Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Board of Selectmen
Meeting – October 21, 2026
Whitcomb Hall
17 Main Street, Swanzey, NH

CALL TO ORDER
The meeting was called to order by Chair James Tempesta at 5:30pm at Whitcomb Hall, Main Street, Swanzey, NH. Other members present were Selectmen Mark LaBelle, W William Hutwelker, James Ward and Alan Gross. Also present was Recording Secretary Susan Ells, Finance Director Andrea Jaeger and Town Administrator Jeremy Bourgeois.

OTHERS PRESENT
Ann Heffernon, Josh Whipple

MINUTES
The regular meeting minutes of October 14, 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 October 14, 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
B. Accounts Payable Manifest
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. Ann Heffernon – Ad Hoc Committee
Ann supplied a draft of the *Standards of Conduct* for boards and committees of the Town and asked for the Board's feedback. The purpose is to guide and inform behavior of current and future members of boards and committees. There was a discussion as to whether current members would need to sign a copy now; going forward it will become part of the application form the new candidate would sign. She will supply the document to Katie Collins and Meagan Kerris to make the changes; the form will be provided back to the Board to approve once the changes have been made.

Ann told the Board that the Ad Hoc Committee has a committed group of members including herself, Bob Audette, Jenna Carroll, Peg Richardson, Jessica Ramsey-Sancez, Dan LeClair, Lee Dunham, Josh Guion, Steve Russell, Jennie Gomarlo, Richard Lane, and Mark LaBelle. This group will work on the newsletter they plan for the Town.

The plan for the new publication will be online versions and paper editions for those who prefer; Ann provided a mock-up of what could be inserted in the tax bill. To promote this project, the committee will be tabling at

Trunk or Treat, and they will have a spot inside the high school during the election. They have created a QR Code for a survey and to sign up for the email delivery.

They applied for the grant from NH Humanities to cover the newsletter publication, plus games for Mt. Caesar's game night. They will also be pursuing advertisements from local businesses to defray the costs.

Ann provided an update on the Governance Committee. Ann met with Joe DiRusso and toured the DPW building; they are planning an open house to educate the voters of the need for a new building; she wants the voters to understand the hardships the crew must deal with in the old building. The committee will create a video and PowerPoint presentation to publicize the event. Steve Bittel told her that because there is a debt service expiring, there would likely be no additional taxes by adding this building. They are looking for someone to monitor social media and respond to inaccurate posts with the facts. Andre Jaeger offered to provide information regarding tax rates, etc.

B. Josh Whipple – Recycling Center

Josh provided an update on the plan to install gutters at the recycling center. He left voicemail for 2 vendors who did not reply. Udderly Gutters provided a quote with a discount by quoting a 5" gutter but they will install 6" instead. The total cost is $2,128.88; they require a 50% deposit and can start the job soon.

Mark LaBelle made a motion to approve up to $2,200 to Udderly Gutters for gutters at the Recycling Center with funds coming from line item 15-4324-4324-1-001 Recycling Center Capital Improvements Capital Reserve fund; Jay Ward seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Josh went on to report that he applied for grants to help defray the cost of the EnergyLogic Waste oil burner which had been approved for purchase during the September 16, 2026 meeting. The Town was approved for a grant of $3,100 from NH the Beautiful and one from DES for $2,500. This unit will be installed during the 1st or 2nd week in November.

Josh then asked if there was an update on his request for an additional office computer; the Board will get back to Josh on this as there might be a computer that can be repurposed.

Josh provided a quote for the installation of the cardboard compactor that was donated by Nanotech. The cost will be $10,941 for electrical work by Hamblet to install a 30 KVA transformer. Additionally, $669.95 will be needed for 22 gallons of hydraulic oil; Josh hopes to cover that expense with his operating budget.

Hamblet also provided a quote to install 6 new high bay LED lights in the existing transfer station and a motion detector light on the existing exterior main door. The cost for this project is $4,439.

Mark LaBelle made a motion to approve the quote from Hamblet LLC Electric electrical work at the Recycling Center in the amount of $15,800, to be paid from line item 15-4324-4324-1-001 Recycling Center Capital Improvements Capital Reserve fund. Jay Ward seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

C. Andre Jaeger – Finance Director- Budget Discussion

Andre reviewed the proposed budget with the Board and explained increases and decreases in the line items. He will research the questions the Board had and will get the information back to them.

There was a discussion about the timeline to receive the tax rate. The Town was ready in September to submit to the State, but the School District was late; this will likely delay receiving the tax rate from the State, which will delay sending the tax bills. Andre reached out to banks to get quotes for a possible Tax Anticipation Loan; he has not heard back from anyone yet.

