Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Board of Selectmen
Meeting – July 23, 2025
Whitcomb Hall
17 Main Street, Swanzey, NH

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair W. William Hutwelker III, at 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, Liam Mallan, and Alex Stradling with FACT TV, Cody Morrison- MEDC, Dan LeClair, Josh Whipple - Recycling Center Solid Waste Manager, Art Whipple, Michael York, Neil Jeneral, Jay Ward, Mark Scalera, Vincent (Mick) Sanchez, Asst Fire Chief, Jessica Ramsey-Sanchez, Russell Tenney, Nick Keane, Allyce Romaneck, Lisa Mango, Ali Kreutz

MINUTES

- The regular meeting minutes of July 9, 2025 were tabled.
- The non-public session minutes of July 9, 2025 were tabled.
- The non-public session minutes of April 16, 2025 #1, 2, and 3 and May 21, 2025 #1, 2 and 3 and July 16, 2025 #1 and 2 were considered. There was a motion by LaBelle to approve the minutes as presented which was seconded by Tempesta. There was no further discussion and all were in favor. The motion passed.

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Labelle to approve the Consent Agenda without Item F. There was a second by Tempesta. There was no further discussion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

A. Payroll Manifest
B. Accounts Payable Manifest
C. Notice of Intent to Cut – M246 L42, M247 L17
D. Abatement 2025-31, Map/Lot 248/430CGO/144
E. Release of Lein-M233 L22
~~F. Open container Permit- Liz Traynor~~
G. Raffle Permit- Swanzey PTO
H. Raffle Permit- Cheshire Fair
I. DRA RE: PA-28 Inventory Taxable Property Form
J. Raffle Permit- Cheshire Fair – Not F

PUBLIC INPUT

Neil Jeneral explained his issue of foul balls hitting his vehicles and causing damage - most recently $1,000 in damage to his car. He stated he had a conversation with the President of the Cal Ripkin League and that the League did not want to pay for the damages, so it is being requested of the Town. Tempesta responded, adding it was also brought to the Board's attention that residents were letting their dogs in the field, not cleaning up after them, and parents complaining of children stepping in dog feces while playing ball. Rautiola explained she has spoken with the Town's Recreation Director about both issues, the dog feces and the need to raise the fence to stop balls from landing in neighbors' yards. Hutwelker mentioned the Town's good relationship with the Cal Ripkin League and the need to work together. The Agreement between the Town and

the League was bought up, which clearly states the Town is not responsible to pay for damages, and that the Cal Ripkin League should pay for his damages. It was also noted the agreement was coming due for renewal.

APPOINTMENTS

A. Cody Morrison, Exec Director – MEDC

Mr. Morrison introduced himself and gave a brief overview of MEDC and explained the organization was expanding into other towns and wanted to make the Town of Swanzey aware of their services such as tactical assistance to businesses and expansion planning processes. He added the Organization has approved over a million dollars in improvements within the region and are building a pipeline of grants to offer to local municipalities and small business within the community. They are also a commercial lender and have funds to assist with affordable housing and childcare expansion projects. The Organization is hoping to improve their partnership with local municipalities and the community. Mr. Morrison will follow up with the Town Administrator. He complimented the work of Stephon Mahu and Adam Paquette in the Planning Office.

A few questions were asked by Hutwelker, Scalera and Rautiola:

- Hutwelker asked for more information on the housing benefit. Mr. Morrison explained the Organization wished "shore up the funding" adding that the infrastructure is more for rental facilities, versus single family homes.
- Scalera, on behalf of the Wilson Pond Association, stated the needs of Wilson Pond which include a water management study and grant funding. Mr. Morrison responded, stating that water management is not their expertise, but he is interested in talking more about it with them and he might be able to give ideas about other contacts.
- Rautiola asked for clarification on how to assist with the needs of home childcare in Swanzey. Mr. Morrisson explained if there was an entrepreneur home-based childcare provider in Swanzey who wanted to become licensed, MEDC would be able to provide grants to make improvements, give lessons on QuickBooks, regulatory hurdles, etc.

B. Dan LeClair – Warmac Road

Mr. LeClair stated that he was present with concerns regarding the direction that Swanzey is going in. He explained it started years ago, when all the houses on Route 32 were built looking alike, then FW Webb built where they did instead of using the industrial park. He added that he doesn't complain about property taxes; he said he was upset about the new security doors in the Town Hall and feared the Town has lost its sense of community.

Hutwelker explained the doors were installed for two reasons: safety and productivity of employees' work. He encourages scheduling appointments; this allows for confidentiality of personnel files, grants, etc. and limits unnecessary interruptions for employees. Hutwelker also added the Board is responsible for protecting staff and this allows them to be more efficient.

Hutwelker continued by adding that the building projects LeClair mentioned had gone through the Planning Board. He said FW Webb did try to build at the industrial park but there were too many obstacles to their plan. They met all the zoning and planning criteria. The Town's vision is to maximize the infrastructure where prudent and keep the rural nature as much as possible.

There was a brief discussion on the infrastructure of the Town and further discussion on security.

Tempesta added that they must look at the big picture and at the safety of town employees. Tempesta questioned why LeClair didn't come to the Board and have a conversation instead of posting about it on Facebook.

Mr. Tenney supported the changes.

Mr. York explained his Republican group is inviting different department heads to meet in a non-partisan way to explain about their jobs in the Town.

Hutwelker addressed a question from LeClair of adding a scale at the recycling center by explaining they are trying to reduce the burden on the property taxpayers and charge appropriately.

The Board thanked Mr. LeClair for coming in.

C. Josh Whipple, Recycling Center Solid Waste Manager – Skid Steer Proposal

Whipple explained the need for a second Bobcat Skid Steer for the Recycling Center. He added that the new one would be the same model, so the parts are interchangeable. In addition, he requested a rock bucket attachment.

