Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
**Board of Selectmen**
Meeting – November 10, 2026
Whitcomb Hall
17 Main Street, Swanzey, NH

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Chair James Tempesta at 4:26pm 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 Town Administrator Jeremy Bourgeois, HR Coordinator Meagen Kerris, and Finance Director Andre Jaeger.

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Police Chief Joe Gonsalves

**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 4:26pm. Present were James Tempesta, Mark LaBelle, W. William Hutwelker III, James Ward and Alan Gross. Also present was Town Administrator Jeremy Bourgeois, HR Coordinator Meagen Kerris, Finance Director Andre Jaeger and Police Chief Joe Gonsalves.

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 5:04pm.

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.

Chair Tempesta reopened the public session at 5:04pm.

The group discussed the Chief's requisition to purchase a new police cruiser.

**Mark LaBelle made a motion to authorize up to $56,000 to purchase a Chevy Tahoe cruiser from MacMulkin Chevrolet, unless a local dealership can provide comparable pricing, and to authorize up to $15,170 to outfit the cruiser from Southwest Mutual Aid, with funds to come from the Police Department Operating Budget, GL# 01-4210-4210-5-730 (PD New Equipment – Department). There was a second by Jay Ward. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.**

Fire Chief Eric Mattson, Recording Secretary Susan Ells, and Robin and Lee Dunham joined the meeting.

**MINUTES**

The regular meeting minutes of October 23, 2026 were considered. A motion was made by Mark LaBelle to approve the minutes as amended. Jay Ward seconded the motion, and it passed 5-0.

The regular meeting minutes of November 3, 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 regular meeting minutes of November 6, 2026 were considered. A motion was made by Mark LaBelle to approve the minutes as presented. Jay Ward seconded the motion; Mark LaBelle abstained and it passed 4-0.

The non-public session minutes of November 3, 2026 Sessions #1, 2, 3 and 4 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 November 6, 2026 were considered. A motion was made by Mark LaBelle to approve the minutes as presented. Jay Ward seconded the motion; Mark LaBelle abstained and it passed 4-0.

**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. Police Chief – Police Department Budget**

The Chief presented the Police Department budget which is showing a .5% increase. The group reviewed the details, such as adding more vests for the officers. The Board will review this again more thoroughly later and will let the Chief know if there are any questions.

**B. Chief Eric Mattson – Fire Department**

Chief Mattson told the Board that he met with CIP and was told he could move forward with purchasing an exhaust fan for one of the trucks (the fan is used to exhaust smoke from buildings). He had anticipated it would exceed $5,000 which would require Board approval; however he received a quote for $4855, so he is informing the Board of the transaction, but a vote is not needed.

Chief Mattson then provided a quote he received about 6 months ago for a new Chevy Tahoe to replace Squad 3 which is used by Assistant Fire Chief Mick Sanchez. Chair Tempesta asked if a smaller, less expensive vehicle could be considered. Chief Mattson will investigate this suggestion. He recommended this purchase and to hold off replacing Engine 2. Chair Tempesta asked the Chief about the engine and the tanker which need to be repaired and suggested discussing this topic further at the November 17 meeting. The Chief will provide information to Katie Collins by Friday so she can provide it to the Board so that they have time to prepare.

Next, Chief Mattson asked for permission to hire a part-time administrative assistant. He has been working with Meagen to create a job description and pay rate. This person would help with maintaining scheduling for assembly permitting, inspections, ordering small items, EMS, station, track vehicle maintenance, inspections and testing. The Board will discuss this request at the meeting on November 17.

**C. Ann Heffernon – Ad Hoc Committee – postponed to a future meeting**

**D. Lee Dunham – Old Homestead Association**

Lee and Robin Dunham were invited to discuss the Potash Bowl's ownership and how the building and property are being administered as well as plans moving forward. Lee provided a history of the building which was constructed in 1939 on Town-owned land. (It has since burned and was rebuilt in the late 1970s.) When the Town celebrated its 200th anniversary in 1933, there was no place large enough to hold the Old Homestead play (which was written by resident Denman Thompson about the Town of Swanzey and its residents), so the play was performed at the Keene Opera House. The 3-day weekend attracted over 5000 people.

The North Swanzey Community Association wanted a building to host the play in Swanzey. There was a lot of community activity to raise money to build the building. The organization was strong for many decades, but in the past years, not as many people have attended; it is hard to get actors, there are very few people left to serve on committees, and the organization is barely breaking even. The building is owned by the association but is on Town-owned land. The play is no longer produced there, due to lack of interest and actors, but the association has been holding free concerts the past few years with help from local sponsors to garner interest to keep the association active and the property utilized.

Bill Hutwelker questioned how the building could be transferred to the Town and felt they would need a decision from the Association's board to divest itself of the property. Alternatively, he said the Association could lease it from the Town for as much as would be needed to keep up the maintenance of the building (like how the Carpenter Home is leased). He said the Board would like a plan in place for use of the property before moving forward. Lee would like the Town to take over the ownership and suggested that maybe the recreation department could use it for family movies. As far as utilities, there is currently no water or restrooms, but he felt that one well could service both the Potash Bowl and the Grange Hall.

