Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Board of Selectmen
Meeting – October 14, 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 and Alan Gross. Also present were Steve Bittel, Scott Self, Recording Secretary Susan Ells and Jack Franks from Swanzey West Apartments.

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 4:32pm. Present were James Tempesta, Mark LaBelle, W. William Hutwelker III, James Ward and Alan Gross. Also attending were Steve Bittel, Scott Self, Recording Secretary Susan Ells and Jack Franks.

Bill Hultwelker recused himself from the meeting.

A motion was made by Mark LaBelle to come out of the non-public session, seconded by Jay Ward. All were in favor and the motion passed. The non-public session ended at 5:15pm.

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; all were in favor by Roll Call and it passed 4-0.

The Chair resumed the public meeting at 5:16pm and Bill Hutwelker returned to the Board.

OTHERS PRESENT

Steve Bittel, Scott Self, Town Administrator Jeremy Bourgeois, HR Coordinator Meagan Kerris, Finance Director Andre Jaeger, Barbara Skuly, Robert Audette and Teresa Williams and John Masse from HealthTrust Insurance.

MINUTES

The regular meeting minutes of September 30, 2026; October 1, 2026 and October 7, 2026; were considered. A motion was made by Mark LaBelle to approve the minutes as presented. Jay Ward seconded the motion; all were in favor and the motion carried.

The non-public session minutes of September 15, 2026; September 30, 2026, October 1, 2026 sessions #1 and 2; and October 7, 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; all were in favor and the motion carried.

CONSENT AGENDA

A. Payroll Manifest
B. Accounts Payable Manifest
C. Intent to Cut – M/223 L/10
D. Raffle Permit – Honeybee Hollow

E. Special Event Permit – Honeybee Hollow Fall Festival

A motion was made by Mark LaBelle to approve the Consent Agenda. Jay Ward seconded the motion; all were in favor and the motion carried.

PUBLIC INPUT

Steve Bittel reviewed the Capital Improvement budget plan for the Town's proposed purchase of the West Swanzey Water Company. He discussed the option of applying for a grant to purchase the company, and then find methods to fund the improvements later, versus budgeting for the improvements at the same time as the purchase. One risk of waiting is that the grant opportunity might expire. He and the Board discussed some strategies. Chair Tempesta recommended meeting with the Water & Sewer committee to discuss it further. Scott Self said the committee has a meeting planned for Thursday, November 5th at 10am which the Selectboard will join.

Mark LaBelle made a motion to authorize Chair Tempesta to sign the letter of support from the Swanzey Board of Selectmen for the Northern Borders Regional Commission grant application to be used for the purchase of the West Swanzey Water Company and to sign the resolution authorizing William Hutwelker to apply for, accept, and expend grant funds from the Northern Border Regional Commission and to sign all NBRC application, award, investment, and related documents that bind the Town of Swanzey. Jay Ward seconded the motion; the motion carried unanimously.

APPOINTMENTS

A. HealthTrust Insurance – Review of Plan Options 5:35 pm

Teresa Williams and John Masse were invited by HR Coordinator Meagen Kerris to discuss adding a less expensive option of employee health insurance to provide a choice for the employees and to potentially save the Town some expenses. The Board agreed by consensus to add the '2550' plan to the benefit offerings and to keep the original plan as well.

B. Energy Commission – Bob Audette 5:50 pm

Barbara Skuly and Bob Audette provided an update from the Energy Commission. Barbara explained that energy audits were performed last year for Whitcomb Hall, Stratton Free Library and Carpenter Home courtesy of an Eversource grant. The proposal that was shared with the Board is to weatherize the second floor via aero sealing; to insulate the walls and foundation (not using spray foam); and to insulate the wall cavities under stage, the balcony and the attic hatch. At the time of the audit, there was an approximate 9-year payback; with fuel rates so much higher this year, the return on investment could be longer. The quote for Whitcomb Hall is $25,541 (50% will be provided by Eversource), leaving about $12,700 to be funded by the Town. The Energy Commission is looking into resources for the match.

The Energy Commission met with Sharon Greatbatch and Mike Thieme from the Whitcomb Hall committee; they seemed to be onboard.

Bill Hutwelker advised Barbara that Joe DiRusso will need to be consulted to determine if there are other projects slated for the funds dedicated to Whitcomb Hall. Barbara said she was impressed with the company that provided the quote and how thorough the quote was. They were recommended by the company providing the energy audit. An RFP will be required which Joe will handle. Once the contractor has been chosen, the Board will approve expending the funds.

Next, Barbara told Chair Tempesta that he should expect a DocuSign via email by Friday to sign for ReVision Energy's contract to purchase the Renewable Energy Certificates (RECS) from the solar array at the Wastewater Treatment plant.

