Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Board of Selectmen
Meeting – September 2, 2026
Whitcomb Hall
17 Main Street, Swanzey, NH

CALL TO ORDER
The meeting was called to order by Chair James Tempesta at 5:32pm 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, Meagen Kerris (HR Coordinator), Katie Collins (Admin Asst), Mick Sanchez (Asst Fire Chief), Sylvester Karazinski (Town Moderator)

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

The regular meeting minutes of August 26, 2026 were considered. A motion was made by Mark LaBelle to approve the minutes as presented. Jay Ward seconded the motion, and it passed 5-0.

The non-public session minutes of August 19, 2026 Sessions #1 and 2; August 21, 2026 and August 26, 2026 were considered. A motion was made by Mark LaBelle to approve the minutes as presented. Jay Ward seconded the motion, and it passed 5-0.

CONSENT AGENDA
A. Payroll Manifest
B. Accounts Payable Manifest
C. Special Events Permit- Elijah's Race
D. Assessing:
    1. Certificate of Yield Taxes Assessed M/226 L/11
    2. Original Warrant Yield Tax Levy M/226 L/11

A motion was made by Mark LaBelle to approve the Consent Agenda. Jay Ward seconded the motion, and it passed 5-0.

Bill Hutwelker asked Katie Collins if she had an opportunity to remind the people requesting the special event permit that one month notice is needed for department heads to review prior to the Board's vote. She replied that she did.

PUBLIC INPUT
Assistant Fire Chief Mick Sanchez provided an update on the open house being held on Saturday, October 10 from 10am - 1pm at the new fire station. This has been publicized on social media and fliers will be posted. This coincides with the end of fire prevention week; there will be fire prevention education for kids, the apparatus and equipment will be on display, and food will be available. There will be guides to provide tours of the station and to answer questions. As far as parking is concerned, besides the 2 parking lots, the road around the back of the building will allow for 2 rows of parking, so there should be ample parking.

Chair Tempesta asked if there is room in the mezzanine to store items from Town Hall over the winter. Mick suggested using the addition at the West Station. Mick will discuss this with the Fire Chief and get back to the Board.

Alan Gross reminded the Board that there is a Joint Meeting of the Planning, Zoning and Select Board on September 17th to review the audit of the Town of Swanzey's Zoning Ordinance.

APPOINTMENTS

A. Sly Karasinski – Town Moderator

Sly gave an update on the voting plans for Tuesday's Primary; Skip DiBernardo and Francis Faulkner will assist. The Select Board is encouraged to attend. Voting is 8am – 7pm at MRHS.

The process for a new voter in Swanzey is to provide documentation that proves citizenship unless they have voted in another area in the State of NH; if that is the case, they are on a list of voters and would be considered a citizen and would then be registered to vote in Swanzey. Voters need to bring a photo ID; if they have no ID, a selectman or supervisor of the checklist can vouch for them if they know who they are. The town clerk or moderator would then need to sign the voucher. There was discussion about purchasing a box truck to load all the booths, tables, etc.; it would be stored at DPW instead of loading and unloading to the storage facility.

B. Katie Collins – Whitcomb Hall Rental Rates/ Year to Date Revenue for Whitcomb Hall

Katie provided a draft of the proposed rental agreement which was reviewed and discussed. She provided 2 options for the Board to consider. The Board discussed determining the costs involved in operating the building to be sure the rates are adequate. The Board agreed by consensus to accept the second option and the proposed rates; they also agreed to eliminate the option of the use of the kitchen for upstairs rental use if the downstairs is being used at the same time since the path to the kitchen would be through the other party's event or out the back door and in through the kitchen which is not a feasible solution. There should also be a note to upstairs renters that they would need to use the backstairs to get to the restrooms in there is an event downstairs, so that would restrict handicapped access. Katie will revise the agreement with information from Chair Tempesta and will return to another meeting with the document to review and approve.

Katie went on to report that she has reached out to a few companies to provide a quote for a digital sign at the Town Hall; she will report back when she has more quotes. Having a digital sign would make changing the message much easier, quicker, and safer.

A. Review of Workweek and Overtime, Holiday, Vacation and Sick Policy

Meagen Kerris reviewed the draft changes to the *Holidays* policy; this policy was last updated in 2024; since then, the Town Hall hours have changed, so the policy doesn't match. Town Hall employees work until noon on Friday, so when the holiday is observed on a Friday, the Board has typically given the employees Thursday afternoon off as well as Friday morning to provide 8 hours of Holiday pay. This negatively affects the Town's residents because the hall would be closed Thursday afternoon and all day Friday. The Board agreed.

