Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Rail Trails Advisory Committee (RTAC)
Meeting Minutes – May 7, 2026
Whitcomb Hall, Main Street, Swanzey, NH

CALL TO ORDER:
The meeting of the Swanzey Rail Trails Advisory Committee (RTAC) was called to order at 6:07 pm by Chair Mike Kowalczyk. The meeting was held at Whitcomb Hall.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Mike Kowalczyk, Alan Gross, Rob Hart, and Cindy Kordys
ABSENT: Bruce Bohannon and Stephon Mehu, Assistant Town Planner
OTHERS PRESENT: Adam Shoukimas, Eversource

MINUTES:
The Minutes of March 5, 2026 were considered. **Motion** was made by Kowalczyk to approve the minutes of March 5, 2026. There was a second by Gross and no further discussion. All were in favor. **Motion passed**.

PUBLIC INPUT: Adam Shoukimas from Eversource spoke about Eversource's pole replacement project on their A152 Transmission Line, and a section of the line goes through Swanzey. Since the project will involve partial use of the Ashuelot Rail Trail, he wanted the RTAC to know about it. Shoukimas stated that construction would be from just north of the Eversource substation near Pine Street to the farmer's drive along Holbrook Ave. Kowalczyk asked if Shoukimas was aware of the ART washouts from the North Holbrook Ave crossing to the farmer's drive, and if Eversource was planning to fix these washouts. Shoukimas stated that he was aware of the washouts and that Eversource is planning to fix them. Eversource has to get access to the work site. Kowalczyk asked if Eversource would ensure the drainage ditches are working properly so water does not pool against the rail bed. Shoukimas stated yes. Kowalczyk asked if Eversource would secure the rail bed (e.g., rip rap) in areas that were compromised. Shoukimas stated yes. Kowalczyk asked when Eversource is done with the project and pulling out, do they fix the rail trail surface? Shoukimas stated yes. Kowalczyk asked if Eversource would lay, grade and roll 304.7 material. Shoukimas stated yes. Construction is slated to begin in July 2026.

OLD BUSINESS:
Ashuelot RT Washout Status
Remaining 5 Washouts on Ashuelot RT
Holbrook to Holbrook Washouts will be TAP Grant funded and the work to be done in 2027. Via memo to RTAC, Mehu reported that the project cost estimation provided by Hoyle Tanner is at $2,948,886. The request for a waiver from the need for an Alteration of Terrain permit was approved and he is waiting for written approval. Hoyle Tanner is currently acquiring the wetlands permit. Further updates will be provided by Mehu. The Town of Swanzey currently has funds to cover 20% of the original $1.8 million project estimate. The Town is now being asked by NHDOT to raise the additional funds to support 20% of $2.9 million.
Eversource Washout (by substation) – NH DOT is committed to completing the entire project starting in 2026 as part of the Christian Hill Bridge Project. Via memo to RTAC, Mehu reported that the project continues on as scheduled. Further updates will be provided by Mehu.

Funding

Ashuelot Rail Trail Westport RTP Grant 2027 – Via memo to RTAC, Mehu reported that he attended a workshop for the next round of RTP funding. Changes to the application process have been introduced for the next round and all are manageable. A majority of the changes do not apply to a municipality, but the ones that do are fairly straightforward and mostly clerical/documentation changes. Mehu will look into including Americorps/SCA labor in estimate to give NH SCA volunteers a project in 2027. It would alleviate labor/burden on DPW. Further updates will be provided by Mehu.

MAST Grant—Matthews Road Crossings – Via memo to RTAC, Mehu reported that Matthews Road units are all set to be installed once the units are available which should be this month. The Sawyers Crossing design will be submitted next week, as design is almost complete and needs to be reviewed by District 4 and approved by State DOT. No ramp will be included, just landing. Mehu will provide updates next month, as review period is approximately 30 days.

Monthly Cleanup Events/Maintenance Strategy

Mowing and Leaf Blowing on both Ashuelot RT and Cheshire RT

The ART will be mowed twice by Bohannon and Kowalczyk will mow the CRT once. Kowalczyk will ask DPW if they will do leaf blowing in late November 2026 and provide a cost estimate. Alternative is to contract it out. Renting an excavator for canopy mowing and ditch clearing was discussed. This work is being done in preparation for the 2027 project which is to lay fill and hardpack material. Last year, the rental was done through Milton Rentals and they provided great service. **Action Item** Kowalczyk will obtain quote from Milton Rentals for a 2 week excavator rental from August 17 – September 4, 2026

Promotional and Outreach

Business Contacts – Outreach – Kordys reported that she emailed rail trail activity updates to Ashuelot River Campground, Bridges Inn and Norm's Bike Shop.

Other

AI Meeting Notes: Kordys is researching which app works best with a live meeting and will report at the next meeting.

Swanzey Old Home Day – schedule for Saturday July 18th. Gross will register RTAC for the parade and a booth near Town Hall.

RTAC Meeting 1st Thursday of every month starting at 6:00 pm, Whitcomb Hall –
Next Meeting Date: June 11, 2026

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Kordys to adjourn the meeting. There was a second by Gross and no further discussion. All were in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Kordys

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