NEW BUSINESS

Jeremy Bourgeois presented a proposal for services by Town Hall Streams for live and on demand streaming. This is to replace the services that were previously provided by FactTV who are no longer available. Jeremy will arrange a Zoom meeting with the proposed provider just prior to the next regular board meeting on 10/28.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Equipment Grant Agreement – Police Department

Mark LaBelle made a motion to authorize Joseph B. Gonsalves, Police Chief of the Swanzey Police Department, to execute the Crimestar U.S.A. RMS/JONE Equipment Grant Agreement with the New Hampshire Department of Safety on behalf of the Town of Swanzey.

Additionally, the Board hereby certifies that said vote has not been amended or repealed and remains in full force and effect as of the date of the agreement. The authority granted by said vote remains valid for thirty (30) days from the date of the vote.

The Board further agrees to approve the Crimestar USA RMS/JONE Equipment Grant Agreement for the Swanzey Police Department for the purchase of Mobile Data Terminals (tablets, printers and mounting equipment) for the Police cruisers, in the amount of $33,171.00.

The motion was seconded by Jay Ward; all were in favor and the motion carried.

FUNDING AUTHORIZATIONS

The following were suggested by the Assistant Finance Director, Theresa Lounder:

Below please find a list of Board authorizations from various Capital Reserve Funds, Expendable Trust Funds, and grant funds where all of the money approved was not needed. When less than 10% of an authorization is unspent, the project is considered completed and no further action is needed. However, the Board should formally rescind larger amounts so the funds can be freed up to be used for other purposes.

Type & Purpose of Fund	Date of Minutes	Details for Authorized Expense	Amount Authorized	Amount Expended *	Balance to Rescind	Explanation
Sewer Commission (North) CRF	1/15/2025	Route 32 pump station furnace	4,800.00	0.00	4,800.00	posted to 2025 Operating Budget
Sewer Commission (West) CRF	1/15/2025	heating fan at Wastewater Treatment Plant	1,345.00	0.00	1,345.00	posted to 2025 Operating Budget
InvestNH per Unit Grant	4/19/2023	Recycling Center Improvements	92,750.29	31,446.71	61,303.58	project came in under budget
InvestNH per Unit Grant	12/11/2024	Recycling Center propane heaters & tanks	20,000.00	17,626.12	2,373.88	project came in under budget
InvestNH per Unit Grant	8/20/2025	Town Hall phone system (after lightning strike)	7,683.49	0.00	7,683.49	Insurance reimbursed all except $1,000 (deductible); deductible posted to operating budget

* does not include expenditures posted to other accounts or operating budget

Mark LaBelle made a motion to rescind prior year's authorizations as outlined by the Assistant Finance Director in her memo dated October 21, 2026. Jay Ward seconded. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Documentation of Authorizations:

Several expenditures were posted to the system based on information provided that they were to be paid for from Capital Reserve Funds or Expendable Trust Funds. The approved Board minutes do not document this. All withdrawals from these funds must be documented in Board minutes.

On April 23, 2025, the Board authorized $1,750 for the Mountainview Cemetery tomb repair during the meeting (at approximately 1:03:40 in the recording). The meeting minutes do not reference the authorizations. The final amount expended was $1,331.95.

Mark LaBelle made a motion to authorize $1,331.95 from the Cemetery Expansion & Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund for the Mountainview Cemetery tomb repair as discussed at the April 23, 2025 meeting. Jay Ward seconded. All were in favor and the motion carried.

On April 23, 2025, the Board authorized $1,500 for the Town Hall reception window during the meeting (at approximately 1:04:14 in the recording). The meeting minutes do not reference the authorizations. The final amount expended was $231.22. Most of the anticipated cost was reduced by staff from Public Works performing the work.

Mark LaBelle made a motion to authorize $231.22 from the Town Hall Repairs, Maintenance, & Improvements Expendable Trust Fund for the new reception window as discussed at the April 23, 2025 meeting. Jay Ward seconded. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Minutes from the August 5, 2026 Board meeting include a motion to spend up to $5,000 for the installation of 128' of poly vinyl fence for the new Fire station. The source of funding is unclear. Please clarify the funding source.

Mark LaBelle made a motion to authorize up to $5,000 from the Fire Stations Capital Reserve Fund for the installation of 128' of poly vinyl fencing as discussed at the August 5, 2026 Board meeting. Jay Ward seconded. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Authorizations Needed:

The expenditures noted below either exceeded the authorized amounts or cannot be located in available Board minutes. The annual road improvement project uses funds from the expendable trust fund and the operating budget.

Mark LaBelle made a motion to authorize $575,000 from the Town Roads Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Expendable Trust Fund for the 2026 Road Improvement project. Jay Ward seconded. All were in favor and the motion carried.

The heat pumps at Stratton Library were installed in May 2026 and were to be funded from the Expendable Trust Fund. The authorization cannot be located in available board minutes.

