Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
**Board of Selectmen**
Meeting – June 3, 2026
Whitcomb Hall
17 Main Street, Swanzey, NH

**CALL TO ORDER**
The meeting was called to order by Mark LaBelle at 5:31pm at Whitcomb Hall, Main Street, Swanzey, NH. Other members present were Selectmen Mark LaBelle, W William Hutwelker, James Tempesta and Alan Gross. Also present were Town Administrator Lori Rautiola and Recording Secretary Susan Ells.

**OTHERS PRESENT**
Kai Kraemer with FACT TV, Cathy Bergstrom, Mark Scalera, DPW Director Joe DiRusso, Gerry Sanville

**MINUTES**
**The regular meeting minutes of May 20, 28, and 29 and June 2, 2026 were considered. A motion was made by Jay Ward to approve the minutes as presented. Alan Gross seconded the motion, and it passed 5-0.**

**The non-public session minutes of May 28 session 1 and session 2 and June 2 were considered. A motion was made by Jay Ward to approve the minutes as presented. Alan Gross seconded the motion, and it passed 5-0.**

**CONSENT AGENDA**
A. Payroll Manifest
B. Accounts Payable Manifest
C. Open Container Permit- Whitcomb Hall – September 13,2026, September 26,2026, October 10,2026
D. Special Event Permit – Swanzey Lake Gate to Gate 5k – June 13, 2026
E. Special Event Permit – Jimmy's Hometown Pizza – June 27, 2026
F. Special Event Permit – Old Home Day – July 18,2026
G. TY 2026 Tax Exempt Property List
H. Original Warrant Yield Tax Levy – M250 L15, M/261 L/31
I. Intent to Excavate – M/240 L48
J. Intent to Cut – M/257 L/3&4&5, M/258 L/1

**A motion was made by Jay Ward to approve the Consent Agenda. Alan Gross seconded the motion, and it passed 5-0.**

**PUBLIC INPUT**
None

**APPOINTMENTS**
**A. Joe DiRusso, DPW Director – Update on Town Roads**
Joe provided an update on the road projects the DPW is working on:
- West Street has been completed and came in well under the Capital Expenditure plan budget primarily due to engineering not being necessary.
- Sugar Hill is almost complete and will also come in under budget; DPW is holding off on adding the topcoat until later in the season.

- All State Paving offered to hold their prices from last year which saved the Town about $200K; with this and the surplus in CIP funds, Joe recommends that the Town move forward on the Marcy Hill project this year instead of next year.
- Partridgeberry Lane prep work has been done. There are 2 culverts which are almost 20 feet deep which will cause the road to settle. The DPW will shim it to reestablish the crown of the road but will hold off on topcoat until next year when the road has settled after a freeze/thaw cycle. That cost will come out of the operating budget.
- Troy Hill Road was planned for next year, but DPW will move the project to this year with some of the savings from the other projects.

Jay asked Joe if he felt the Town should hold off on some of the work in case the money is needed for other reasons; Joe replied that his concern is that the bargain they received for this year would not likely follow next year, based on fuel prices.

Susan Ells asked Joe if the sidewalk lane of West Street would be colored to delineate the sidewalk as he originally described; Joe replied that he since learned he was not able to color the pavement; he can provide the fog line and a pedestrian sign. He appreciates the property owners for giving formal easements to discharge water on the land to prevent the flooding that has been a problem in that area for years.

**Jay Ward made a motion to accept Joe DiRusso's recommendation to move the CIP funds to the Marcy Hill project. Alan Gross seconded the motion; all were in favor and the motion passed.**

Next, Joe let the Board know that Eversource contacted him regarding incentives for LED lighting for municipal buildings. They will be providing a 50% increase on the bonus of light fixtures which is $150 per light fixture. There is no charge for an audit, so he plans to have an audit performed for the Town Hall, Whitcomb Hall and possibly Stratton Library.

Bill asked Joe for an update on the cameras for Thompson Bridge. The boxes are being installed, and the cameras should be installed within 2-3 weeks.

