Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Board of Selectmen
Meeting – August 26, 2026
Whitcomb Hall
17 Main Street, Swanzey, NH

CALL TO ORDER
The meeting was called to order by Chair James Tempesta at 4:30pm at Whitcomb Hall, Main Street, Swanzey, NH. Other members present were Selectmen Mark LaBelle, W William Hutwelker, James Ward. Also present was Recording Secretary Susan Ells.

OTHERS PRESENT
Kai Kraemer with FACT TV, Sarah Ridyard (NH DES), Ryan Hudock and Terry Demarais (Underwood Engineers), DPW Director Joe DiRusso, Joe Parisi, Bud Winsor

ABSENT
Alan Gross

PUBLIC HEARING
The purpose of the hearing is to hear public comments regarding the Town of Swanzey's engagement of Underwood Engineers, Inc., to evaluate conveyance route alternatives for connecting the West Swanzey collection system to the City of Keene's sewer collection system. This effort builds on the Town's 2026 Wastewater Planning Study, which identified treatment at the Keene Wastewater Treatment Facility as a recommended long-term alternative to upgrading the existing West Swanzey Treatment Facility. This initial meeting will summarize the engineer's overall scope of work and schedule. The engineer will also introduce the four potential routing options at a high level for discussion.

Terry Demarais and Ryan Hudock from Underwood Engineers explained that this hearing is a continuation of a DES-funded planning study from May 2026 which examined the condition of the Town's wastewater treatment facility and whether there was a benefit to upgrade the facility to be able to meet future permit requirements. One of the alternatives that was considered was converting the existing lagoon treatment system into a pump station and redirecting the fluids to the City of Keene for treatment. As a result of that study, Underwood brought forward their recommendation that would be the most cost-effective solution. The Board agreed with this approach and recommended moving forward. This current project is to further develop the engineering side of this concept. The State suggested researching other alignments; Joe DiRusso and the Board also had other ideas for alignment, so this presentation is to report on the other alternatives in order to find a better approach and/or a less expensive approach. The Town has submitted a pre-application to the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund (CWSRF); this project is on the short list to be considered for $1.6 million funding which would cover the design phase of this $19 million project.

Joe DiRusso added that the Town had some other ideas for alignments; some are required to be considered for the funding; so, there are four options to review in this presentation.

Terry began the presentation to describe the design development.

Phase 1 – Design Phase Services:
- Evaluates the additional conveyance routes.

    - A: Wastewater Treatment Facility to Route 10 to Keene Collection System (near Market Basket - this is the route described in the planning study)
    - A-1: Wastewater Treatment Facility to Route 10 to Sawyers Crossing Rd to Route 10 to Keene Collection System
    - B: Wastewater Treatment Facility to Eaton Rd to North Swanzey Collection System
    - B-1: Wastewater Treatment Facility to Eaton Rd to Cedar/Sawyer/Causeway to Keene Wastewater Treatment Facility
- Develop costs (capital, operation and maintenance, life cycle costs)
- Additional discussion with City of Keene regarding upgrading to 101 which has significant costs
- Recommend conveyance route

Summary of Tasks
Task 1 - Design Phase Services to develop recommended conveyance route
Task 2 - Examine the subsurface to determine possible cost estimating if there is rock to drill through
Task 3 - Funding Assistance support for the time, such as grant applications.

All routes start at what would be the new pump station at the Wastewater facility.

Option A – this is the concept used for May 2026; it would require an easement at Brown Field to get to Route 10; this is generally uphill heading north; there are 2 high points; the latter is more significant; then downhill to the base that will need an intermediate pump station to get the fluid to the connection at the existing Keene gravity sewer. It would allow for easier service connections in that vicinity. The intent is to stay off the pavement as much as possible, which is feasible for most of the project, so there is potentially less pavement work. Joe pointed out that the gravity main could be tied into from Ash Hill and Base Hill. There is a right-of-way where the collection system runs at Brown Field so it would not have to go through Winchester Street.

