Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire

Water and Sewer Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes – October 8, 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, Stacey Goodale, Selectman Jim Tempesta, Director of Department of Public Works (DPW) Joe DiRusso, and Pat Ambrosio.

Absent: Cathy Bergstrom, Selectman Bill Hutwelker, Assistant Planner Stephon Mehu.

Others Present:

MINUTES:
Bittel **moved** to approve the minutes from September 24, 2026. Second made by Tempesta. There was no further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***

DISCUSSION
Billing Procedures
Bittel provided a draft of Billing Procedures which were reviewed for changes. Several changes were made to the draft document. Bittel noted the changes and will rewrite the document.

Sewer Ordinance Changes
Bittel spoke about the size of the Sewer Ordinance. He said it covers a lot of territory. DiRusso said the connection piece needs to be addressed. DiRusso said the final document from the Billing Procedures document can be inserted into the Sewer Ordinance at the appropriate time. There was discussion about connections and the price for making connections for both water and sewer. DiRusso said he would insert the final rate document into Article 9 with the understanding that there will be further changes in the future. Bittel said he will make changes to the document and get the document to DiRusso. DiRusso then will make other changes as necessary.

WARRANT ARTICLES
Wording and Financing
Self said we should focus on engineering for the **sewer project**. He asked Bittel to write up verbiage for the cost of engineering for the project. Bittel said the design engineering is covered by a Grant. DiRusso said the Town pays for the cost up front and then gets reimbursed from New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (DES). The second Article for the Warrant would be the actual cost of the project. There is a DES loan for the project with 20% forgiveness to be considered. It was decided by consensus that there will be two Articles for the Warrant: one to accept funding for preliminary engineering and the second for loan for DES to fund the design phase.

Article for the **Water Company** was discussed. Self pointed out there is an existing request approved for $8.0 million; he said he was unsure who had made that request for funding. Self said the $8.0 million would cover purchase, storage and updating of system. Self noted that the Northen Borders grant of about $600,000 would assist in just the purchase of the Water Company. Tempesta said we should know about the grant on November 15th. Self said he thought the Article would only be for acceptance for the purchase price being covered by the Northern Borders Grant. He said he thought the Town was going to take a phased approach, rather than an all-in-one approach. Self suggested to stick to the plan for the Northen Borders grant and to create the Article when we learn if the grant has been awarded to the Town. It was agreed by consensus there will be one Warrant Article for water.

There was a discussion about accepting grants for engineering work for the sewer connections by the Board of Selectmen (with a public hearing) instead of using a Warrant Article. Self said we need to research that possibility. DiRusso said he would research it.

WATER COMPANY OPERATIONS
Costs, billing, meters, hookups, supplies on hand, ordinance, operator (temporary and permanent)
Tempesta said he spoke to the current operator who suggested he would be willing to stay on for at least 3 months and perhaps as long as one year to assist in the transition to the Town for operations.

Self pointed out the Town could operate the water system just as is with a higher rate and with a reserve. Billing would need to be adjusted to cover the required reserve. Self noted a storage tank would be desirable. He added that a large investment in materials and supplies would not be needed. DiRusso said we have to have a plan to figure out who would operate the system permanently. DiRusso suggested an operator for both North Swanzey and the acquired water system. Self said we have a year to work that out.

STATUS
Current Status of Water Company and Sewer Project
Self reiterated the focus will be on one Article for the Water Company acquisition.

HOW TO PROMOTE BOTH PROJECTS
Self noted support from the Economic Development Committee (EDC) and from the Selectmen. The need is to promote the projects to the public. Self noted the EDC will hold forums in different areas of the town with information about the project, including how the funding works. Self said information needs to be conveyed about the need for the sewer project, such as EPA requirements getting difficult to achieve. Bittel suggested the sewer project is a regional project, which includes the City of Keene in the project, and it should be noted that way. Self said the City of Keene is obligated to take so many gallons of sewage from the Town of Swanzey, and the Town of Swanzey is paying the City of Keene for that service. There was a brief discussion about future needs for handling sewer sludge. The City of Keene will need to address that, which means a benefit to the Town of Swanzey.

In terms of promoting acquisition of the water company, Self suggested members come up with ideas.

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, November 5th; 10 am at Whitcomb Hall

ADJOURNMENT
Ambrosio **moved** to adjourn, and Bittel seconded the motion without further discussion. All were in favor. Meeting adjourned at 11:09 am.

Respectfully Submitted,

Recording Secretary

DRAFT