Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Board of Selectmen
Meeting – September 2, 2026
Town Hall Lower Level - Swanzey, NH

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was opened by Chair James Tempesta at 9:00 am. Present were board members James Tempesta, Mark LaBelle, W. William Hutwelker III, Alan Gross, and James Ward. Also present was DPW Director Joe DiRusso.

The Board established a phased approach to renovate the lower level of the town hall, prioritizing the creation of a "vanilla box" office space and securing the building exterior before winter. The plan involves the possible relocation of the planning department to the lower level to free up space upstairs for finance and recreation/welfare departments.

DECISIONS MADE

- **Phase 1 Priorities:** Focus on removing overhead doors, installing a new front door, and finishing the current office room to create a basic operational space before winter.
- **Office Layout:** The lower level will utilize an open-concept design with optional cubicles/dividers rather than permanent walls to maintain heat/AC flow and flexibility.
- **Departmental Relocation:**
  - *Planning Department:* Moving to the lower level.
  - *Finance*: Moving into space being vacated by planning.
  - *Recreation Department*: To be relocated to the Town Hall for better public accountability.
  - *Welfare Office*: Possible creation of an additional office upstairs for welfare using space freed up by moving the break room and filing cabinets downstairs.
- **Phase 2:** Includes a downstairs restroom and creation of a large meeting space in the former garage bay. Might include installing a LULA lift if required.

Financial Estimates & Funding

- **Immediate Costs:** Approximately $25,000 is estimated to cover materials for the break room, new planning office, and front door closure. Funding will be sourced from remaining stair project balance potential insurance claims (estimated at $5,000 to $7,000),
- **Restroom Costs**: A guesstimate of $25,000 to $30,000 for a turnkey restroom, with the primary expense being the sewage pump system.
- **Lula (Lift) Cost:** Estimated at roughly $100,000, though its necessity is being questioned due to existing handicapped entrances.
- **Budgeting**: A figure of $150,000 will be proposed for the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to cover the phase 2 project.

Considerations

- **Code Compliance:** There is uncertainty regarding whether a lift is mandatory by code for the restroom if the space is used for offices or congregations.
- **Engineering Viability**: The feasibility of certain structural changes depends on an engineer's assessment which is scheduled for Sunday.

Bill Hutwelker will meet with the engineer on Sunday to determine if the proposed engineering is viable and to obtain a quote. Work on the office and breakroom space cannot start until the stair project is finished and DPW completes their fall work.

Joe DiRusso will provide costs for materials for the doors and studded wall. The Board will be provided with a list of balances in expandable trusts and capital reserves next week. The Board will sketch the desired room layout to guide the "vanilla box" preparation.

The Board will coordinate the removal of old equipment and files to the fire station mezzanines to clear the workspace as needed.

The Board then discussed the need for a new DPW building and how to convince voters that it is a priority. Several ideas were discussed and the Board agreed that the DPW building would be on the agenda multiple times this fall.

Mark Labelle reported that Ashlee Crosby has requested funds be released for work done at Richardson Park and the Board agreed to set up a meeting with Ashlee soon to discuss her requests.

Over the phone, Keith Bell committed to taking the fire department trophies from the lower level of the Town Hall to the new fire station.

The Board received an update concerning the possible sale of Renewable Energy credits earned from the solar array at the Wastewater Plant. Some questions remain.

The Board is concerned about Whitcomb Hall finances and discussed possible changes to improve the situation.

NON-PUBLIC SESSIONS

Non-public session(s) per RSA 91-A:3 I *Consideration of legal advice provided by legal counsel, either in writing or orally, to one or more members of the public body, even where legal counsel is not present.*

A motion **was** made by Mark LaBelle to enter a non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3 II (l) 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 10:34am. Present were James Tempesta, Mark LaBelle, W. William Hutwelker III, James Ward and Alan Gross.

A motion 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 10:39am.

A motion 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.

Non-public session(s) per RSA 91-A:3, II *(a) the dismissal, promotion, or compensation of any public employee or the disciplining of such employee.*

A motion was made by Mark LaBelle to enter a non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (a) 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 10:41m. Present were James Tempesta, Mark LaBelle, W. William Hutwelker III, James Ward and

Alan Gross.

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 10:52am.

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.

Non-public session(s) per RSA 91-A:3, II *(a) the dismissal, promotion, or compensation of any public employee or the disciplining of such employee.*
A motion was made by Mark LaBelle to enter a non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (a) 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 10:53am. Present were James Tempesta, Mark LaBelle, W. William Hutwelker III, James Ward and Alan Gross.

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 11:05am.

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.

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 11:05am. Present were James Tempesta, Mark LaBelle, W. William Hutwelker III, James Ward and Alan Gross.

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 11:12am.

Chair Tempesta informed the Board that representatives of the Cal Ripken League would be coming to a future Board meeting.

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 11:15am.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jay Ward, Board Secretary

Approved on September 8, 2026