Jimmy let the Board know that Joe is getting more signs for Parking at the Town Hall to try to address the problem of cars from the school being parked in the Town Hall lot. Joe will create a parking map to show the school an option to increase their parking, which the DPW could help with.

Joe announced that the Fire department will be finished being paved on Monday afternoon after DPW paves Cedar Street. On Tuesday morning, there will be a walk through to review the building. It is very close to being opened. He has asked Cody for the full cost of the generator to provide to Lori.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Discussion on Organization of an EMS Research Committee**

**Jay Ward made a motion that the Board of Selectmen establish an EMS Services Subcommittee consisting of X (x) members, including at least one member from the Fire Department to research and evaluate options for the future delivery of emergency medical services in the Town of Swanzey and report its findings and recommendations to the Board of Selectmen. Alan Gross seconded the motion. Discussion ensued regarding the timeframe needed for this and how many members should be on the committee; the committee determined that the committee would get their recommendation to the Selectmen by July 2027; all were in favor and it passed 5-0.**

**B. Update on Status of Aldrich Road**

Lori announced that she received notification from the Fire Chief confirming that the request to change Aldrich Road's name to Coolidge (can be Lane, Avenue or Street) has been approved by the State E911 service; abutters need to be notified and there needs to be a public hearing which will be scheduled for July 1.

**C. Assessing – Veteran's & Tax Credit/Exemption**

a. M/240 L/40
b. M/247 L/124

**Jay Ward made a motion to approve the slate of Elderly and Disabled Tax Deferral Applications. Jim Tempesta seconded the motion, and it passed 5-0.**

**D. Assessing – Tax Abatements**

a. M/243 L/46
b. M/246 L/4
c. M/257 L/11

**Jay Ward made a motion to accept the slate of Abatement recommendation from the Town's contracted assessor, Bernaiche Consultants. Alan Gross seconded the motion, and it passed 5-0.**

**OLD BUSINESS**

Jim Tempesta asked about naming the park near Thompson Bridge in honor of Ken Colby; the Board had already decided to do this but needed to make a final decision of the name and need to find $4K for the sign and granite posts. This will be delayed until the new hire is made.

Jimmy pointed out that Chris Levy has the new permitting software running and will train those who will use it. The Police will be able to log into the system when there is an issue of a code violation that has been recorded; this should also help to get an administrative warrant, and to have the details well documented when taking property owners to court. Lori said final internal manual processes are being completed to get the information into the assessing system.

Jimmy also asked Lori about the timekeeping system that has been a problem for the Town for the year it's been in place. The HR coordinator has been working on it but Lori suggests that the new finance director can decide on next steps.

Bill asked about the Finance Director's Job Description; Lori had already sent them by email but will bring copies to the interviews on Monday. Bill handed out suggested questions from Steve Bittel. Bill thanked Lori for sending the resumes today; Jay explained that the reason they were not sent out until today was that he misunderstood and told Meagen that Lori was sending them when Lori's intent was for Meagen to send them.

**ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATE**

Lori updated the Board with the status of the Finance Director hiring; they've interviewed 5 candidates this week and are inviting 2 to return to interview with the Board, Steve Bittel, HR Coordinator and Lori on Monday.

She also provided a draft of the job posting for the Town Administrator opening and requested feedback. The posting will be placed with NHMA and Southwest Regional Planning Commission.

She added that she has sent an email to the USDA regarding the congressional spending; she should hear back within a month with the confirmation that $200K funds can be obligated for the fire station equipment and was told that reimbursement requests should be able to be submitted by the middle of July.

Bill mentioned that last week the Board asked him to coordinate and act as the point person in recruiting for a Town Administrator; there are 2 candidates from 2025 which he would like to review, and the Board authorized him to reach out to them. He approached the HR Coordinator for the Job Description for the Town Administrator as well as for the Director of Public works since he believes that it has not been updated in years and it would be a good time to review it. Bill stated, originally, she agreed, but as of today, she had refused to provide the information to him, so he is asking for a motion from the Board to require the HR Coordinator to give him the information by noon on Thursday so he can distribute the resumes to the Board. Lori asked whether she had been informed by the Board and stated there seemed to be a communication error, as Lori or Meagen were not aware of the Board's decision to appoint Bill as the point of contact. There was a brief discussion on the process and communication between the Board and staff.

