Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Board of Selectmen
Meeting – August 12, 2026
Whitcomb Hall
17 Main Street, Swanzey, NH

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

OTHERS PRESENT
Kai Kraemer with FACT TV, Michael York, Fire Chief Eric Mattson, DPW Director Joe DiRusso, Police Chief Joe Gonsalves, Cheshire County Attorney Chris McGlaughlin

MINUTES
The regular meeting minutes of August 3,2026, August 5,2026, August 7,2026 were considered. A motion was made by Mark LaBelle to approve the minutes as presented. Jay Ward seconded the motion; Bill Hutwelker abstained from the August 5 and August 7 minutes as he was not present for those meetings; the rest were in favor and the motion passed.

The non-public session minutes of August 3, 2026, Session 1, August 5, 2026, Session 1, August 7, 2026, Sessions 1, 2 & 3 were considered. A motion was made by Mark LaBelle to approve the minutes as presented. Jay Ward seconded the motion; Bill Hutwelker abstained from the August 5 and August 7 minutes as he was not present for those meetings; the rest were in favor and the motion passed.

CONSENT AGENDA
A. Payroll Manifest
B. Accounts Payable Manifest
C. Special Event Permits-Monster Truck Madness 2027
A motion was made by Mark LaBelle to approve the Consent Agenda. Jay Ward seconded the motion, and it passed 5-0.

PUBLIC INPUT
None

APPOINTMENTS
A. Chris McGlaughlin – County Attorney – Training/Discussion
Chair Tempesta introduced Cheshire County Attorney Chris McGlaughlin who had offered to attend a board meeting to provide education about the Exculpatory Evidence Schedule (ESS), historically known as the Laurie List, which categorizes law enforcement officer misconduct or credibility-impacting incidents. The primary behavioral categories listed on the public registry include Truthfulness, Falsifying Reports or Records, Falsifying Evidence, Criminal Conduct, Excessive Force, Legal Procedure, Obedience to Laws and Policies, Deception and Credibility Process. Under the EES protocol, the officer's name stays on the list for life.

The officer can be placed on the list temporarily by the police chief while conducting the investigation, but that information would not be published on the public list unless the case is closed with findings.

Based on the Town's grievance policy, the officer being investigated could appeal the chief's decision to the Town's select board; if the board determines the charges were founded, the chief will notify the County Attorney and the Attorney General that the officer is on the list and under what category. The officer could then take it to Superior Court to appeal.

An officer on the EES could still be hired unless they were decertified in the process. Chair Tempesta asked if would affect credibility if a town hires someone on the list; Attorney McLaughlin replied that any case the officer was involved in, the ESS case would be referenced, so he wouldn't recommend hiring someone who was on the list for credibility reasons.

The County Attorney's primary obligation is to prosecute felony cases; his office has 2 assistant county attorneys. Since 2013, the number of individuals indited has been consistently between 210 - 230. The types of crimes vary but generally are drug related, burglary, assault, and assault on a child. Most are resolved with a plea bargain. For those that are not negotiated, the cases go to trial.

The Board thanked him for coming and for providing this information.

B. Joe DiRusso – DPW- Highway Update

Joe DiRusso gave an update on the road work which he said was on schedule; Marcy Hill is just about done; they are waiting for a part for one of the machines so they can finish that project. Christian Hill needs to be reclaimed but he is watching the weather since there has been a lot of rain and is concerned with erosion. They have reconstructed the intersection of Rabbit Hollow Road at Swanzey Lake Road.

At the end of August or beginning of September, the foundations for the flashing lights on all 3 trail crossings on Matthews Road will be installed.

Joe informed the board that the Stratton Library trustees reported being dissatisfied with the recent repointing work done on the building's original bricks. Joe has contacted another mason who might be able to remove the new work and replace with the correct material. Since this is an historic building, extra care must be taken to preserve the integrity of the bricks and mortar.

The Christian Hill culvert has been installed; and the compactor that Nanotech is donating will be delivered to the Recycling Center on Friday.

