Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Board of Selectmen
Meeting – August 19, 2026
Fire Station
321 Old Homestead Hwy, Swanzey NH

CALL TO ORDER
The meeting was called to order by Chair James Tempesta at 5:30pm at Swanzey Fire Station 321 Old Homestead Hwy, Swanzey, NH. Other members present were Selectmen W William Hutwelker, James Ward and Alan Gross. Also present was Administrative Assistant Katie Collins.

ABSENT
Mark LaBelle

OTHERS PRESENT
Kai Kraemer with FACT TV, Sharon Legere, Nathan Jacobs, Bob Droppa, Vicki Scalera, Mark Scalera, Susan Perry, Gary Zitta, Jim Newton, Jane Parent, Jim Jarzabek, Marcy Jarzabek, Joel Patrick Legere, Gloria Luneau, Mike Delisle, Ron Parent, Blyth Coleman, Harlan and Marth Class, Barry and Doris Leclair, Joe Parisi and Cynthia Kordys and others.

MINUTES
The non-public session minutes of August 11, 2026, Sessions 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5 and August 12, 2026 Sessions 1 & 2 were considered. A motion was made by Jay Ward to approve the minutes as presented. Alan Gross seconded the motion, and it passed 4-0.

CONSENT AGENDA
A. Payroll Manifest
B. Accounts Payable
C. Raffle Permit – Cheshire Fair Association
A motion was made by Jay Ward to approve the Consent Agenda. Alan Gross seconded the motion, and it passed 4-0.

PUBLIC INPUT
Joe Parisi addressed the Board regarding a potential Section 319 water quality grant through the Southwest Region Planning Commission (SWRPC). The proposed project would address stormwater runoff from Talbot Hill onto East Shore Road and into the lake. Parisi stated that there is another grant that would include funding for septic system improvements, with a portion of the funds established to reimburse homeowners for eligible septic system upgrades.

Parisi stated that the total grant request would be approximately $70,000, with $20,000 allocated toward septic system improvements. He noted that Pilgrim Pines is supportive of the project and has indicated that they will provide a match for the funding received. Parisi also stated that DES has indicated that the proposed projects are eligible.

Parisi explained that he is seeking a letter of support from the Selectboard and that the letter would not obligate the Town to participate financially. He stated that he has met with Stephon Mehu and Cheri Domina regarding the project. Ward stated that he had spoken with Mehu, who is going to produce a draft letter to the board before the next meeting.

Hutwelker asked how many properties would potentially be involved. Parisi estimated approximately 45 properties. He stated that the grant could provide up to $5,000 per homeowner, not to exceed 60% of the eligible project cost. The application deadline is September 11, and Parisi noted that Pilgrim Pines has already submitted a letter of support.

Hutwelker stated that the Board needs additional information regarding how the funding would be distributed and how the program would be implemented. He noted that he had previously requested additional information on these matters.

No action was taken by the Board at this time.

APPOINTMENTS

A. Katie Collins – Whitcomb Hall Rental Options

Postponed for a future meeting.

B. Sharon Legere – Wilson Pond

Sharon Legere appeared before the Board regarding concerns related to Wilson Pond. Legere stated that the purpose of the meeting was to address the bladderwort problem in the pond, discuss what can be done to address the current issue, and consider long-term solutions.

Ward stated that he was speaking as President of the Wilson Pond Association and not in his capacity as a Selectboard member. Ward provided information regarding what the Association has been doing and stated that DES has been notified of the bladderwort issue by multiple individuals. Ward explained the nature of the bladderwort problem and stated that he has attended meetings regarding the issue. He noted that he had previously been told that Wilson Pond was considered a private pond but that it is now listed as a non-private pond.

Ward stated that the Wilson Pond Association needs additional volunteers, better organization, and more meetings. The board needs to look into a lake host program and grant opportunity following the lead of Swanzey Lake and whether we need to register with the state to see if we can accept donations. The Board discussed the need to determine whether the Association intends to become a 501(c)(3) organization or pursue another organizational structure.

Hutwelker stated that the Association has spoken with the Town's grant writer, who will research potential grants that may be available. He noted that the grant writer needs additional information from the Association in order to determine what funding opportunities may be applicable.

Nathan Jacobs questioned why grant funding would be necessary and why the Association would have to apply for grants rather than partnering directly with the Town. Ward stated that the Association should determine what resources may be available and apply for available funding.

Bob Droppa asked what alternatives exist to becoming a 501(c)(3) organization and stated that the Association should research the available options. Droppa also suggested looking into possible mechanical methods or chemical treatments for the bladderwort. He questioned whether lowering the pond level during the winter could help control the vegetation and suggested speaking with DPW regarding the possibility.

Vicki Scalera thanked the Board members for coming to look at the pond and asked whether the Town has any responsibility for the condition of the pond. Scalera stated that something may have been brought into the water from the Town's boat launch.

Mark Scalera stated that vegetation is a problem and suggested that prevention may be possible through a lake host program similar to the program at Swanzey Lake. He explained how a lake host program could help prevent the spread of invasive vegetation. Mark also suggested reducing the amount of salt used on side streets. He stated that some of these matters would require Selectboard involvement. Mark also raised concerns about flooding and stated that water is coming down Safford Drive, flowing over private property, and then entering the pond. He stated that Code Enforcement should be made aware of these concerns.