There was a discussion regarding the Hydro net metering contract with Keene; Barbara wondered if there was a conflict with the Standard Power agreement. Jay Ward replied that he didn't believe there was.

Bob Audette reported that the proposed Solar ordinance is ready but that the Planning Board will probably delay putting on the warrant for another year since they have several other ordinance changes they will be putting on this year's ballot. The solar ordinance will outline where commercial solar will be allowed; currently there are no restrictions.

Bob also reported that the Energy Commission has an opportunity to install two Level 2 Electric Vehicle charging stations in Swanzey using funds from NH DES and Clean Energy NH. Steve Russell is working with them, and they are recommending the New World store on Route 10 (previously Gomarlo's) since there are so many rental units in the area which might have residents who could use the stations.

Bob told the Board that the Commission would like to brainstorm with the Board regarding applying to federal funding to help pay to renovate the Carpenter home. The would also like to consider installing solar panels on the proposed DPW building and have a plan in place so it would be ready if the building is approved by the voters.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Purchase of Tablet from EmerTech for Trustees

Mark LaBelle made a motion to authorize the purchase of a tablet from EmerTech for the Trustees of the Trust Funds in the amount of up to $1800, to be paid from the Town Hall IMS Expendable Trust. Jay Ward seconded the motion; all were in favor and the motion carried unanimously.

B. Quotes for Digital Sign for Town Hall

The Board discussed the quotes received for adding a digital sign to replace the sign in front of the Town Hall; this will be easier to change the message frequently, even having more than one message on a rotation, and it would be safer since it would not require someone to manually change the letters on the sign; this is especially a concern in bad weather. The consensus was to add it to the CIP budget.

Mark LaBelle made a motion to authorize the Chair to sign the 2026-2027 MAST grant application to extent the sidewalk from the Congregational Church to Talbot Hill Road. Jay ward seconded the motion; all were in favor and the motion carried.

C. NHDOT Sidewalk Agreement

Mark LaBelle a motion to authorize the Selectboard Chair Tempesta to sign the Municipal Sidewalk Blanket Agreement with NHDOT on behalf of the Town of Swanzey. Jay Ward seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion carried.

D. Covered Bridges Camera Project

Mark LaBelle a motion to approve the expenditure of $12,800 for the bridge camera projects, consisting of $3,800 for the Thompson Bridge cameras, $4,500 for the Carlton Bridge cameras, and $4,500 for the Slate Bridge cameras, with $2,500 to be funded from the Non-Restricted Slate Bridge account and $10,300 from

the Covered Bridges Capital Reserve. Jay Ward seconded the motion; all were in favor and the motion carried.

Mark LaBelle made a motion to close out the Slate Bridge Non-Restricted fund. Jay Ward seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

Jay provided the agreement with ViewPoint Cooperative for Chair Tempesta to sign.

Next, Jay showed the Board a flier which they could include with the tax bills; he had asked Adam Paquette to provide the flier which informs taxpayers what instances require a building permit.

Jay reviewed with the Board a Pitney Bowes Value Use agreement for the postage meter contract which Andre Jaeger will sign.

Jay asked the Board to create a Wilson Pond Non-Restricted Account which would allow donations to be made for the benefit of Wilson Pond and allows the Board to make the decision on how the funds are spent. He provided a resolution for the Board to sign.

The Whitcomb Hall rental proposal was reviewed and discussed. The Board also discussed operations in the Finance department and changes that will be implemented now that the new Finance Director has been hired.

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATE

None

CORRESPONDENCE

None

PUBLIC INPUT

None

NON-PUBLIC SESSIONS

Non-public session(s) per RSA 91-A:3 II *(b) Hiring of a Public Employee.*

A motion was made by Mark LaBelle to enter a non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3 II (b) 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 7:37pm. Present were James Tempesta, Mark LaBelle, W. William Hutwelker III, James Ward and Alan Gross. Also present was Recording Secretary Susan Ells and Town Administrator Jeremy Bourgeois.

A motion was made by Mark LaBelle to come out of the non-public session, seconded by Jay Ward. All were in favor and the motion passed. The non-public session ended at 7:51pm.

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; all were in favor by Roll Call and it passed 5-0.

Non-public session(s) per RSA 91-A:3 *(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 7:52pm. Present were James Tempesta, Mark LaBelle, W. William Hutwelker III, James Ward and Alan Gross. Also present was Recording Secretary Susan Ells and Town Administrator Jeremy Bourgeois.

A motion was made by Mark LaBelle to come out of the non-public session, seconded by Jay Ward. All were in favor and the motion passed. The non-public session ended at 8:19pm.

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; all were in favor by Roll Call 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 8:23pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Ells, Recording Secretary

Approved on October 21, 2026