He reported the cost of the Bobcat Skid Steer is $66,000 after a $4,000 municipal discount, which is below budget. The cost of the rock bucket attachment is $3,140 which is also under budget. The total amount requested is $69,140. Whipple noted that the current balance in Recycling Center Capital Reserve is $131,880.93.

A motion was made by LaBelle to authorize Josh Whipple to purchase the Skid Steer and Rock Bucket from the Recycling Center Capital Reserve Fund. There was a second by Tempesta. There was no further discussion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Whipple then gave a Department Update: The new front gate sign was installed. He worked with the DPW director to get lines through the center of the drive-through area. The old yellow cones have been replaced; the Bobcat maintenance has been completed, and the tire and propane shed improved. He is working on finishing a shed for the attendants with supplies which were donated by residents Bryan and Jen Rudgers and Mark and Vicki Scalera. Nick Keane has been training staff. They are working on reducing the brush pile and working on the plastics pilot program for #3-7 plastics. He gave diversion rates on the amount of waste that was recycled instead of going to the landfill. Other projects that Whipple is working on include replacing the waste oil container and fixing gates.

Rautiola expressed appreciation for the work Josh and his team have done there.

D. Consideration of Appointment - Art Whipple - Deputy Emergency Management Director

Mr. Art Whipple was present and gave an overview on his attributes for the position of Deputy EMD and his desire to help in the community.

A motion was made by LaBelle to accept the appointment of Art Whipple as Deputy Emergency Management Director. There was a second by Tempesta. There was no further discussion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Approval of Cardinal Surveying Estimates
This item was tabled due to lack of knowledge of a funding source

B. Special Use Permit # Trails 25-30 HQC-HA1N-N2VZ3 - Department of Natural & Cultural Resources: Rail Trail Maintenance
A motion was made by LaBelle to approve the Special Use Permit Package for the purpose of Rail Trail Maintenance to include 3 culvert replacements and to further approve the payment of $1,100 from the Rails to Trails Expendable Trust Fund, payable to the *NH Department of Natural & Cultural Resources - Division of Parks and Recreation*. There was a second by Tempesta. There was no further discussion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

C. West Swanzey Water System Improvement Engineering Report – Contract Agreement
A motion was made by LaBelle to enter into the contract agreement with Underwood Engineers, Inc. as stated in the contract agreement dated June 25, 2025, for the project - *West Swanzey Water System Improvements Preliminary Engineering Report*. There was a second by Tempesta. There was no further discussion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

A motion was made by LaBelle to authorize Town Administrator Lori Rautiola to sign the agreement. There was a second by Tempesta. There was no further discussion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

D. Approval of funds – Bond for Rail Trail work -Fee for shoreland PBN application
A ***motion*** was made by LaBelle to expend up to $2,000 from the Rail Trail Expendable Trust for payment of permitting, any bond(s), and necessities for maintenance work being executed along the Cheshire Rail Trail. There was a second by Tempesta. There was no further discussion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Update of Governance Committee Appointments - Hutwelker explained what the committee was about, and suggested LeClair let the Town Administrator know if he is interested in joining the Governance Committee. Hutwelker noted another committee the Board would like to establish is a 250th Anniversary Committee. LeClair asked about getting the Old Homestead play back; Hutwelker suggested he contact Lee Dunham.

B. Hutwelker suggested naming the park by the Thompson bridge 'The Kenneth Colby Park' to honor Colby for his 24-year commitment to the Town.

The Board went through the items within the agenda packet and updated them as needed.

CORRESPONDENCE

Property Tax 72-39-a Conditions for Elderly Exemptions
There was no discussion on this agenda item.

PUBLIC INPUT

York asked when Cutler School would close; LeClair responded that it would close next winter during school break.

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.

There was a motion made by LaBelle to enter a non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (c) which was seconded by Tempesta. All were in favor by Roll Call and the motion passed. The Board entered a non-public session at 7:17pm. Present were W. William Hutwelker III, James Tempesta and Mark LaBelle. Also present were Town Administrator Lori Rautiola and Recording Secretary Susan Ells.

There was a motion made by LaBelle to come out of the non-public session which was seconded by Tempesta. All in favor by Roll Call and the motion passed. The Non-public session ended at 7:44pm.

There was a motion 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; the motion was 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.

There was a motion made by LaBelle to enter a non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (c) which was seconded by Tempesta. All were in favor by Roll Call and the motion passed. The Board entered a non-public session at 7:45pm. Present were W. William Hutwelker III, James Tempesta and Mark LaBelle. Also present were Town Administrator Lori Rautiola and Recording Secretary Susan Ells.

There was a motion made by LaBelle to come out of the non-public session which was seconded by Tempesta. All were in favor by Roll Call and the motion passed. The Non-public session ended at 7:58pm.

There was a motion 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; the motion was seconded by Tempesta. All were in favor and the motion passed.

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There was a motion made by LaBelle to enter a non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (c) which was seconded by Tempesta. All were in favor by Roll Call and the motion passed. The Board entered a non-public session at 7:58pm. Present were W. William Hutwelker III, James Tempesta and Mark LaBelle. Also present were Town Administrator Lori Rautiola and Recording Secretary Susan Ells.

There was a motion made by LaBelle to come out of the non-public session which was seconded by Tempesta. All were in favor by Roll Call and the motion passed. The Non-public session ended at 8:05pm.

There was a motion 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; the motion was seconded by Tempesta. All were in favor and the motion passed.

ADJOURNMENT

There was a motion by LaBelle to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Tempesta; there was no further discussion. All were in favor and the motion passed. Adjournment occurred at 8:13pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Ells, Recording Secretary

Approved on August 6, 2025