Tempesta stated that he had visited Safford Drive and spoken with the construction company. He stated that he was informed that the drainage issue would be corrected. Tempesta also questioned whether placing additional boards in the dam would help increase water levels in areas experiencing low water.

Ward stated that he has spoken with the Health Officer regarding the testing for E Coli bacteria because the state is no longer processing our E Coli samples taken during our water testing.

Susan Perry stated that the cove near her property is empty and that she is unable to have a boat because there is not enough water. Perry questioned whether the boards being placed in the dam are contributing to the low water levels. She suggested that weather conditions be considered when determining when boards should be installed or removed.

Tempesta asked whether placing additional boards in the dam would help increase the water level in Perry's area. Mark Scalera stated that he believed it would.

Tempesta questioned why the water-level concerns had not been brought to the Board previously. Perry stated that she had brought the matter to the Board twice. Ward stated that residents have provided conflicting requests regarding water levels, with some asking for the pond to be lowered and others asking for it to be raised.

Nathan Jacobs asked when the pond would next be drained and stated that the matter should be investigated.

Gary Zitta, who owns property around the pond, stated that the area has experienced reduced water flow since the new dam was installed. Mark Scalera suggested that the diversion dam may need to be evaluated.

Jim Newton discussed the bubblers on his property and their purpose. Ward stated that Newton would need a permit from DES if the bubblers are used to control vegetation. Newton also raised concerns about a street drainage inlet where leaves and other material are being washed into the pond. Newton stated that the location of the drainage inlet has contributed to problems. Ward stated that he would look into the drainage concern.
Jane Parent discussed inconsistent water levels and stated that the water flow has not been consistent since Lee Dunham left. Parent also suggested that the Association look into establishing a watershed program similar to the one at Swanzey Lake.

Ward stated that Swanzey Lake received a grant for a watershed management survey and that a similar opportunity may be available for Wilson Pond. Ward reiterated that additional information and organization from the Wilson Pond Association would be needed.

Jim Jarzabek discussed the diversion dam on Route 32 and stated that the Town paid approximately $10,000 to have the dam dismantled. Jarzabek questioned whether the dam should have been repaired instead.

Mike Delisle stated that the pond problems have become worse each year.

Jim Jarzabek stated that lowering the pond during the winter could potentially allow the affected areas to freeze and help address the vegetation.

Ward agreed that lowering the pond during the winter should be considered.

Joel Legere stated that the issue affects everyone who uses the pond because of the number of people using the Town's boat launch and that the issue is not limited to homeowners around the pond.

Ron Parent stated that residents previously had the ability to clean vegetation from their shorelines but are no longer able to do so.

Marcy Jarzabek stated that the diversion dam would need to be repaired before the pond could be lowered because otherwise the area may not freeze as intended.

Sharon Legere stated that residents should not have to pay for the work because the pond is public. Ward clarified that the State owns the pond and that the boat launch is Town-owned.

Vicki Scalera asked what happens to residents' tax dollars if they are not used to address the pond issues. Mark Scalera stated that waterfront property owners pay a significant tax premium.

Tempesta explained that the Town does not set the tax rate. Hutwelker stated that the Board does not have the ability to determine specifically where tax revenue is spent.

Hutwelker stated that the Board has asked the Town's grant writer to research potential grants that could assist with the Wilson Pond issues. Vicki Scalera asked whether the grant writer would write the grant application. Hutwelker stated that the grant writer would research available opportunities but would need additional information regarding the Association and the proposed projects.

Marcy Jarzabek stated that the Association used to provide information to the pond residents but has not done so recently. Ward stated that the Association could continue the discussion at its Labor Day cookout.

Blyth Coleman spoke about vegetation concerns on her side of the pond. Tempesta stated that the group needs to become more organized and hold additional meetings.

Hutwelker stated that he would reach out to the Southwest Region Planning Commission (SWRPC) regarding potential watershed resources.

Gloria Lenoue asked whether Otter Brook Dam could have an impact on the Wilson Pond water levels or conditions.

Vicki Scalera asked whether she could contact the Town's grant writer directly. Hutwelker stated that he would find out.

Tempesta stated that the meeting was informative and emphasized the need for additional organization and communication regarding the issues affecting Wilson Pond.

Ward stated that he would follow up with the Town's grant writer.

Sharon Legere asked whether the issue could be made more of a community effort. Ward agreed.

Follow-Up: Hutwelker will contact SWRPC regarding potential watershed resources. Ward will follow up with the Town's grant writer regarding potential grant opportunities. The Wilson Pond Association will continue discussions regarding organization, available funding, and potential solutions to the pond's vegetation, water-level, drainage, and watershed concerns.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Reorganization of Trustees of Trust Funds

Cynthia Kordys accepted Steve Bittel's resignation. It was discussed that Bittel will continue to serve as an alternate until Town Meeting 2029, and Ashley Guion will serve in Bittel's place until Town Meeting 2029.

