Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire

Capital Improvement Program Committee (CIPC)

Meeting Minutes – October 12, 2026

Whitcomb Hall, Main Street, Swanzey, NH

Note: Draft minutes are subject to review, correction, and approval by the Board. Review and approval of minutes generally take place at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board.

CALL TO ORDER

CIPC was called to order by Chair Steven Bittel at 10:00 am.

Members present: Chair Steven Bittel, Selectmen's Representative Mark LaBelle, Pat Ambrosio, Vice Chair Bruce Bohannon, Larry Crowder, Planning Board Representative Michael York, Mark Scalera, and Alternate Josh Guion.

Absent:

Others Present: Fire Chief Eric Mattson, Finance Director Andre Jaeger, Trustee and Chair for the Stratton Free Library David Hoitt, Selectmen Jay Ward, Bill Hutwelker, and Alan Gross. Department of Public Works (DPW) Director Joe DiRusso, and Assistant Planner Stephon Mehu.

Minutes:

LaBelle **moved** to approve the Minutes from September 21, 2026. There was a second by Crowder as amended with changes to page three made by Bohannon. All were in favor. ***Motion passed*** unanimously.

Time requested by Bill Hutwelker

Hutwelker noted the Open House at the Fire Station was well attended. He said the Town thrives because of committees like this one. The Selectmen want the committee to know how much they value this committee. Hutwelker then pointed out a comment that arose during a past committee meeting about the awarding of contracts. He said he understands that some comments in the last meeting suggested corruption among Selectmen, regarding awarding contracts to GDS Construction, and he noted they have come in as lowest bidder. When not the case, staff members have recommended either GDS to the Selectmen. Hutwelker said he has recused himself when needed.

Bohannon said the perception in town is that Grayson gets all the work in town. He said as long as bids go out to anyone who wishes to bid, the towns folks need to know about the bidding process.

Hutwelker said all employees, committee members and selectmen are all working for the same objectives. He ended with thanks, once again, for the work done by this committee. Hutwelker and DiRusso left the meeting at 10:10 am.

Proposal for Wilson Pond

Scalera suggested a $15,000 capital reserve be established for Wilson Pond. Bittel said it is more complicated than it seems. The State of NH owns the pond. He said until ownership is better defined, he is reluctant to establish a capital reserve. Ward said the Town owns the boat launch ramp. Scalera said he recommends to fund an account for any body of water in Swanzey, not just Wilson Pond. He said the parking area has been neglected for a long time. He referred to having kiosk, or addressing erosion of the ramp, these sorts of things cost money. He indicated he met with the Selectmen and spoke about key problems at the pond. He suggested $20,000 to start and capital reserve of $10k per year. Scalera noted there is a lot of vegetation in the pond. He noted funding for removal of vegetation. The State will remove invasive species but the kind of vegetation that is present at Wilson Pond which is not invasive. Ward noted the Association of Wilson Pond doesn't exist any longer. Bittel said the Town could create a Non-restricted Fund (NRF) which folks could donate to in support of the pond.

Bohannon asked about the possibility that work for Upper Wilson Pond had an impact. Ward said "no"; the problem is the pond is shallow and a lot of heat from the summer causes vegetation to thrive. Ward said there is an estimate of cost of $20,000 for one year solution and up to $50,000 for a longer term solution. Bohannon said this should go to the Board of Selectmen. Ward agreed that a NRF is a good way to start. Ward spoke about an operating budget to add funds to maintain access/parking at the pond. Ward said it is long-range problem associated with global warming and the question is how to fix it. Bittel noted the pond is not a natural pond. Bittel noted NRF are funds that are donated. He noted the Selectmen can create the fund, and anyone can donate into it. Guion said an understanding at deeper level of the issues around the pond and a road map for future care would be important. There was a discussion about consulting the Conservation Commission. Ward suggested asking the State to assess the water quality. It was agreed that the CIPC is not the best place to solve the problem.