Option A-1 – This route eliminates the two high points by going down Sawyers Crossing then to a class VI R road (Old Route 10) and then to the connection point. The benefit is that the project stays out of route 10 longer, so there would be less construction, but it adds about 2000 feet to the length. Joe DiRusso added that some research is needed to determine who owns the Old Route 10 section; it might have been given back to Town, but the Town may have given it to Yale Forest, in which case an easement would be needed.

Option B takes a different route in the opposite direction along Denman Thompson Road to Eaton Road. There is quite a bit of variation with high and low points, but not as extreme. One consideration for this option is the restoration because the construction would be within the paved roadway. There are not too many conflicts; there are some drainage crossings which would require directional drill because there is a significant river crossing along Denman Thompson Road outside of the treatment facility; there is gravity flow to next crossing (which allows for connections which could provide a benefit such as to the schools). A second crossing would need another intermediate pump station to physically connect to Route 32 pump station. There is a need to evaluate that station for capacity for current and future. This is the longest route – about 24,000 LF; when it was designed there was some consideration for build out, but it is not clear yet if there is enough capacity to add West Swanzey, or if it was it just planned for North Swanzey.

Option B-1 – This route is similar to Option B, but where the high point is, it takes a direct route to Keene across Cedar Street, to Causeway, then they would need to directionally drill to connect to the treatment facility. They need to evaluate hydraulics to compare with the existing station. The elevation where the line would enter would need to be designed to be pressurized enough to enter the system; possibly another pump

station would be needed. There are significant wetlands, but they would be drilling underneath the earth using a method that would not disturb the wetlands.

Contract Schedule and Funding:
The intent is to be in advance of getting the article on the warrant for March 2027. If the vote is affirmative, then they would apply for the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund and then begin the preliminary/final design.

Joe DiRusso commented that the cost of building will be a driving factor, but they also need to consider which option is more expensive to operate and maintain in the future.

Chair Tempesta commented that there are benefits to each option.

Bill Hutwelker suggested there might be a line near the bridge near the schools on Route 32 which isn't being used but was installed preemptively. This needs to be researched.

Chair Tempesta asked for public input. Joe Parisi asked if Eversource right of way was an option for a path; Joe DiRusso said the railroad still owns the right of way, and contaminants are a problem. Parisi restated he meant the power lines and was told that was not the area they would be using.

With no other public comments, Mark LaBelle made a motion to close the public hearing; Jay Ward seconded the motion; all were in favor and the hearing closed at 5:08pm.

Joe DiRusso updated the Board that he has inspected the extension of Rabbit Hollow Road, and it is ready for the Board to accept.

Mark LaBelle made a motion to accept the Class V extension on Rabbit Hollow Road; Jay Ward seconded the motion; all were in favor and the motion carried.

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 Mark LaBelle to enter a non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (c) 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 5:11pm. Present were James Tempesta, Mark LaBelle, W. William Hutwelker III, and James Ward. Also present was Recording Secretary Susan Ells, Joanne Cote and Jen Wells.

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 5:36pm.

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 4-0.

The regular meeting continued at 5:38pm. Ann Heffernon, Barbara Skuly, Victoria Scalera, Lisa Ryan, and David Mason joined the meeting.

MINUTES
The regular meeting minutes of August 11, 2026; August 12, 2026; and August 18, 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 August 18, 2026 #1, 2, 3, and 4 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. Raffle Permit- Monadnock Football

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

APPOINTMENTS

A. Ann Heffernon – Swanzey Community Conversation

Ann provided an update about the upcoming event at Pilgrim Pines at Camp Squanto from 10am till noon on Saturday, August 29. There will be signs directing folks there. A facilitator from NH Humanities will lead the meeting; they will break into groups with the intent of discerning ideas to do as a town together; they will vote on which idea is best, and the Town will get a grant for $3000 to accomplish the event. They have asked for the meeting to be taped and if the grant doesn't cover the cost of it, Jay Ward said he and Ann would cover the cost. They would like people who can't attend the event to be able to watch. There has been a lot of publicity such as social media, SAU put it in the blast before school started, Coffee Connection, the chamber breakfast, and the Dan Mitchell radio show. Monadnock's Interact group will be there to entertain kids; an artist will be there to guide kids creating art about what community means to them.