Mark LaBelle made a motion to authorize $16,460 from the Stratton Library Expendable Trust Fund for the installation of a heat pump system. Jay Ward seconded. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Fieldstone Land Consultants prepared and submitted an expansion plan for the Public Works facility. The work was done in 2025 with the expectation that the funding would be from the expendable trust fund. The authorization cannot be located in available Board minutes. The final amount expended was $1,813.75.

Mark LaBelle made a motion to authorize $1,813.75 from the Public Works Facilities Expendable Trust Fund for the expansion plan from Fieldstone Land Consultants. Jay Ward seconded. All were in favor and the motion carried.

The Town paid for a dumpster at 110 Pine Street in 2024. Purchase of the property was authorized from the InvestNH per Unit grant received in 2023. Authorization for the dumpster expense cannot be located in available board minutes.

Mark LaBelle made a motion to authorize $2,346.06 from the InvestNH per Unit grant for the cost of a dumpster at 110 Pine Street. Jay Ward seconded. All were in favor and the motion carried.

On September 27, 2023, the Board selected DEW Construction as the construction management firm for the Fire station and authorized $21,500 from the InvestNH per Unit grant for this purpose. Per then Town Administrator Branley, new architectural plans from KCS Architects were to be included in this authorization when invoices were received. The total expended was $29,819.48, which is $8,319.48 more than the authorized amount.

Mark LaBelle made a motion to authorize $8,319.48 from the InvestNH per Unit grant for the architectural plans by KCS Architects. Jay Ward seconded. All were in favor and the motion carried.

On October 25, 2023, the Board authorized $35,600 from the InvestNH per Unit grant a conceptual design of improvements at Brown Field. Actual expenditures total $38,005.42, which is $2,405.42 more than the authorized amount.

Mark LaBelle made a motion to authorize $2,405.42 from the InvestNH per Unit grant for the Brown Field conceptual design by Stevens and Associates. Jay Ward seconded. All were in favor and the motion carried.

The Webber Hill Road Stabilization project cost more than budgeted. Most of the project costs have been funded by grants, bond funds, municipal aid, and previous authorizations from the Town Roads Rehabilitation & Reconstruction Expendable Trust Fund. The total expended for the project was $1,932,547.74. Funding for the remaining cost ($385,007.49 or $492,118.76, depending on how the Board wants to proceed relative to bonding) needs to be authorized.

After rescinding and authorizing funds from the InvestNH per Unit grant in the items above, there is $416,258.92 available to be used.

The 2022 Warrant Article (Article 5) provided $211,250 in bonding authority. The Town has received $104,068.73 in SRF bond funds. This leaves $107,181.27 in bonding authority. If the Board chooses to pursue bonds, the Town will need to complete the necessary bond application and pay for bond counsel. If the Town obtains $107,181.27 in bond funds, the amount necessary for the remainder of the project would be $385,007.49.

Mark LaBelle made a motion to authorize $492,188.76 for the remaining cost of the Webber Hill Road Stabilization project with $416,258.92 to be funded from the InvestNH per Unit grant and $75,929.84 from

the Town Road Rehabilitation & Reconstruction Expendable Trust Fund. Jay Ward seconded. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Bill Hutwelker informed the Board that these motions expend the remaining funds in the InvestNH per Unit grant.

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATE

There was a discussion regarding Heather Estrella's concern that when contractors are working on the weekends that they potentially have access to the building. However, the office doors are locked, file cabinets are locked and the contractor is bonded. Jay will ask Joe DiRusso to ensure that the contractor's staff know not to roam the building.

The Town's contract with the assessor, Bernaiche Consultants was a one-year contract and is expiring at the end of the year. The proposed new year contract is $7,000 more; the Board suggested asking for a 3-year contract. Jeremy will contact Norm and discuss the increase and the possibility of a multi-year contract.

Jay received a recommendation from Steve Bittel to purchase the new digital sign for the Town Hall using funds from the Town Hall IMS Capital reserve fund. This will be discussed further at the meeting on Friday at 10am at Town Hall.

Jay reported that Christine Smith is planning on having the new website go live on October 30th.

Chair Tempesta spoke with Sharon Greatbatch regarding the weatherization proposal for Whitcomb Hall; the committee will meet with the Board and with Barb Skuly and Bob Audette to get more information.

Chair Tempesta reviewed the recent meeting with the Recreation Department when they set the expectation to receive a weekly report and a schedule for the department. At this point, they have not received either.

Next, Chair Tempesta reported that an employee has been hired to be the caretaker for Whitcomb Hall.

There was a discussion regarding the Swanzey Historical Museum who inquired as to if the Town's insurance covers the museum's contents. The museum owns the contents but the building belongs to the Town; the Town's insurance does not cover the contents. Further discussion will be needed regarding this subject.

CORRESPONDENCE

None

PUBLIC INPUT

None

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mark LaBelle to adjourn the meeting; Alan Gross seconded the motion; it passed 5-0. Adjournment occurred at 8:18pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Ells, Recording Secretary
Approved on October 28, 2026