Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Board of Selectmen
Meeting – February 11, 2026
Whitcomb Hall
17 Main Street, Swanzey, NH

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair W. William Hutwelker III, at 5:22pm. 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

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

A motion was 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 5:22pm. 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 5:24pm.

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.

The group discussed plans for staffing Whitcomb Hall due to the recent vacancy.

Chair Hutwelker recessed the meeting at 5:33pm and then reopened the public meeting at 5:35pm

OTHERS PRESENT

Sean Rohberon with FACT TV. Theresa Lounder, Sharon Greatbatch, Michael Gomarlo, Gail Wood, Alan Gross, Jean Minnich, Jeannie and Michael Theime, Jay Ward, Scott Self, Joe DiRusso, Mark Scalera and others from the community.

MINUTES

The regular meeting minutes of January 28, 2026, January 30, 2026, and February 3, 2026 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
C. Current Use-M/224 L/38-M/224 L/39
D. Raffle Permit-Cheshire Fair Association

PUBLIC INPUT

Tara Tinker-Burt asked whether she was required to clean around the fire hydrant that is on her property because she was told it was her responsibility by someone whom she thought was a Town employee. Joe DiRusso asked her to send an email to him and he would investigate.

APPOINTMENTS

A. Whitcomb Hall Committee

B. Peter Johnson Memorial Fund Committee

Sharon Greatbatch and Michael Gomarlo represent both the Whitcomb Hall and the Peter Johnson Memorial Fund committees. They told the Board that the committees are considering merging since both have the same mission and many of the same members. Sharon said there is roughly $26,000 in the Perter Johnson Memorial Fund which is to be used to beautify Main Street and she believes there is about $16,000 left in the Whitcomb Hall Fund. Currently they plant flowers in the Spring and for Memorial Day, and they put up Christmas decorations in front of the Whitcomb Hall, the gazebo, and Stratton Library.

They inquired about plans to fill the current caretaker vacancy. Lori Rautiola said that currently the Administrative Assistant is filling part of the role by changing the signs, etc. The Board is looking to fill the caretaker role with one of the town employees soon.

There was some discussion about the ice falling from the roof and what might be needed to prevent that from occurring. There was more discussion about repairs or improvements that are likely. Sue Ells suggested installing rubber treads on the back stairway, similar to what is on the front stairs. This would reduce the risk of falling, especially since it is an emergency exit which might involve people rushing down the stairs which are currently varnished and slippery. Sharon wondered whether that would be contrary to the requirement of the LCHIP grant. Lori offered to check with George Borne and ask about any restrictions for LCHIP.

Chair Hutwelker told the group that the long-term vision is for the Town to stop using Whitcomb Hall for meetings once the Town Hall is renovated. He asked the group to see if they can come up with other uses for Whitcomb Hall to generate revenue and help to the building be self-sufficient. Sharon asked about the Town employee's role and Rautiola said the hope is that eventually the position would be full-time. Michael Gomarlo suggested that the rental rates should be reviewed for short meetings, such as those that are just for a couple hours and wondered if insurance is really needed if the kitchen is not being used. He asked where the registration fees for children's programs go. Theresa Lounder replied that the fees go to the Recreation Revolving fund. Mr. Gomarlo suggested some of the fees could go to the Whitcomb Hall fund to pay for wear and tear on the building.

Mr. Gomarlo then asked what the Board would need for them to join the committees; Hutwelker suggested the two committees meet and make a recommendation to the Board at the March 25th meeting. Hutwelker also suggested they review similar venues in the area for rental rates and make their recommendations for any changes to rates.

Lori thanked the groups for their good work.

C. **DPW Update:** DPW Director Joe DiRusso suggested weight restrictions on roads should be posted when frost heaves occur. The posting is authorized by Selectboard. He went on to give an update on overtime use by DPW staff and the remaining supply of salt. He reported that weekend storms sometimes cause delays in cleaning the sidewalks in order to reduce overtime.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Purchase Approval – Town Hall Server

Lori Rautiola reviewed the proposal to replace the server for the Town Hall computer system.

LaBelle made a motion to authorize the purchase of a new server as recommended by EmerTech, with the funds in the amount of up to $31,000 to come from the Town Hall IT Management Systems Expendable Trust Fund.

B. 2026 Voters' Guide

Lori provided a draft of the voters' guide which will be mailed to Swanzey residents to provide background information for the items on the ballot. She read each description and the group, with input from Jay Ward, Mark Scalera and Scott Self, discussed changes for clarity. She will make the recommended changes and will send them to the Board for final approval.

NON-PUBLIC SESSIONS

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A motion was 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 7:07pm. Present were W. William Hutwelker III, James Tempesta and Mark LaBelle. Also present were Town Administrator Lori Rautiola, Finance Director Theresa Lounder, 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 7:23pm.

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.

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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 7:55pm.

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.

The Board reviewed the request from Police Chief Gonsalves for a 6% raise for the police officers. Since the Board had already approved 4.5%, and the Chief was asked to find places to cut in his budget for the difference. Chair Hutwelker reported that the Chief was successful in finding the difference.

LaBelle made a motion to approve the 6% raise for the police officers. Tempesta seconded the motion; with

no further discussion the motion 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 8:00pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Ells, Recording Secretary

Approved on February 17, 2026