Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire

**Water and Sewer Advisory Committee**

Meeting Minutes – May 7, 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 10:03 am at Whitcomb Hall.

**Members present:** Also present were Committee members Steven Bittel, Scott Self, Larry Crowder, Stacey Goodale, Cathy Bergstrom, Pat Ambrosio. Also present was Selectman Bill Hutwelker and Selectman Jim Tempesta.

**Absent:** Ken Greatbatch, Sylvester Karasinski

**Others present:** Recording Secretary Beverly Bernard, Department of Public Works Director Joe DiRusso, and Town Administrator Lori Rautiola.

**MINUTES**

Crowder **moved** to approve the minutes from April 2, 2026. Second made by Tempesta with no further discussion. All were in favor, ***motion passed.***
Self **moved** to approve the Minutes from April 23, 2026 with change of Enterprise Zone to Enterprise Fund. Second made by Bergstrom with no further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***

**UPDATE ON APRIL 29 SELECTMEN'S VOTE ON THE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS**
Self reported that the Selectmen have approved the recommendation to contract with City of Keene for sewer service.

**WEST SWANZEY SEWER RATES (CURRENT AND FUTURE)**
The Chair asked Bittel to report on his financials. Bittel passed out copies of the financials. He spoke about operating results from North and West sewer services. Both are running at a deficit. West at $35,355 and North deficit at about $4,000. Then he spoke about cash available. This is an Enterprise Fund. Investment with about $700,000 assets; Capital Reserves add another $800,000. Hutwelker asked about the balances. Bittel noted revenues that the General Fund receives from sewer use would be the number. At best we are at a break-even status for operational costs. Self noted using some of the $700,000 for engineering costs.

Bittel spoke about Capital Reserves; West is at $300,000 now, and we know about capital projects which need to be considered. He noted Spring St. pump, new meters, used grinder, and other types of deductions need to be accounted for.

Bittel did a Performa plan of finance. $19,500,000 is revised cost estimate. 70% grant funding was considered. Bonding would be about $5,000,000 at 4%. An increase in rates would be needed to cover increased costs, which would result in a 95% increase in rates from today (impact 2028-2029).

Rate Increase Considerations – Bittel proposed $100,000 added to capital reserve for 2026.

Sample Area average Monthly Sewer Bills – Current $48.87, Interim $74.25, and Final $97.34.

Self said there would be a 50% increase across the board, whether single family or multi-family. He spoke about the cost for North fees to Keene at $0.0093 cents per gallon which is cheaper than costs associated with West. Self noted there has never been a rate increase.

Billing formula test was discussed next. Bittel spoke about using equivalent units (EU). He spoke about plus or minus 23,449.30 gallons per quarter per house. He noted multi-family metered facilities are underpaying as compared to unmetered users. He said as more multi-family projects are metered, it increase the EU's become more skewed. Meter readings, and total processing number from the plant are known numbers. Meters readings represent 35% of flow and the rest 65%. The metered users are paying about 10% of costs. This needs to be corrected. Proposed taking metered gallons and working out the cost. Use EUs for the remainder costs (unmetered). He said this will enable more accurate billing. He noted the system has been on auto-pilot for a long while and in the future needs to be reviewed yearly.

There was a discussion about metering. DiRusso said there are 11 multi-family units that are not metered and they could be metered. Self agreed that apartment houses with meters are being charged less. The apartments without meters are paying a lot more. Self said this is the first time that the meter data was considered. $0.0094 cents per gallon is one figure Self spoke about. He noted $85 per quarter per household user fee, properly evaluated, should be closer to a $150 per month rate. Self spoke about several different multi-family facilities in town. Bittel noted there is one meter per building.

Bittel said using meters increases accuracy. Discussion was held about having two rates now, one metered rate and one un-metered rate, which doesn't accurately reflect who pays for costs.

Self said across the board rate increase of 50% could be recommended. Bittel said using meters makes things more accurate based on use versus costs.

Bittel said the rates should be set every year. He suggested a first correction to the billing now and review around December 1st for a rate increase. Self noted two costs being considered; one associated with hooking up with City of Keene sewer system, the other is to make the rates fairer across the board.

Self suggested using the cost of operating the system and divided by 9,000 gallons per user per month and using .0094 factor to bill the apartments houses, which would come to about $75 per individual user fee. Self noted there would be a rate adjustment and a rate increase. Bittel said with meters you can use the actual used gallons. He noted the amount due from those un-metered will go down as measured by use, but they will not necessarily see a reduction in rate of payment.

There was a brief discussion about the possibility of mandating meters.

> **Motion** was made by Self make a recommendation to the Selectmen to change the sewer use billing to use actual cost per gallon and develop a list of apartment building to put on meters. Motion was seconded by Hutwelker. There was no further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***

Gomarlos, campground, Princeton, among apartments are presently metered. Bittel noted down the road the Town should manage assessing the efficiency of the system for future rates. He also said the fix should be easy since you are eliminating inequality.

There was a discussion about relating the need to make rate changes to the users. DiRusso suggested sending out informational letters ahead of time about changes coming. Bergstrom suggested there be a contact name for users to come to with questions once they get a letter about upcoming changes. Self said he would work on some verbiage for rate increases to give to DiRusso for fleshing out a letter to those impacted by the rate changes.

**NEXT STEP FOR ENGINEERING SERVICES**
Self spoke about getting out a Request for Proposal (RFP) for appropriate engineering services with sewer system expertise. Crowder and DiRusso both spoke about some possibilities. DiRusso said there will be a need to finalize the design to connect up to City of Keene sewer system; a lot of work is required.

> **Motion** was made by Bittel to recommend to the Selectmen to issue an RFP for engineering design work for connection to City of Keene sewer system. Second by Self. There was a brief discussion about whether it should be an RFP or Request for Quote (RFQ). Decision was made that an RFP was the correct choice. All were in favor. ***Motion passed***

A brief discussion followed about Selectmen voting on a motion that they will ultimately decide on.

**Motion** was made by Self to rescind the prior motion to increase rate by metered users. Second by Bittel. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***

> **Motion** was made by Self make a recommendation to the Selectmen to change the sewer use billing to actual cost per gallon and develop a list of apartment building to put on meters. Motion was seconded by DiRusso. There was no further discussion. All were in favor, with Hutwelker and Tempesta abstaining. ***Motion passed.***

DiRusso left the meeting at 11:38 am. Ambrosio left the meeting at 11:40 am.

**MEETINGS WITH CITY OF KEENE AND NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORATION (NHDOT)**
DiRusso said the NH DOT is cooperative.

**OTHER BUSINESS**
There was no further business to discuss.

**NEXT MEETING**: May 21, 2026, 10 am.

**ADJOURNMENT**
Bittel **moved** to adjourn, and Crowder seconded the motion without further discussion. All were in favor. Meeting adjourned at 11:45 am.

Respectfully Submitted,



Beverly Bernard, Recording Secretary

DRAFT