The *Floating Holiday Leave* policy and *Vacation Leave* policy had mainly grammatical corrections. Item 15.6 – added a requirement to request vacation time using the electronic software AND through email to verify approval. The Board also decided to add that 30 days' notice would be required when requesting time off. Meagen suggested removing 15.7 but Bill Hutwelker thought it should remain and the Board agreed. Some other minor changes were suggested.

The *Sick Leave* policy was reviewed; Meagen suggested adding that general medical guidance is 48 consecutive hours without a fever when returning to work. 16.5 was discussed to reduce the rollover of 240 hours to 2 days but the Board decided to keep it as is.

Next, the *Work Week, Overtime, Breaks and Lunch Periods* policy was reviewed: Section 5.2 inserted that Employees are expected to be on time… and added Town Administrator and/or the Board of Selectmen. 5.3 inserted '40 hours worked' excluding DPW and Police Department; 5.4 removed reference to the fire department; 5.7 deleted – nursing mothers breaktime which has been dealt with in a separate policy.

Meagen will rewrite the policies and have the Board review and approve at the next meeting on Tuesday; Chair Tempesta asked how the staff will be notified of the changes; Meagen will put together acknowledgement signature sheets with copies of the new policies and provide them to the department heads to distribute to staff; it is the responsibility of the employee to read and follow the revised policies.

NEW BUSINESS

A. July Expenditure and Revenue Report

The Board reviewed the report; Webber Hill Road will be over budget by $17K due to an error in not allowing for this expense in that budget line. There are 53 pay weeks this year, so the budget is $100K under what will be needed. Recruiting is over budget as well; the BoS would like a breakdown of those expenses; IT is being reallocated from each department to an IT budget line. Computers need to be ordered for the new Town Administrator and Finance Director as soon as possible to give enough time for them to be configured and delivered. Jay will get this information together for a vote on Tuesday. Most of the rest of the budget is within expectations.

B. 2026 MS-1 and MS-1V

Bill Hutwelker reported that the M-1 has been filed with the Dept of Revenue; the MS-1 form is an official Summary Inventory of Valuation report submitted annually by local municipalities. It provides a complete inventory and total assessed valuation of all taxable and non-taxable property within a town or city as of April 1st. The state uses the data from MS-1 filings to calculate local property tax rates, equalize property values, and fairly apportion county and cooperative school district taxes. Once the projected rate is calculated, the Board will meet to see if any adjustments are needed. Bill added that there was a $15.3 million increase in valuation due to the projects coming online which will improve the tax rate. Jay reported that there is now over a billion dollars in property values. The extra money from the TIFF being paid off will also be available to go to the General Fund once the State projects the tax rate.

C. 2026-2027 Heating Oil & Propane Bids: Our 2025-2026 Suppliers were Swanzey Oil for Heating Oil and L&G Propane for Propane. The following bids were received:

Company	Oil	Propane
Davis Oil	$4.10	
Dead River	$4.49	$2.91
Discount Oil of Keene	$4.37	
L&G Propane, Inc.		$1.43
Swanzey Oil, LLC	$4.11	

Mark LaBelle made a motion to award the 2026-2027 heating season fuel bids to Swanzey Oil for oil and L&G Propane, Inc. for propane, and to authorize Jay Ward to sign contract documents. The motion was seconded by Jay Ward; all were in favor and the motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

Jay reported that he had received a request from Joe Parisi from the Swanzey Lake Protection Association for a letter of support so they can apply for a grant for an engineering study through SWRPC; while Jay is supportive of the grant request, he is reluctant to commit the Town to providing match funds at this time since the amount is unknown. Chair Tempesta suggested they wait until Joe Parisi can meet with the Board to provide more information on how much money would be requested.

Bill Hutwelker provided a copy of the letter that will be sent to customers of the West Swanzey Sewer System to explain the reasons for the upcoming rate changes; this is a follow up from the original letter. A date for a general information session is needed. There are 4 metered customers whom the Board will meet with to explain the change to the meter reading. The letter was reviewed; once suggested edits are made, it will be mailed to the customers.

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATE

Meagen asked for office space for Joint Loss Management in the West fire station to provide a central location for files, etc. at least on a temporary basis; she said she had spoken with Fire Chief Mattson who was in support of this. The Board agreed by consensus.

Jay reported that the new phone system will be installed on 9/11.

Jay provided copies of Stephon Mehu's tasks as assistant town planner, health officer, and grants manager, as well as a list of his licenses and certifications. He also provided a list of what grants Stephon is working on.

Chair Tempesta asked the others on the Board if the Town should provide a holiday party similar to last year. He's willing to host it again and will get a committee organized.

CORRESPONDENCE

None

PUBLIC INPUT

None

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 8:15pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Ells, Recording Secretary

Approved on September 8, 2026