Ward made a motion to accept Steve Bittel's resignation, with Bittel continuing to serve as an alternate until Town Meeting 2029, and for Ashley Guion to serve in Bittel's place until Town Meeting 2029. Hutwelker seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Swanzey Community Conversation

Ward discussed the upcoming Swanzey Community Conversation event with the Board. The event will be held at Pilgrim Pines on August 29th from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Ward stated that the event is open to all Swanzey residents and will provide an opportunity for residents to come together, share ideas, and discuss community matters.

Residents interested in attending are asked to RSVP by contacting Ann Heffernon.

C. Police Department – Highway Safety Grant

The Board revisited the Highway Safety Grant, which had been previously discussed and approved by the Select Board. The Board discussed the grant terms and amended grant terms and the need to reaffirm the previous action.

Hutwelker made a motion to accept the terms of the Highway Safety Grant as presented in the amount of $8,500.00, along with the amended grant terms in the amount of $2,029.50, as presented in the Grant Agreement Amendment Notice, for an adjusted total grant limitation of $10,529.50. Gross seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Northern Borders Regional Commission Grant (NBRC)- Discussion Regarding Potential Purchase of West Swanzey Water

Hutwelker updated the Board regarding discussions with Sara Barrett, a grant writer, concerning a NBRC grant pre-application related to the potential purchase of the West Swanzey Water Company. The projected budget is 1.2 million. The Town is applying for approximately $600,000 in NBRC grant funding. The grant requires a 50% match, which Hutwelker stated would be covered by the water system users.

The board discussed the reasons for purchasing the West Swanzey Water Company. These reasons included stability for current users; opportunity for economic growth for users in West Swanzey; improvement to public safety by being able to utilize fire hydrants. The board acknowledged the existing system as currently operated cannot add additional hookups, this impacts economic development when fire suppress systems are needed and has halted attempts to further development of the Homestead Woolen Mill for residential and business development. This is because the existing West Swanzey Water Company system does not have adequate storage capacity. The board agreed that owning maintaining and expanding the existing system is vital for current users and future economic development.

Hutwelker stated that the pre-application is due by Friday and that Barrett is currently working on the application. He explained that minutes documenting the Board's support are required as part of the grant application.

The board agreed by consensus to support the NBRC grant pre application. All Board members were in favor of supporting the application.

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATE

A. Hazard Mitigation Plan – Status Update

Ward read a memo from Stephon Mehu regarding the Town's Hazard Mitigation Plan. Hutwelker stated that the group has held its first meeting and that three additional meetings are planned, two of which will be open to the public.

B. California Street & N Winchester Street Grant Closeout

The Board discussed the closeout of the grant. Tempesta stated that the project came out well. Hutwelker reported that the Town received approximately $1 million in grant funding and that all required funds have been accounted for. The grant has been successfully closed out, allowing the Town to pursue additional grant opportunities.

CORRESPONDENCE

A. Mt. Caesar Union Library

Ward read a letter from the library regarding the Beyond the Battlefield event

B. Resident Letter of Concern- Wilson Pond

Ward read a letter from a resident regarding issues at Wilson Pond.

PUBLIC INPUT

Wilson Pond: Discussion resumed regarding the Wilson Pond issue. Tempesta stated that he will speak with Joe DiRusso about getting the bench repaired and obtaining dirt to fill in some of the ruts at Wilson Pond. Ward and Tempesta stated that they will speak with DiRusso about lowering the water level.

Public Session ended at 7:50 p.m.

NON-PUBLIC SESSIONS

Non-public session(s) per RSA 91-A:3, II *(e)* Consideration or negotiation of pending claims or litigation threatened in writing or filed by or against the public body, or by or against any member because of his or her membership in such body.

A motion was made by Jay Ward to enter a non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (e) which was seconded by Alan Gross. All were in favor by Roll Call and the motion passed**.** The Board entered the non-

public session at 7:50 pm. Present were James Tempesta, W. William Hutwelker III, James Ward and Alan Gross. Also present was Administrative Assistant Katie Collins.

A motion was made by Jay Ward to come out of the non-public session, seconded by Alan Gross. All were in favor by Roll Call and the motion passed. The non-public session ended at 7:58 pm.

A motion was made by Jay Ward 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; Alan Gross seconded the motion, and it passed 4-0.

Non-public session(s) per RSA 91-A:3, II (b) Hiring of a Public Employee
A motion was made by Jay Ward to enter a nonpublic session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (b) which was seconded by Alan Gross. All were in favor by Roll Call and the motion passed**.** The Board entered the non-public session at 7:58 pm. Present were James Tempesta, W. William Hutwelker III, James Ward and Alan Gross. Also present was Administrative Assistant Katie Collins.

A motion was made by Jay Ward to come out of the non-public session, seconded by Alan Gross. All were in favor by Roll Call and the motion passed. The non-public session ended at 8:11 pm.

A motion was made by Jay Ward 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; Ala Gross seconded the motion, and it passed 4-0.

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

Adjournment occurred at 8:16 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Katie Collins, Administrative Assistant

Approved on August 21, 2026