempesta. All in favor by Roll Call and the ***motion passed***. Non-public session ended at 9:15pm.

Motion was made by LaBelle 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 Tempesta. All were in favor and the ***motion passed***.

Public Session – Mark L authorized the Town Administrator to sign the electric agreement with Good Energy for 2 years at 11 Cents. Hutwelker seconded. All were in favor and the ***motion passed***.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Labelle. The motion was seconded by Hutwelker without further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.*** Adjournment occurred at 9:17pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Ells
Recording Secretary

Approved on July 9, 2025