Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Board of Selectmen
Meeting – August 5, 2026
Whitcomb Hall
17 Main Street, Swanzey, NH

CALL TO ORDER
The meeting was called to order by Chair James Tempesta at 5:30pm at Whitcomb Hall, Main Street, Swanzey, NH. Other members present were Selectmen Mark LaBelle, James Ward and Alan Gross. Also present was Recording Secretary Susan Ells.

ABSENT
W William Hutwelker

OTHERS PRESENT
Kai Kraemer with FACT TV, Stephon Mehu – Asst Town Planner, Cathy Bergstrom

MINUTES
The regular meeting minutes of July 21, 2026, July 28, 2026, and July 29, 2026, were considered. A motion was made by Mark LaBelle to approve the minutes as presented. Jay Ward seconded the motion, and it passed 4-0.

The non-public session minutes of July 21, 2026, Sessions 1, 2, and 3; July 28, 2026, Sessions 1 and 2; and July 29, 2026, Sessions 1, 2, and 3 were considered. A motion was made by Mark LaBelle to approve the minutes as presented. Jay Ward seconded the motion, and it passed 4-0.

CONSENT AGENDA
A. Payroll Manifest
B. Accounts Payable Manifest
C. Original Warrant Yield Tax Levy – M/209 L/1-1

A motion was made by Mark LaBelle to approve the Consent Agenda. Jay Ward seconded the motion, and it passed 4-0.

PUBLIC INPUT
Susan Ells, Treasurer for Stratton Free Library, requested a revision to the CIP budget for 2026 and 2027; the trustees would like to prioritize resolving the water intrusion issues before working on weatherization, therefore they are requesting the amounts allocated to 2026 and 2027 to be swapped.

Mark LaBelle made a motion to move $15,000 from the CIP for Stratton Free Library Weatherization Line from 2026 to 2027 and $5,000 from 2027 to 2026. Jay Ward seconded the motion; all were in favor and the motion passed.

Mark LaBelle made a motion to move $3,000 for Stratton Free Library Water Intrusion line from 2026 to 2027 and $12,500 from 2027 to 2026. Jay Ward seconded the motion; all were in favor and the motion passed.

APPOINTMENTS
A. Stephon Mehu – Annual Health Officer Meeting

Stephon requested that he and the Board hold a dedicated Board of Health meeting before the end of the year to create a review for readiness for DHHS; he will be presenting a document for the public to be able to have access to. The meeting would be to review it in a public meeting, and he suggested planning a meeting in October.

With Cathy Bergstrom and Chris Levy's help, Stephon has devised a draft of a Shoreline Septic System Regulation document which addresses the RSAs he follows as health officer as well as the RSAs that regulate the maintenance and upkeep of individual septic disposal systems in the Shoreline districts such as Swanzey Lake, Wilson Pond, Ashuelot River, (essentially any property which requires a shoreline permit), to require those property owners to maintain their septic systems to minimize pollution, septic backups, etc.

He plans to create a spreadsheet to list the properties with septic systems in this category. A note will be placed in Avatar to tag the property to allow the public to know which property is applicable.

The proposed regulations will require that septic systems in this area be pumped at least every 3 years; a waiver can be applied for a longer period under certain circumstances. Stephon would hold a public meeting to explain the regulation and to educate the public as to what should not be put in the system. A letter will be sent to those that have not reported that they have complied with the regulation. Penalties would then be assessed to those who do not comply with the regulation.

Alan asked how many homes would be affected by this regulation; Cathy replied approximately 60 homes on Swanzey Lake; Stephon estimated there are 150 along Ashuelot that are not connected to the Town's sewer system.

As the Health Officer, he has the authority to go to any property to evaluate their septic system, but this is not the focus of the document he's drafted. This document is specific to the shoreline districts.

The document was reviewed and suggestions were made for edits. Stephon will send the updated version to the Board.

Cathy said the Swanzey Lake Association is in support of the regulation. She requested a draft of the communication the homeowners will receive. Alan asked Cathy if she would send him minutes from the Swanzey Lake Association board meetings.

Chair Tempesta thanked Stephon and Cathy for their work.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Whitcomb Hall Rental Options

This was postponed to a future meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Final Decision on Police Department Phones

Jay has sent an email to the most recent service provider of the Police department phones regarding whether they are still servicing the phones. If he hasn't heard back in a day, he will notify Tania at EmerTech to request her assistance moving forward.

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATE

A. Staff Monthly Reports – included in the packet from most of the departments

B. **Rail Trail project** – Jay reported that Julie informed him that funds had to be moved from 2026 to 2027 since the Town didn't have approvals by 6/30 but she is applying to have them moved to back 2026 to allow the Town to get final designs; she is confident she'll know by August 21st when the estimate will be provided which locks us into a 10% match.
C. **Fire Station progress** – the opening of the new fire station is further delayed because the fire alarm system can't be tested because it needs a phone. He was told by Joe DiRusso that the StarLink phone is best, but he is not sure what system is going to be set up and whether a copper line is needed. There was discussion regarding how much reimbursement is going to be requested from federal funds. Stephon said there is another opportunity that could be applied for.

Mark LaBelle made a motion to spend up to $5,000 for the installation of 128 feet of poly vinyl fence by Monadnock Fence Company with funds coming from the Swanzey Center fire station fund. Jay Ward seconded; all in favor - motion carried.

CORRESPONDENCE

A. Cheshire Fair Association

The Board will consider their request for a donation as part of the budget process.

PUBLIC INPUT

None

NON-PUBLIC SESSIONS

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

A motion was made by Mark LaBelle to enter a nonpublic session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (b) which was seconded by Jay Ward. All were in favor by Roll Call and the motion passed**.** The Board entered the non-public session at 6:28pm. Present were James Tempesta, Mark LaBelle, James Ward and Alan Gross. Also present was Recording Secretary Susan Ells.

A motion was made by Mark LaBelle to come out of the non-public session, seconded by Jay Ward. All were in favor by Roll Call and the motion passed. The non-public session ended at 6:42pm.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mark LaBelle to adjourn the meeting; Jay Ward seconded the motion, and it passed 4-0.

Adjournment occurred at 6:47pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Ells, Recording Secretary

Approved on August 12, 2026