Ward left the meeting at 10:41

Department CAPEX Reviews:

Fire Department

Fire Ponds – only Arrowcrest dry hydrants were done. Bittel pointed out there was $87,000 available. The money can carry the funding that was available for this purpose in 2026 and wasn't used. $8,200 wasn't used that was allocated for 2026. Bittel asked for a revised plan for fire ponds. Mattson said he would have it in about a month. $4,000 project got put off until next year or beyond said Mattson since the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (DOT) didn't do the project. Bittel asked for a plan in two weeks. Crowder said the time it takes to get permits for work is a concern. Dry hydrant needs were discussed. Mattson said we need water at Whittemore Farm Road. Crowder said if you start now with permits, you might get to digging next year because you are dealing with wetlands. Crowder said he would get an engineering firm to do a survey and submit it to New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (DES).

Bittel said we will leave in the $20,000 contribution for the year.

Fire Tools – SCBAs were discussed. There is a lease. For 2028 the need will be $275,000; Mattson said he hasn't gotten pricing back yet, but as far as he knows, it would be a good number. Bittel reviewed the items. No need for SCBA Fill with new station. Still need Ram Fan; Bittel asked Mattson if he had anything to add. Bittel said the Finance Director says there is about $80,000 available. Bittel noted there are two other fire stations to accommodate. He asked Mattson about renovations needed. Mattson said Station 3 problem is access to second floor. Mattson noted all the bays are full. Bittel said other stations will need funding just for upkeep.

Fire Trucks – Mattson spoke about pricing. He said three companies responded right away. $960,000 and $980,000 quotes. Third was close to 1 million. And the fourth said 1 million plus with custom cabs. Bittel asked about commercial cabs. Mattson said they are smaller and can't accommodate enough firemen. Only $100,000 is difference in price. Bittel asked about combo heavy rescue. The quotes provided are for combination heavy rescue truck/pumper. It was noted that the tanker has some rust. Mattson noted some repairs will need to be added. Engine 1 will need repairs; Bittel asked Mattson to get him a number. $25,000 total for Engine 1.

Gross said the open house at the new fires station went very well.

Stratton Free Library

Hoitt said HVAC installation was a success. The need is for computers. He said he is trying to make the system more secure. Slight increase is needed because storage and memory purchase price has gone up. The number should be $15,000 in 2026; 2027 needs $3,000. Brickwork resulted in damaged; Hoitt said no lawsuit; fixing it will cost $4,360. The folks that did the damage didn't get paid for the work. $4,500 needed. New Heating system, no $16,000 for 2026, just $20,000 for 2028. Weatherization will need to be increased. 2026 $7,000 and 2027 $15,000. Water intrusion; the cost won't be known until its started. Keep the numbers. Water heater 2028 $5,000. No heat pump, $20,000 for a new oil system instead. Bohannon said propane heat is cheaper and perhaps Hoitt should explore it. Hoitt said he would explore it.

Hoitt said Eversource grant will be based on potential savings. Grant will not be $8,000. Hoitt said maybe $3,000 will be closer to what they receive.

Bittel spoke about Stratton having no fund raising. He asked Hoitt if they are making any effort. Hoitt said no, but if they had a large project, they would probably do so.

Rail Trails

Bittel asked for numbers from Gross. Excavator need was discussed. Gross said an excavator would be faster and would do a better job of cleaning out the ditches. Bohannon said the debris from the ditches is put on the sides of the trail. It was noted $10,000 contribution each year.

Bohannon said DiRusso said they could use a rental excavator and unless there is a grant, he would not recommend buying one. Bohannon noted a spend date for a grant. Mehu said it wouldn't be awarded until 2027 and spent in 2028. Bohannon said he isn't sure DiRusso would be ready. DiRusso is focused on DPW facility. Bohannon said we need to get DiRusso involved to discuss with him. Bittel suggested Rail Trails discuss with DiRusso. Bohannon noted if DPW buys the excavator they won't let the Rail Trail folks operate it.

Potash Bowl
Bohannon said he would like to see some funds put into the property. The Town owns the property, but not the building. Bohannon noted Recreation could possibly use it. Bohannon noted the Homestead Preservation Committee could ask for an NRF.

Next meeting: Monday, October 19th at 10 am at Whitcomb Hall, Town Hall IMS, Whitcomb Hall, and Emergency Management and Summary review.

ADJOURNMENT
LaBelle **motioned** to adjourn, and Ambrosio seconded the motion without further discussion. All were in favor. **Meeting adjourned** at 11:47 am.

Respectfully Submitted,

Recording Secretary

DRAFT