Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire

Water and Sewer Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes – November 12, 2026
Whitcomb Hall, 17 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
The meeting was called to order by Chair Scott Self at 10:00 am at Whitcomb Hall.

Members present: Committee members Chair Scott Self, Steven Bittel, Ken Greatbatch, Sylvester Karasinski, Larry Crowder, Cathy Bergstrom, Pat Ambrosio and Selectmen Jim Tempesta and Bill Hutwelker.

Absent: Stacey Goodale, Director of Department of Public Works (DPW) Joe DiRusso.

Others Present: Town Administrator Jeremy Bourgeois and Finance Director Andre Jaeger.

MINUTES:
Bittel **moved** to approve the minutes from October 8, 2026. Second made by Crowder. Pg 2 at discussion on Northen Borders Grant, the correct number is $306,500. Last paragraph Governance committee will be holding forums. There was no further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***

DISCUSSION
Drinking Water and Ground Water Trust Fund
Discussion was held regarding preference for an expenditure of $8,000,000 for purchase and all improvements or $306,500 for purchase only. It was noted that the $8,000,000 would have included every need, including a water tower and maintenance, but that money might not be available next year. Self said rates will be paid by 200 rate payers. He asked for input from the members to make recommendation to the Selectboard as to whether to move ahead with the $8 million request for the full need or to instead take a phased or staged approach. Crowder said if we did not do grades for the first year, we could run it as it is. Hutwelker said we need to tell the state if we not going to need the $8,000,000. He noted the engineers indicated the project could be developed in stages. Hutwelker continued, saying, if we were to accept the $8 million, payment wouldn't start until 2040. Bittel said the $8 million is a good deal, but the Town will still have debt service to pay. Bittel said the question is will it pass by the voters. The staged approach has a modest increase to rate payers while the $8,000,000 decision will create a substantial increase for rate payers. Acquisition and a partial buildout could be included in a phased approach. Unknown question is a mini-storage tank which would enable doing some projects. Bittel spoke about the cost of fees going to engineers. He said there is no easy answer. The idea of splitting into two Warrant Articles has been thought about.

Self said the system can run without updating. He noted the Town can ask developers to assist in infrastructure creation. There was more talk about inground storage versus a large storage tank above ground. Self said he cannot justify raising rates very substantially. Crowder said he agrees with Self about rates for the rate payers and to do it in a staged approach instead. Tempesta asked how many

years will we lose for bringing up the system into the future. He said we will sit for 3-4 years. Bittel said improvements to the system, without the water tank, are planned early. Tempesta said the most positive thing is the storage capacity. Self said 300,000 to 400,000 gallons is increase in storage needed. Bittel said if we put in reserves of $75,000 to $100,000 each year, we could cover the cost of improvements over time without increasing rates to the rate payers. He added you can overdevelop these systems too. Ambrosio questioned the need for water for improvements on State Route 10. He noted the wetlands behind some of the businesses already in place. He said there wouldn't be any large developments going on those sites. There was discussion about the flow assessment and the need for a new one. It was also noted that the correct calculations of gallons per day per person is important.

Self asked for input for staged approach. Karasinski said some storage capacity is needed. Tempesta said he hates to give up on the complete approach for the future of Swanzey, but he sees it both ways. Bittel said he would vote for the staged approach. Bergstrom agreed. Ambrosio said he feels major development potential is overstated. He is for the staged approach. Crowder agreed with Ambrosio. Greatbatch said he is in favor of buying the water company and upgrading as needed so, yes, the staged approach. Consensus for staged approach at this point.

Hutwelker asked about cost of just doing the storge tank. Bittel said you are asking people to build a tank that most people wouldn't have any use for. He said another innovated answer might give us a better deal, with more storage at a lesser cost. Bittel referred to Safford Drive and how many folks never said a lot of the land wasn't useable. The development potential may not be quite what we think it is. Hutwelker said there are present needs that cannot be hooked up because of lack of storage and adequate pressure.

Hutwelker asked if the committee would vote against a non-staged approach. Krasinski said any developer developing the mill would need fire suppression otherwise his insurance would be too high. Self said there is a space for cisterns to provide water storage to develop the mill. Hutwelker noted the tax revenue would be generated by development of the mill. Bittel spoke about financing sources including using Tax Increment Financing (TIF). Tempesta said West Swanzey needs water and we have to look to the future. Tempesta said there are properties that will change over time and may be much larger.

Bittel noted financing for the sewer is an open item right now.

> **Motion** to go with the staged approach for purchase and upgrading of West Swanzey Water Company system by Bittel with a second by Bergstrom. Discussion: none. The Chair polled the members for their votes. Bittel, yes, Greatbatch abstained, Crowder, Bergstrom, Ambrosio, Karasinski, and Self said yes. ***Motion approved*** and that will be the recommendation to the Selectmen.

Self introduced Finance Director Jaeger and Town Administrator Bourgeois to the members.

Sewer Discussion

Self said the committee is waiting for the engineering report to come back. Discussion was held about different routes that could be utilized. Eaton Road is five miles to the treatment plant in Swanzey. With that route 2.5 miles would be forced main and 2.5 miles gravity main. The gravity main could pick up

users including the school. Some of State Route 32 and some of Sawyers Crossing Road might also be able to use the system. Pump station would be needed by the school. He referred to the number of users that could be picked up. Self said it is 4 miles to State Route 10 and it's a straighter shot.

Self spoke about the Swanzey Newsletter and his draft document for it. He passed it out to the committee members. He said Bittel suggested adding more figures and Self said he didn't want to add estimated figures, however $26,000,000 can be added since it was the estimate from the engineers. Crowder said he would like to be able to show how the numbers are derived. Karasinski suggested pointing out the plant doesn't meet the standards required by the Department of Environmental Services (DES) and not use numbers. Make it general at first and more concise as time passes when you have better numbers. Self noted the Governance Committee will have contact information for the public to ask questions. Self will submit his draft to the Governance Committee.

Bittel suggested Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) can provide some research into what land is developable.

NEXT MEETING: Thursday December 10th at 10 am at Whitcomb Hall

ADJOURNMENT
Bittel **moved** to adjourn, and Crowder seconded the motion without further discussion. All were in favor. Meeting adjourned at 11:08 am.

Respectfully Submitted,

Recording Secretary

DRAFT