

Town of Swanzev, New Hampshire
Board of Selectmen
Meeting – August 18, 2015
Swanzev Town Hall, 620 Old Homestead Highway, Swanzev, NH

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair W. William Hutwelker III at 6:01 p.m. at the Swanzev Town Hall. Present were Kenneth P. Colby, Jr. and W. William Hutwelker III. Also present was Town Administrator Michael Branley and Recording Secretary Beverly Bernard. Deborah J. Davis joined the meeting at 6:04 p.m.

OTHERS PRESENT

Residents Ann and Ronald Bedaw, Swanzev’s representative on the Cheshire TV Board of Directors Sue Castriotta, Resident Wally Smith, Gus Lerandean, Cindy and Neil Livengood Jr., Fire Chief Norm Skantz

MINUTES

- The regular meeting Minutes of August 11, 2015 were considered. There was a **motion** by Colby to accept the regular meeting Minutes of August 11, 2015. The motion was seconded by Hutwelker with no further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***
- The non-public Minutes of August 11, 2015 were considered. There was a **motion** by Colby to accept the non-public Minutes of August 11, 2015. The motion was seconded by Hutwelker with no further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion was made by Colby approve the Consent Agenda. There was a second by Hutwelker and no further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***

- Payroll Manifest
- Payables Manifest
- Thank you Letter to Tom Wessels for donation of time (The Open Space Committee has asked the Board to send this letter – which will accompany a check to Mr. Wessels)
- Event Permit #2015-28 – Cheshire Fairgrounds Arena / NE Directional Pipeline Project
- Personnel Action Reports

MS-434 Form Discussion

Colby and Hutwelker briefly reviewed the MS-434 Form – vehicle registrations were discussed regarding trending either up or down. Branley said vehicle registrations were budgeted at a \$1,000,000. Branley wanted direction from the Board regarding setting it level or setting it somewhat higher or lower. He noted that the form is due September 1, 2015. Colby suggested looking for trends and the Board told Branley to do what he thought he is comfortable with.

APPOINTMENTS

Denial of 2014 Abatement

Ann and Ronald Bedaw met with the Board of Selectmen to discuss the denial of their request for year 2014 abatement for property located at 47 West Shore Road, Map 61, Lot 46. Ann Bedaw said she wanted to appeal to the Board’s common sense regarding market value of the property which is currently assessed at \$192,400. Bedaw said that the bathroom is very small. She said she didn’t understand how the waterfront unit price is calculated. She wanted to know why her unit price is greater than a nice looking cottage that is nearby.

Davis asked Bedaw what she thought the assessment should be and she responded it should be \$169,000 which was the valued settled in 2009. Bedaw said that appraisals that have been done have never been that high; documentation included in the Board meeting packet stated that one appraisal done in 2009 was for \$128,000 and another done in 2011 was for \$165,000. Davis suggested discussing with Vision appraisers how they came about the current assessment. Bedaw referred to the New Hampshire Board of Tax and Land Appeals (BTLA) and going to them if there cannot be a satisfactory solution with the Town of Swanzey. She said it is sad to see locals taxed off the lake. Bedaw explained how she and her husband came to acquire the property. Davis said that the Board needs to discuss the issues among themselves and will get back to the Bedaws. They left at 6:18 p.m.

Setting Priorities for Cheshire TV Board of Directors representative

Sue Castriotta, Swanzey’s representative on the Cheshire TV Board of Directors, met with the Board to discuss priorities. She noted that the TV Board of Directors will be focusing on Swanzey related matters and she asked that the Board of Selectmen confirm the direction they wish her to take on these matters. She said she sent Branley a copy of the By-Laws and Policies and Procedures. She referred to her notes from a year ago as to direction from the Board. She handed Branley information pertinent to the technology for transmitting a meeting referring to it as “Point of Origin” technology. Castriotta said Cheshire TV charges \$20 per hour for a tech to record meetings plus the DVD cost. Recorded meetings would get aired on Channel 10.

Colby asked about video streaming, which he said can’t be done on Channel 10; can be done on Channel 8, but the quality is poor. Castriotta spoke about the possibility of getting someone local to use the Cheshire TV equipment. She noted that robotic camera system only requires one technician. It cost \$53,000 in 2011 to purchase the equipment. She referred to Mark Nelson wanting to do more for the Town of Swanzey.