B. Joe DiRusso – DPW- Follow up on Wilson Pond

Joe DiRusso couldn't stay for the meeting, so Jay reported that DPW added a board in the dam at Wilson Pond and repaired the existing boards; they will monitor the water level and if it gets too high, they will take boards out. The main goal is to keep the water level where it is. There will be a company surveying the pond tomorrow regarding the vegetation.

Chair Tempesta inspected the area following last week's meeting; he didn't find the broken benches or the ruts that had been reported at the meeting. Jay told the group that a man named Richard brings in gravel to fill in the ruts occasionally and has offered to pay for upgrading the benches. Joe DiRusso had said that the Town mows and weed whacks regularly.

There was a discussion regarding the level of the pond; Vicky Scalera said that the Wilson Pond Association has a meeting planned for the Saturday of Labor Day at 11am.

C. Energy Commission – Swanzey Wastewater Treatment

Barbara Skuly provided an update regarding Revision Energy's proposed contract to purchase the Renewable Energy Certificates (RECS) from the solar array at the Wastewater Treatment plant. They aggregate the RECS and sell them to a broker who deals in much larger volumes. She explained the reason for the two addresses on the contract. The Portland address is ReVision's headquarters; the Renewable Energy Certificates service agreement has a Massachusetts address because they use a Massachusetts broker who is better able to sell the RECS. The solar array has a data acquisition system incorporated; the data automatically gets fed into the pool so ReVision can report how many KW produced and that determines the value of the REC. They pay the

Town, retaining $3.50 per REC and pay about $1.50 per REC to the broker. The REC is worth about $40; it will fluctuate per month, but the Town can expect about $5000 per year.

Mark LaBelle made a motion that the Chair sign the contract with ReVision on the Town's behalf, after the Town's attorney reviews it. Jay Ward seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Jay Ward will let Barbara know when the lawyer has reviewed the contract.

Additionally, Barbara suggested the Board and Joe DiRusso review the management plan to determine if it would be helpful to manage the solar array.

PUBLIC INPUT

David Mason expressed his compliments to Tax Collector Kevin Wescott for notifying him of a mistake he made in overpaying his real estate tax bill. He also appreciated the customer service he's received from Town Clerk Heather Estrella.

David told the Board he came to ask about the area from Mt Caesar to Sawyers Crossing between the sidewalk and the school's fence where there is a path of grass 12 feet wide; it's been over 3 years, and it hasn't been mowed except by him or by Kevin Bell. Mark said he spoke with Joe DiRusso about it who believes it is owned by the State; the Board will investigate it.

Joe Parisi explained to the Board that the Swanzey Lake Association is applying for an EPA 319 Watershed Assistance Grant; they are working with SWRPC as their grant writer; in the preconcept meeting with SWRPC and DES, both recommended a letter of support from the Town. They are not seeking any money from the Town, but a letter would be helpful in the grant application. Two items from the watershed management system are being addressed; the shoreline erosion at Camp Squanto and to set up a fund to partially reimburse homeowners for improvements to their septic systems. About $70k is being requested; the application needs to be submitted by 9/10; he's trying to get it submitted sooner. Stephon Mehu has prepared a letter of support for the Board to sign. The Board then signed the letter.

