Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Board of Selectmen
Meeting – September 23, 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, Police Chief Joe Gonsalves

MINUTES
The regular meeting minutes of September 16, 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 September 16, 2026 sessions #1, 2, and 3 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 (Week of 9/23)
B. Accounts Payable Manifest (Week of 9/16 and 9/23)
C. Special Event Permit – MRMHS Homecoming Parade
D. Raffle Permit – Northern Lights

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. Chief Gonsalves- Police Department Update
Chief Gonsalves provided an update of recent activities by the Police department; they have had two major events this summer – Cheshire Fair and the music festival – which they were hired for police details. In the past, private contractors had been hired for these events, but due to shortage of staff, the Town's police department was hired. Other community events included Beyond the Bell, the First Responder appreciation event, the half marathon, and helping the Town Clerk with dog licenses. Recently, the City of Keene determined they will be closing the gate at airport road to the water treatment plant due to unauthorized vehicle traffic after hours; there will be an opening for walkers.

Next, Chief Gonsalves provided a hiring update: there are four applicants (2 certified and 2 uncertified). He hopes to complete the hiring of one certified officer by next week, but it could take a few months to complete background checks, etc.

Chief Gonsalves went on to explain that the police station needs to replace three computers which are outdated; the cost for the computers, switches, and peripherals will be about $12,000. The department also

plans to replace one vehicle next year. The schedule is to replace one of the eight cars in the fleet each year. The Chief drives the oldest vehicle.

Chair Tempesta asked for an update regarding the school traffic since the beginning of the school year. Chief Gonzales replied that the high school was not normally an issue, but Mt. Caesar had tremendous backup of traffic. He said the School Resource Officer sometimes goes into the road to direct traffic, but he needs to be certified and have the right equipment. A few changes have been made, and the alternate plan has helped.

Due to lack of police officers, the officers are working overtime, and Chief Gonsalves is working extra hours. He said that he has called the State Police and the Sheriff's department for backup at times. The highest priority of the department is hiring more officers to relieve the department of the extra work.

Next, Chief Gonsalves reported that the telephone system is working well at the police station. The Emergency Management phones in the police station are not needed, so Jay will investigate moving them to the WS fire station and the Swanzey Center fire station for the Emergency Management offices there.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Discussion on Town Policy Regarding Animals in Town Buildings and Vehicles

The Board reviewed the draft of a proposed policy restricting pets in all town buildings and town vehicles. This policy addresses employees who have been bringing their pets to work. Visitors to the Town Hall and other buildings should not have to experience this disturbance. This does not include Trained Service Animals as defined by the ADA. This policy will be effective on 9/28/2026. Signs will be posted and employees will be informed of this new policy.

Mark LaBelle made a motion to approve the Pets policy as amended; Jay Ward seconded the motion. With no other discussion, the motion carried.

B. Review of Capital Reserve and Expendable Trust Balances

The Board reviewed the balances in the Capital Reserve Funds and Expendable Trust Funds.

C. Hydro Program Renewal Agreement

Mark LaBelle made a motion to authorize Chair Tempesta to sign the Hydro Program Renewal Agreement with Standard Power of America. Jay Ward seconded the motion; all were in favor and the motion carried.

D. Purchase of Computer for Recycling Center

A motion was made by Mark LaBelle to approve the purchase of a computer for the Recycling Center from EmerTech in the amount of $1,981.99, to be paid from the Recycling Center Capital Reserve Fund, account 15-4324-4324-1-001, which has an approximate current balance of $117,000. Jay Ward seconded the motion, and it passed 5-0.

Chair Tempesta updated the Board that Josh Whipple is continuing to work on getting quotes from local contractors for gutters for the recycling center, as discussed in the meeting on 9/16/2026.

OLD BUSINESS

The Board discussed communication from Recreation Director Ashlee Crosby regarding work that still needs to be completed for the Recreation department. Mark has spoken with DPW Director Joe DiRusso and plans are being made to address the work.

Bill Hutwelker notified the Board that the Town has made it through the first round of the Northern Border Regional Commission grant, and the Town was invited to apply for the second round. This grant is for $306K and requires a match by the Town. There is also a grant for the Drinking Water Ground Water Trust Fund which Sara Barrett is currently applying for in the same amount which, if awarded, would provide the match for the Northern Border's grant if that is awarded. With those two grants, the Town would have the funds to purchase the West Swanzey Water Company at no cost to the taxpayers. The Board of Selectman is providing a Letter of Support to submit with the application; Jay suggested an edit to the letter which the Board agreed to make.

Mark LaBelle made a motion to authorize the Chairman to sign the Northern Borders Regional Commission letter as amended. Jay Ward seconded the motion, and it passed 5-0.

Bill added that they have also requested a letter of support from Monadnock Economic Development Corporation and Southwest Regional Planning Commission which they have agreed to supply. They also asked for a Letter of Support from owners of the West Swanzey Water Company, and they have agreed and are fully supportive of the grants.

Bill asked the Board to consider engaging Sara Barrett Consulting for the second phase of the Northern Borders grant application. This would be at the same cost as the first phase, which is $2500.

Mark LaBelle made a motion to continue to engage Sara Barrett Consulting for grant writing for the second phase of the Northern Borders grant application in the amount of $2500 with funds coming from account 01-4191-4191-1-314 Planning and Community Development. Jay Ward seconded the motion; all were in favor and the motion passed 5-0.

Bill added that he needs to clarify who the entity the Letter of Support should be addressed to and would like authority to change the name if needed. It might need to be addressed to the Drinking Water Ground Water Trust Fund.

Mark LaBelle made a motion to modify the letter, if needed, to be addressed to the Drinking Water Ground Water Trust Fund. Jay Ward seconded the motion, and it passed 5-0.

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATE

Jay Ward handed out the LakeSmart Recommendations for Wilson Pond for review and discussion. The Town owns the boat launch and the parking area. DPW has routinely cleaned and mowed the area; Chair suggested the DPW add some funds to the budget to maintain the area appropriately. Chair Tempesta will read the report and then review it with DPW Director Joe Russo to get his suggestions on what can be done and what the estimated costs might be.

Jay then reviewed the telephones project and discussed a few phones that might need changing from copper to fiber; this will be delayed until a decision is needed.

Next, Jay reviewed a proposal from Fidium Fiber to replace the internet service from Spectrum to provide better service at similar prices. It would take 45 - 60 days to change over and Fidium has offered the first 3 months at no charge as an incentive. It was determined that a few more details need to be learned; Jay will bring more information back to the Board. Another item to research is a phone number for the Carpenter home that is in question since there is no phone for it – perhaps for a fire alarm. Jay will investigate this.

Jay then provided a draft of the Town Hall CIP request form, and the Board discussed possible expenses that will be needed to continue improvements to the Town Hall lower level. Jay will make the changes to the form and supply it to the CIP committee.

Jay announced that Andre Jaeger has started the job as Finance Director and that the new Town Administrator, Jeremy Bourgeois, will start October 26th.

PUBLIC INPUT
None

NON-PUBLIC SESSIONS
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 7:02pm. 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 7:44pm.

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 7:57pm. 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 8:15pm.

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 8:16pm. 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 8:35pm.

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.

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 8:36pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Ells, Recording Secretary

Approved on October 7, 2026