Chair Tempesta added there is a plan to remove the stumps to possibly create a parking lot. Bill said they would need to know the annual obligation and how much is owed to creditors. Lee will contact the Board when he is ready to return with more information.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Tax Anticipation Note (TAN)**

Andre Jaeger explained that the Town might need to obtain a Tax Anticipation Note to cover expenses until the tax revenue is received. The TAN is a line of credit from Mascoma Bank for short term financing. Andre would like the Town to request a line of $1,000,000 at an interest rate of 5.3%. The Town would only draw what was needed, not necessarily the whole million, so payments would be based on the amount drawn. It's possible it wouldn't be needed, but Andre would like it in place.

**Mark LaBelle made a motion to approve obtaining a Tax Anticipation Note from Mascoma Bank in the amount of $1,000,000 at a rate of 5.3%. The loan document will be signed by the Finance Director and the Treasurer. The Finance Director will notify the Town Administrator of the amount needed; the Town Administrator will then notify the Board; the Finance Director will instruct the Treasurer to create the transfer. Jay Ward seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion carried.**

**B. Setting the Tax Rate**

**Mark LaBelle made a motion to set the 2026 Tax rate at $21.11; Jay Ward seconded the motion; all were in favor and the motion carried unanimously.**

**C. FY 2027 Budget Presentation – Finance Director**

Andre provided the changes that have been made since the last presentation. The Board discussed how to reduce the overall budget. The Board will meet again on Friday to discern if there are budgets that could be reduced.

**D. Mailings Unlimited – Tax Bill Inserts**

**Mark LaBelle made a motion to approve up to $1500 to be paid from the Swanzey Uncovered account #4130-1-550 for the cost of the newsletter insert to be placed in the December 2026 tax bill. Jay Ward seconded the motion, and it passed 5-0.**

**E. Grievance Policy – postponed to a future meeting**

**F. Code of Conduct – Planning Board – postponed to a future meeting**

Review of correspondence regarding the Planning Board's decision not to sign the Selectboard-adopted Code of Conduct

**G. Swanzey Town Administrator Mentorship Memorandum of Understanding**

**Mark LaBelle made a motion to approve the Town Administrator Mentorship Memorandum of Understanding as presented and authorize all Selectboard members to sign the document. Jay Ward seconded the motion, and it passed 5-0.**

**H. Assessing Services Contract**

**Mark LaBelle made a motion to approve the contract for assessing services with Normand Bernaiche for the period of January 1, 2027, through December 31, 2030, as presented. Jay Ward seconded the motion, and it passed 5-0.**

**OLD BUSINESS**

**A. Roof Repairs – Richardson Park – delayed until a future meeting**

**ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATE**

Old Home Day was discussed regarding who will be planning the event. Jeremy will have the Recreation department meet with the Board on Friday at 9am in the Town hall.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

Bill Hutwelker provided a handout for Sara Barrett Consulting estimated fees for 2027. This will need to be added into the budget.

Next, Bill provided an email from Lori Krebs that she forwarded from July Mathews from NH DoT in which she wrote:

> *As discussed by phone last Thursday, 10/15/26, the State will not be providing any additional barriers along the trail beyond those already provided at both roadway intersections with the closed portion of the train and on either side of the washout adjacent to your property.*
>
> *I have reached out to the Town to return the barriers on the norther end of the closed portion of trail to be perpendicular to the trail to discourage others from entering the trail from that approach.*
>
> *With regards to your crossing request, your application was received and has been added to the queue. As I discussed with your husband, there is a minimum turnaround time of 60 days as we have an*

*extensive number of requests. We will move forward as quickly as possible, though there should be no concerns with completion prior to the Spring construction season.*

*Thank you both for taking the time to speak with me.*

**PUBLIC INPUT**

Alan Gross asked about Veteran's Day activities. He also clarified the Recycling center would be closed and those employees have the holiday off.

**NON-PUBLIC SESSIONS**

**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 8:56pm. Present were James Tempesta, Mark LaBelle, W. William Hutwelker III, James Ward and Alan Gross. Also present was Town Administrator Jeremy Bourgeois and 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 and the motion passed. The non-public session ended at 9:03pm.

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, 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 9:04pm. Present were James Tempesta, Mark LaBelle, W. William Hutwelker III, James Ward and Alan Gross. Also present was Town Administrator Jeremy Bourgeois and 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 9:14pm.

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 9:15pm. Present were James Tempesta, Mark LaBelle, W. William Hutwelker III, James Ward and Alan Gross. Also present was Town Administrator Jeremy Bourgeois and 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 9:20pm.

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.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

The Board then discussed the temporary Code Inspection Officer Mike Mastaler who is an independent contractor and works with other towns.

**NMENT**

A motion was made by Mark LaBelle to adjourn the meeting; Jay Ward seconded the motion, and it passed 5-0.

Adjournment occurred at 9:27pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Susan Ells, Recording Secretary

Approved on November 18, 2026