Castriotta said she did not have a copy of the operating agreement with the City of Keene but spoke about considering the one used by City of Keene as a model for Swanzey. She also noted there is a joint agreement for Cheshire towns from 2005 that could be also considered. Hutwelker asked for copies of both to consider. The Board decided to have Castriotta work with Branley first, and then meet with the Board once again. Next meeting is September 1, 2015 of the Cheshire TV Board of Directors. Colby asked about a Marlborough representative and Castriotta confirmed that Marlborough is now represented. Castriotta left the meeting at 6:29 p.m.

OLD BUSINESS

Tax Deeded Properties

Livengood Jr., Neil & Cindy	84 Joslin RD	18-001	\$2,074.67	\$6,454.05
-----------------------------	--------------	--------	------------	------------

Neil and Cindy Livengood were present to discuss their tax situation with the Board. The payment for July was paid, but the August payment still needs to be paid. Mr. Livengood spoke about his physical condition. Hutwelker asked what the monthly payment and was told by Livengood that it is \$300.00. Davis said the concern of the Board is that the Livengoods hold to the agreement and that it is important for the Board to hear from the Livengoods when they are late with a payment. Cindy Livengood said that she does have the money to make the August payment. Livengood said that their goal is to pay what is owed on their taxes. Colby said that the expectation was that the payment will be made by noon on Thursday and the Board and the Livengoods agreed. Branley said that if they are not going to make a payment by the expected date, they need to communicate with Town Hall. The Livengoods asked if there was a way to set up automatic payments and Branley stated they would need to speak to the Tax Collector. Livengood asked about tax abatements, but Hutwelker said that the tax payer needs to be current with taxes in order to qualify for tax abatements. Hutwelker asked that the Town Tax Collector send email to Branley and copy to the Board confirming the August payment is received.

North Swanzey Water Commission Request

Commissioner Gus Lerandeau was present and he said he and the other Commissioners from the North Swanzey Water & Fire Precinct would like to meet with the Board. Davis asked Branley to schedule them for August 25, 2015 at 6 p.m.

Water Main for the State Route 12 Roundabout

Lerandeau said the water main for Roundabout has been completed. A brief discussion continued on the size of the roundabout.

Safford Drive Pump House

There was a brief discussion about the finishing of the pump house on Safford Drive. Lerandeau left the meeting at 6:34 p.m.

California Brook Road

Hutwelker spoke about a request from Forester John Randall asking the Board to consider erecting a gate on the Class 6 portion of California Brook Road which is becoming a dumping ground. Branley will contact Randall, research the matter, and invite him to meet with the Board and other staff as is deemed appropriate.

West Swanzey Park Update

There was a brief discussion about the brush that was cut along the river's edge, which enhances the view of the river from the park. The Board received a complaint about the removal of the brush potentially causing erosion of the river bank. Colby said that the idea was to plant vegetation that will be low level and while holding the soil in place. Colby mentioned a park at Hinsdale that is very nice and the builders of the park were able to stabilize the bank of the river without destroying the view. He suggested that the Board will follow up.

Fire Chief Norm Skantze response letter to Altitude North "Up in Smoke" Event

Altitude North has complained about the service they received at the "Up in Smoke" event and have not paid their invoice for the detail required for that event. Chief Skantze met with the board to discuss a proposed letter in response to their complaint. He asked the Board to approve the letter before sending it out since the letter from Altitude North was sent to the Board of Selectmen.

One concern of Altitude North was that they believed were asked to pay for firemen time when firemen were not present, however Chief Skantze indicated they were not charged for the time the firefighters were not at their event. Hutwelker said it would be helpful to document billing in a spreadsheet showing the original quote and the ultimate billing with the subsequent reduction in hours and billing. Hutwelker asked Skantze to work with the Bookkeeper to create a spreadsheet and to attach the spreadsheet to the letter.

Skantze said that he has to prioritize his resources and if there is a structure fire, the firemen have to leave coverage of this type of event to respond to the fire. Skantze also said that billing is reduced when that happens. Skantze emphasized a Fire Chief will re-allocate resources when necessary and reduce subsequent billing. Hutwelker asked for a summary paragraph to the letter submitted tonight and to work with Branley to finish the letter.

There was a brief discussion regarding the California Brook pond boards. Skantze left the meeting at 6:58 p.m.

NEW BUSINESS

Recognize Gary Coburns Resignation

The Board accepted a letter of resignation from Gary Coburn from the Conservation Commission.