**Jay Ward made a motion to instruct the HR Coordinator to provide the job description for the Town Administrator, for the DPW Director (or an explanation if there is no job description) and the applications and resumes of the 2 finalists from the Town Administrator search in 2025. Bill Hutwelker seconded the motion; Alan Gross voted against it and the motion passed 4-1.**

There was further discussion regarding what duties will be taken over temporarily until there is a new Town Administrator hired. The Board will be working with Lori and dividing the duties so that the department heads will know who their point person is when Lori leaves and before there is a new Town Administrator. This will also allow the Board to learn what is needed to run the Town in the interim and help train the new person.

- Jim Tempesta will work with the Police and Dept of Public Works
- Alan Gross will oversee the grant with Mike Kowalczyk with the Rail Trail Committee
- Jay Ward (with Bill's help) will oversee Town Hall
- Bill Hutwelker will be point for Recruiting the new Town Administrator
- Mark LaBelle will work with the Fire Department, Recycling Center, and Recreation Center

Jimmy asked for a list of projects that can be completed by the time she is gone; Lori doesn't expect any will be completed but she will be working with Jay to inform him over the next month.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

None

**PUBLIC INPUT**

Gerry Sanville normally watches the meeting via Zoom but decided to come to the meeting today. He was interested in learning about the individual who proposed to give his property to the Town to avoid paying taxes. He was hoping the land would be used to create rail trails. Jay clarified that the property owner wants to leave the property in his will to the Town for recreational use; the landowner also offered to lease the house to the Town instead of tearing it down. He was turned down because the Town doesn't want to be a landlord but would like the property deeded to the Town for recreational uses which would connect to the Mt. Caesar trails. Jay said they are working on this with the Conservation Commission. Mr. Sanville was hoping the neighbors would be informed if anything changes.

Mark Scalera reported to the Board that the Wilson Pond Aquatic education is off to a good year and invited

the Board to take a ride on the boat for a half hour to get the experience. He added that over the years he has brought up the NH Lake Smart program to the Board. They have a session coming up on Friday, June 12th and he is asking for support from the Board to add the Town of Swanzey to the program. He's proposing 3 properties: the boat launch, the access on Roads Edge Road, and the access on Wilson Pond Road. This will provide an assessment of the properties to look for run off from roofs, driveways, septic systems, and general run-off from the property itself into the pond. Of 73 properties, mostly on the Pond, 46 people have been approached and 76% agreed to get their property assessed. Those high percentages get them Lake Smart Community Status; 17% of them are currently certified. The Town could also get certification which would help with grants for watershed management program.

**Jay Ward made a motion to invite Lake Smart Properties to assess the boat launch, the access on Roads Edge Road, and the access on Wilson Pond Road and look forward to their recommendation; Alan Gross seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.**

Bill told the Board that he has talked with Ann Heffernon who is working on a project that will be held on a Saturday; she will provide more information soon. He added that the Governance committee will be morphing into a non-biased communication committee to provide publicity for groups such as the Water & Sewer committee. She will discuss with Kevin Westcott how to get sign-ups for emergency calls and alerts from the Town. She will meet with Christine to learn how to help the Town be more effective in informing the public.

**PUBLIC SESSIONS**

**Non-public session(s) per RSA 91-A:3, II (c) Matters which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of a person**

A motion was made by Jay Ward to enter a non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (c) which was seconded by Alan Gross All were in favor by Roll Call and the motion passed**.** The Board entered the non-public session at 7:02pm. Present were James Tempesta, Mark LaBelle, W. William Hutwelker III, James Ward and Alan Gross. Also present were Town Administrator Lori Rautiola and Recording Secretary Susan Ells.

A motion was made by Jay Ward to come out of the non-public session, seconded by Alan Gross. All were in favor by Roll Call and the motion passed. The non-public session ended at 7:08pm.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Jay Ward to adjourn the meeting; Alan Gross seconded the motion, and it passed 5-0.

Adjournment occurred at 7:08pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Ells, Recording Secretary

Approved on June 17, 2026