6.23.26

Swanzey Governance Committee Meeting

In attendance;

Ann Heffernon, Michael York, Jessica Ramirez-Sanchez, Mark LaBelle, Josh Guion, Mark Scalera, Richard , Lee Dunham

Call to order 5:15

The chair distributed copies of a new mandate approved by the Select Board, explaining that the committee's direction had shifted to focus primarily on reviewing and recommending updates to specific town ordinances. The committee will not address Planning Board or Zoning Board matters unless specifically tasked, as those boards are autonomous. Members were directed to a list of ordinances on the town website and encouraged to decide the order in which to review them. The process involves researching ordinances, discussing potential changes, seeking public input as needed, and presenting recommendations to the Select Board, who would then hold public hearings before any changes go to a town vote.

There was discussion about the scope and timeline of the work, with members noting that some ordinances may require extensive review and public engagement, while others could be addressed quickly. The importance of understanding relevant state laws (RSAs) was emphasized. The committee agreed that public input is crucial, especially for significant changes, and discussed ways to better publicize meetings and solicit feedback, including using social media and broader community outreach.

The committee also discussed the formation of a subcommittee to assist with public information dissemination for specific projects, such as helping other committees explain complex issues to the public. Members reflected on the success of previous informational events and agreed that facilitating community understanding is a key part of their role.

A significant portion of the meeting was devoted to planning for an upcoming New Hampshire Humanities Grant event, including selecting a date, (Saturday, August 29th) discussing possible venues, and considering how to attract participation from parents and young families. The logistics of food, timing, and event structure were debated, with members agreeing to gather more information from other towns that have hosted similar events.

The committee voted to approve the new mandate and discussed the process for forming subcommittees as needed. They agreed to set regular meetings for the fourth Monday of each month at 5:30 PM, starting in July, and discussed communication preferences for meeting reminders and information sharing. The meeting concluded with a reminder that the next meeting date would be posted on the town calendar

Action Items-

1.) Review the town's ordinance list with Adam to confirm which ordinances the committee can review and ensure none of them fall under the jurisdiction of the Planning Board or Zoning Board.

2.) Send the committee the link to the town's list of ordinances on the website so members can review them.

3.) Send the committee the full packet of information about the New Hampshire Humanities Grant event, including the grant details, facilitator and artist information, and the 8/29 10:00 a.m. date.

4.) Visit and evaluate potential venues for the New Hampshire Humanities Grant community conversation (such as Richardson Park, the field house, and Cutler School) to decide where to hold the event. (Visited Richardson Park 6/26, called Pilgrim Pines 6/25, Cutler School is a no).

5.) Talk to Marion about involving teens in the New Hampshire Humanities Grant event and how they might participate.2

6.) Call Scott to inform him that he has been named an alternate on the committee. (Ann emailed Scott and Katie Collins on this 6.24.26)

7.) Update the town calendar to reflect the new governance committee meeting schedule, starting with the first meeting on the fourth Monday of the month in July. (Done 6.24.26)