Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Board of Selectmen
Meeting – November 4, 2025
Whitcomb Hall
17 Main Street, Swanzey, NH

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair W. William Hutwelker III, at 4:30 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.

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 the non-public session at 4:29pm. Present were W. William Hutwelker III, James Tempesta and Mark LaBelle. Also present were Town Administrator Lori Rautiola, Recording Secretary Susan Ells, Athletic Director Ashlee Crosby, Kyle Hodgman, Shana Thompson, and DPW Director Joe DiRusso.

There was a motion made by LaBelle to come out of the non-public session, seconded by Tempesta. All were in favor by Roll Call and the motion passed. The Non-public session ended at 5:11pm.

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.

The Chair reopened the regular meeting to order at 5:30pm.

OTHERS PRESENT

Kai Kraemer with FACT TV, DPW Director Joe DiRusso, Recreation Director Ashlee Crosby, Finance Director Theresa Lounder, Town Clerk Heather Estrella, Assistant Town Planner Stephon Mehu, Mark Scalera, and Michael O'Connor.

MINUTES

The regular meeting minutes of October 29, 2025, were considered. A motion was made by LaBelle to approve the minutes as presented. Tempesta seconded the motion, and it passed 3-0.

The non-public session minutes of October 29, 2025, #1, 2 and 3 were considered. A motion was made by LaBelle to approve the minutes as presented. Tempesta seconded the motion, and it passed 3-0.

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Labelle to approve the Consent Agenda. Tempesta seconded the motion, and it passed 3-0.

A. Payroll Manifest
B. Accounts Payable Manifest

APPOINTMENTS

1. Assistant Planner, Stephon Mehu- Movement of Funding for MAST Projects

Stephon Mehu reviewed the costs for the Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon project. The original plan was to install 3 signs; however, more were being considered. He sought an amendment to the original proposal. The Total cost would be $22,000; there is currently $18,000 allocated, so the balance would need to be expended from the trust fund.

LaBelle made a motion to give Stephon Mehu permission to apply for a change in scope to the 2024 Monadnock Alliance for Sustainable Transportation Complete Streets Award, and to authorize him to sign the request. Tempesta seconded the motion, and it passed 3-0.

2. Rec Director, Ashlee Crosby- Recreation Department 2026 Budget Proposal

Ashlee Crosby reviewed her budget, which is currently a 13.93% increase over last year. The increases were as follows: changing the Rec Assistant position to full-time, IT and Support for the addition of cameras to Richardson Park and plumbing for septic pumping at Lane Field and Richardson Park. The budget showed a decrease in electricity. Hutwelker recommended Crosby meet with Rautiola to discuss the increase in hours, the additional membership, ideas for increasing activities for children, and for the increase in Payroll. He asked her to come to a future meeting to review the budget again.

3. DPW Director, Joe DiRusso – Department of Public Works 2026 Budget Proposal

Joe DiRusso reviewed the Department of Public Works budget proposal, which is currently an increase of 16.92% over last year. The cemetery budget has increased due to adding full-time employees; a truck driver position was added and would be split with 30% charged to the Cemetery budget line. Some of the increases were due to the addition of a foreman position and the need to hire outside vendors to sweep streets and clean drains. The Paving budget line was increased due to roads that are scheduled to be paved, patched and/or cracks sealed. DiRusso said he knows there are many roads that need repaving, but due to the cost the plan is to budget for the ones that are in the worst shape to reduce damage to snowplows. Hutwelker suggested that they have a work meeting to review this budget.

DiRusso then reviewed the budget for Bridges and discussed options to stop oversized vehicles from driving through the covered bridges. Hutwelker asked about installing cameras; DiRusso said this was not part of the budget he is proposing, but he will add these.

The budget for Street Lights was reviewed, as well as for Wastewater Treatment. They have hired staff instead of using contracted services which has lowered the cost. DiRusso reported that the solar array is now up and running; there will be a loan payment starting soon. The sewer main cleaning increased cost is mandated by the EPA permit requirement.

4. Town Clerk, Heather Estrella – 2026 Budget Proposal

Heather Estrella explained a few increases to the Town Clerks budget; a credit card terminal to allow for credit/debit card payments which included an annual fee, the cost to run three elections (verses one in 2025), and the purchase of another ballot machine. The budget showed an overall increase of 12.63%. Estrella suggested the Board consider having an ATM machine for the lobby. Hutwelker suggested she review the budget to see where it can be reduced and suggested scheduling a meeting to discuss the components of the election budget.

NEW BUSINESS

1. General Government Building & Expenses/Assessing & IT 2026 Proposed Budgets

DiRusso reviewed the building budget which was up 22%. Whitcomb Hall and Carpenter Home both need their fire suppression units and alarm systems tested; the budget also includes planned maintenance for the heating systems.

Assessing and IT budgets were tabled.

2. Special Event Permits

There was a brief discussion on the Special Event Permit Application. The Board considered making changes to the application. No decision was made.

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATE

Rautiola reported that Swanzey's allocation of the County tax is $2,315,280 which is a decrease of about 6%.

PUBLIC INPUT

Michael O'Connor of Westport Village Road mentioned his concern about the narrow width of California Street now that it has been reconstructed with new curbing installed. There was a discussion on adding a line down the center of the road. Hutwelker said he would discuss this with DiRusso and thanked Mr. O'Connor for coming to the Board.

Anthony Bruno of Railroad Street stated it has been 25 months since he brought to the police department his safety concerns and lack of quality of life on Railroad Street due to speed and reckless driving. He distributed a petition signed by residents of Railroad Street, as well as a photo of a bad car accident in 2024. Tempesta asked what he thinks is causing reckless driving. Bruno stated he understood the Police Department being short staffed, adding something needs to be done to slow the speed. Tempesta stated he would speak to the Chief to have the speed sign moved to the area. The Board thanked him for bringing his concern to them.

NON-PUBLIC SESSIONS

Non-public session(s) per RSA 91-A:3, II *(a) the dismissal, promotion, or compensation of any public employee or the disciplining of such employee.*

A motion was made by LaBelle to enter a non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (a) which was seconded by Tempesta. All were in favor by Roll Call and the motion passed**.** The Board entered the non-public session at 7:31pm. Present were W. William Hutwelker III, James Tempesta and Mark LaBelle. Also present were Town Administrator Lori Rautiola and Recording Secretary Susan Ells.

A motion was made by LaBelle to come out of the non-public session, seconded by Tempesta. All were in favor by Roll Call and the motion passed. The Non-public session ended at 7:59pm.

A 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; Tempesta seconded the motion, and it passed 3-0.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by LaBelle to adjourn the meeting; Tempesta seconded the motion, and it passed 3-0. Adjournment occurred at 8:05pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Susan Ells, Recording Secretary
Approved on November 12, 2025