C. Chief Eric Mattson- Request for New Command Vehicle

Chief Mattson reported that the fire trucks have been moved to the new station; the offices are not quite done yet but should be this week and the computers should be set up next week. The ladder truck will be there on Thursday or Friday. The inspections have been done; the elevator needs a phone. The plan is for a celebration on October 10th and the group discussed parking, perhaps using the school lot and having shuttles.

Chief Mattson would like to replace the command vehicle that Mick Sanchez uses; he has a quote for $88K through the State program with Banks Chevrolet. He said that the department has $90K in the capital improvement fund. The vehicle being replaced has about 110,000 miles on it and might have some resale value. Mike Burke's vehicle has about 40K miles and is in pristine shape. The Chief's vehicle has 28K miles. Chair Tempesta asked about lights and radios which are included but lettering would be extra.

Mark LaBelle asked the Chief to be sure about the funds that are available and the group will discuss this again on Tuesday at the new fire station.

Chief Mattson provided copies of the letters notifying the affected residents of the name change of Aldrich Road to Coolidge Road; he will bring them to the meeting on Tuesday so the Board can sign them.

There was discussion regarding getting the fence installed next to the new fire station. An invoice needs to be sent to Finance so the deposit can be paid.

NEW BUSINESS

B. 2025 Primex Return of Surplus

Mark LaBelle made a motion to authorize Finance Director Lounder to request a refund check in the amount of $7,691.00 from Primex for the 2025 Workers' Compensation Return of Surplus. The motion was seconded by Jay Ward. All were in favor and the motion carried.

C. Review of Contract - Sara Barrett Consulting

Bill Hutwelker explained the consulting agreement that has been reviewed and approved by the town attorney. The only change made is the duration of the contract which will be until 12/31/2027.

Bill has asked Sara for a proposed budget for 2027. She has had meetings to discuss grants that she will be applying for. She recommended applying this year for a pre-application for purchasing the water company (grants are up to $1 million for purchase and maintenance). The Town scored highly on the DES review for water project.

Mark LaBelle made a motion to authorize Chair Tempesta to sign the contract with Sara Barrett Consulting through 12/31/2027 – Alan Gross seconded the motion; with no further discussion, the motion carried.

D. Review of Town Attendance Policy

Postponed to another meeting.

E. Discussion/Decision – Location for August 19 Selectboard Meeting

The floors will be worked on in Whitcomb Hall next week, so the Board decided to meet at the new fire station.

F. Purchase of Laptop- Human Resource Coordinator

Mark LaBelle made a motion to approve the purchase of a new desktop computer for the Human Resources Coordinator from EmerTech in the amount of $2,373.57, with the funds to be expended from the Town Hall Information Management Systems (IMS) Expendable Trust Fund. Jay Ward seconded the motion; all were in favor and the motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

A. North Swanzey ZIP Code Change Update

Bill Hutwelker let the board know that he received word from the State that they are confident that the North Swanzey zip code will be changed to 03446.

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATE

Jay told the Board that he was asked for a change in the term of office for the supervisor of the checklist.

Jay explained to the Board that Code Enforcement Officer Chris Levy believes there are a lot of property owners who are not aware they need a permit for projects like adding a shed or remodeling a room. He suggested placing a notice with the next tax bills.

The Whitcomb Hall Rental agreement needs to be edited.

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 7:18pm. Present were James Tempesta, Mark LaBelle, W. William Hutwelker III, 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 7:35pm.

A motion was made by Mark 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; Jay Ward seconded the motion, and it passed 5-0.

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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 7:57pm.

A motion was made by Mark 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; Jay Ward seconded the motion, and it passed 5-0.

ADJOURNMENT
A motion was made by Mark LaBelle to adjourn the meeting; Jay Ward seconded the motion, and it passed 5-0.

Adjournment occurred at 7:58pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Ells, Recording Secretary
Approved on August 26, 2026