NEW BUSINESS

A. On Call Engineering Grant – Letter of Support

Joe Parisi went on to tell the Board that the Swanzey Lake Association has been talking with SWRPC regarding their on-call engineering grants; SWRPC sponsors small engineering projects related to transportation. The project they ear marked for the association was for a conceptual study to engineer a solution to prevent the runoff from Talbot Hill Road which causes further erosion on East Shore Road and ultimately into Swanzey Lake. The Conservation Commission supports this and would contribute funds to help make this happen and would appreciate some matching funds from the Town. Last time there was a flood, FEMA money was available, but if it happens again, those funds might not be there. There have been improvements by the Town, but there is still a concern about protecting East Shore Road.

Joe said that they are doing oxygen testing in the lake and he reported that since the morning of the flood there has been deterioration of the water quality by all the sediment being dumped into the lake by the runoff which is consuming oxygen that isn't there now for other things. Prevention is a high priority.

The maximum grant is $11,500; early estimates for the project cost is between $15-20K so they would need to match $3500 – $8500. The process would be that the firm would do the engineering then there would be a stake holder meeting to start the conversation about the options and estimates. When they started working

with SWRPC, this project was at the top of the list; he's concerned that the grant money will be used up before they get their application in.

The Board will discuss this at the next meeting.

B. MAST Grant – Discussion of Potential Projects and Studies for 2026 Grant Application

Jay Ward reported that Stephon Mehu provided 3 options of potential projects for the 2026 round of the MAST award: continued southerly extension of sidewalk along Old Homestead Highway towards Talbot Hill Road; engineering analysis for the construction of an easterly road for emergency services traveling from Old Homestead Highway to the rear of Marcy Hill through Map 219 Lot 42; and engineering analysis for reconstruction of Class V road along Oliver Hill Rd to intersection at CL Lane Road and Woodland Heights Drive. No decisions made at this time.

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATE

Jay updated the Board regarding his conversation with Fidium regarding what service is currently being paid for and the proposal for running fiber internet to both the Town Hall and the Police Station. Currently the Town Hall has Spectrum and First Light who provide internet; this would be an upgrade from copper to fiber; if the Town were to sign by Friday, they would get 3 months free, but Chris Emerson and Jay spoke later and agreed they don't want to rush into a decision since the savings is minimal – they want to make sure to get what is best. It takes 45 - 60 days to get installed; they also need to determine what it takes to get out of the current contracts. The 3-year contract with First Light expires at end of December; they first need to install phones and then get better service.

Int the process, they have discovered there are several lines that should have been canceled as they are not being used, but that cancelation didn't occur. Jay will pursue getting them canceled.

Christine has analyzed the usage to determine what phones are needed and sent the report to Emertech; the timeline to install the phones is for 9/11. Lisa is working with a company called TCE who haven't given her a copy of the contract.

The Hazard Mitigation Plan form is on the website to provide input to the Town. The Board members should answer the survey.

It's important that the roster for fire department is updated because the cost of carrying inactive fire fighters is expensive due to the Town paying for disability insurance. Jay and Meagan are working on it. Chair Tempesta will have a conversation with Chief Mattson about this.

Jay added that we need to start thinking about Phase 2 of the town hall renovation; Joe is getting a quote to install an ADA bathroom downstairs to eliminate the need for an elevator. Any leftover money from this current project could be used for reorganizing the space into office space. The quotes need to be provided for the CIP budget by September 11th.

PUBLIC INPUT

Rick Robichaud told the Board that he purchased 50 chair covers at a cost of $135 and would like reimbursement. There are 2 events that need more covers. Jay told him how to get a requisition form to submit for approval.

Rick also asked about the list of items Whitcomb Hall Committee needs and was told that Sharon Greatbatch was given a form for CIP. Joe DiRusso has solicited quotes for the snow rakes.

Chair Tempesta expressed the Police Chief's concern about the traffic at Mt Caesar; there was so much traffic backed up due to vehicles dropping children at school which is a safety issue. He will meet with the Chief tomorrow; they might give it until Friday, but he feels it will continue to be a problem. Jay suggested changing the opening times for the 2 schools.

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 7:03pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Ells, Recording Secretary

Approved on September 2, 2026