Colby **moved** to accept the resignation of Gary Coburn from the Conservation Commission and there was a second by Hutwelker. Discussion: Wally Smith said that Coburn was upset over the West Hill grant by the Town of Swanzezy for the Monadnock Conservancy's easement for the West Hill project. The Chair called the vote. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

Elm Research

Davis spoke about receiving communication regarding an elm tree given to the Town in the past. They ask for verification of the Town's incorporation year. She said if the Town could again receive a donation of an elm tree, it would be useful at the new park.

OLD BUSINESS

Tax Deeded Properties

FORMER/CURRENT OWNER	LOCATION	MAP/LOT	BOS Decision	Deed Date	Book/Page
Landry & Berthiaume	12 North Pine ST	18/234	5/5/2015	6/19/2015	2908/0593

Branley informed the Board about a conversation he had with Loretta Wright, an advocate for Landry. He also spoke about the possibility of using a tax deferral for Landry's situation. Branley said that Wright told him she was waiting for the Town to get back to her. Branley noted that the downside of a deferral is that Landry probably wouldn't make payments consistently. Branley opined that perhaps the Town could eventually get more than the \$15,000 that is now being offered for the property. Hutwelker said the concern is that Landry may not be capable of taking care of herself and asked Branley to research housing options for Landry. The Board agreed not to pursue the potential buyer and to research potential housing options for Landry.

OWNER	LOCATION	MAP/LOT	DEEDING BALANCE	TOTAL BALANCE
Curtis, Jacob R. & Kyle L.	25 Anthony CIR	87/2-5025	\$618.36	\$2,679.96
Lefebvre, Gary & Vincenza	52 Mountainview RD	73-22-0576	\$1,860.15	\$6,368.79

- Regarding the situation of the Curtis property, Branley updated the Board: he said he spoke to Claudette Helie at Pine Grove regarding the property owned by Jacob and Kyle Curtis at 25 Anthony Circle. Helie indicated that they are current on their park rent and she did not know that they had a tax issue. She stated that she was going to try to reach out to the owners to inform them to contact the Town immediately. Notice of impending deeding on this property was issued in March of 2015. Helie was eventually able to reach them and said that one of the Curtises will be in on Friday to discuss their situation. Hutwelker asked Branley to ask the Tax Collector to document the visit, if Curtis does arrive.
- Branley informed the Board that Mr. Lefebvre made his July payment last week and stated he would make the August payment by this date, but as far as he knows he has not done so. Colby suggested that a letter be sent to Lefebvre that payment needs to be made by August 31, 2015 or the Town will go forward with the tax deed process. Branley said he would get the letter out tomorrow.

Mud Bog Bogie

Branley noted that the event organizers have asked permission for a temporary sign at the Town Hall about their event. The Board agreed.

Donation to Fire Department in Memory of Gerry Bell

The Selectmen agreed to donate \$500 to the Fire Department in memory of Gerry Bell. A brief discussion occurred about the possibility of having a plaque placed on any new fire station that might be built in the future, in memory of Bell and the dedication he had to the Fire Department.

Motorcycle Swap Meet Overdue Bill

Branley reported to the Board that the overdue bill has been paid.

Recorded Phone Greeting by Staff

Colby suggested an everyday update to the voice mail recording so that callers will be made aware if a staff member is out of the office and cannot return a call immediately. Davis suggested that when staff is going to be out of the office for a day or two, an update of the voice recording would be appropriate. Hutwelker said he supports Colby's suggestion and he suggested that the voice mail system be updated. Branley said he would review voice mail capabilities. Smith suggested asking staff for their input.

Town Hall Hours

Hutwelker also suggested discussing the office hours of Town Hall, in particularly the Wednesday schedule. Discussion occurred regarding being open to accommodate people who need to do business at Town Hall. Davis also suggested perhaps extending one evening to accommodate folks who cannot make it to Town Hall by 5 p.m. Davis said that kind of change needs publicity so that folks are aware of open hours.

International City/County Management Association (ICMA)

Branley spoke about the ICMA Conference to be held in Seattle – he said he would go if the Board wanted him to, but if the Board doesn't want him to go, he is fine not going. Hutwelker said it would be beneficial to have Branley here in Town this year. He noted the Board would be open to it for next year if there was a clear benefit.

Expansion of the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district

Discussion was held about the possibility of extending the TIF district should development occur near the airport. Hutwelker said the Town would discuss further with the City of Keene.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn was made by Colby, second by Hutwelker. No further discussion. All were in favor. **Motion passed.** Adjournment occurred at 7:42 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Beverly Bernard, Recording Secretary

Approved on August 25, 2015