

Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire  
**Board of Selectmen**  
Meeting – September 1, 2015  
Swanzey Town Hall, 620 Old Homestead Highway, Swanzey, NH

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair W. William Hutwelker II at 6:00 p.m. at the Swanzey 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. Chair Deborah J. Davis joined the meeting at 6:05 p.m.

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Fire Chief Norm Skantze, Resident Wally Smith

**MINUTES**

- The regular meeting Minutes of August 25, 2015 were considered. There was a **motion** by Colby to accept the regular meeting Minutes of August 25, 2015. The motion was seconded by Hutwelker with no further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***
- The non-public meeting Minutes of August 25, 2015 were considered. There was a **motion** by Colby to accept the non-public meeting Minutes of August 25, 2015. The motion was seconded by Hutwelker with no further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***

**CONSENT AGENDA**

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

- Payroll Manifest
- Payables Manifest
- Appointment Form for Deputy Town Clerk Karen Elliot
- Timber Tax Warrant for Map 9 Lot 13
- Timber Tax Warrant for Map 22 Lot 1 & Map 34 Lot 34
- Timber Tax Warrant for Map 50 Lots 6, 11, & 12 & Map 51 Lot 9
- Personnel Action Report – the Bookkeeper and Town Administrator recommend removing Jason Taylor from probationary status and increasing his wage 2.8% to \$16.45 per hour

**APPOINTMENTS**

**2015 Fire Department Goals and Direction**

Fire Chief Norm Skantze met with the Board to discuss 2015 Department Goals and Direction. Chief Skantze said he sees that the following as four “moving pieces,” which are all interrelated, regarding the future direction of the Fire Department:

- Proposed construction of the new central fire station – the appropriate design and size of this facility should be driven at least in part by some of the following staffing and operational considerations.
- The staffing balance between full-time career personnel, permanent part-time personnel, and on-call personnel.
- The Town of Swanzey potentially bringing ambulances services in-house as opposed to the current contracted arrangement.
- Capital improvement strategies for apparatus and vehicle replacement.

Skantze provided a booklet of information for each of the members of the Board, which covered staffing for the Fire Department and their availability, among other data. Skantze said he has a concern about daytime coverage. Skantze said calls are averaging 85-100 calls per month. The booklet also included a capital improvement plan, a comparison of a number of other communities and their staffing, contract for ambulance service (which will need to be revisited at the first of the year), information about EMS costs, a presentation regarding ambulance services including revenues, and a study of impact on aging and the demand and stress on calls by the Fire Department. Skantze said that he believed that Swanzey should be providing EMS services, which will also generate revenue for the Town.

Davis asked about the towns that have had their own ambulances that haven't been successful. Skantze said that these towns were relatively small while Swanzey is the largest town in Cheshire County after the City of Keene. Skantze said that he thinks the hospital will expand significantly as part of their association with Dartmouth Hitchcock and there will be more calls for ambulance service in the future. Skantze spoke about the DiLuzio Ambulance business and said that transfer business drives revenue for DiLuzio. Skantze said that adding EMS service drives revenue and also provides the environment for mutual aid with the City of Keene for ambulance service.

Skantze focused on a chart which he provided to the Board which showed the relationship between staffing, apparatus, facility improvements, and call coverage. He said he wanted to make sure the Board realized that these are interrelated because they impact on each other. He asked the Board for direction for the Fire Department.

Hutwelker spoke about the vote of the citizens of the Town rejecting a full-time fire department and ambulance service, when they rejected the Fire Station design with room for an ambulance bay, and room for housing full-time staff. Hutwelker said that the argument has not been made to the citizens for a need for these ambulance services and full-time staff. Hutwelker said that the citizens need to be engaged in the decision to have ambulance services or a full-time staff.

Davis said she would like to know the opinion of the current fire-fighters, and if they don't think the Town needs a full-time Fire Department, then the politically the Town is going to have difficulty moving in that direction. She said Skantze needs the support of the fire-fighters to move ahead with these kinds of services. Skantze spoke about the ability to collect revenue if the Town would be providing EMS services, which would offset the budget. Davis stressed that the support of the fire-fighters is necessary in order to encourage positive conversation about ambulance service and full-time staffing.

Colby spoke about the citizens of the Town not willing to look into the future for 20 or 30 years. He referred to citizens not seeing the problems associated with Town Hall. Colby said that there has to be a new fire station to move it out of Town Hall. Colby said the Fire Station should be on Safford Drive because of sewer and water availability.

Skantze referred to the citizens who voted for the previous Fire Station and not to forget their interests. Colby stressed a compromise. Skantze stressed the need for professionals to be involved in the Municipal Facilities Review Committee. Skantze said there aren't appropriate plans that can drive estimates at this point.

Smith spoke about the importance of communicating with the citizens – to explain to them the need so that they become convinced to vote for it.

Skantze spoke about the need for architectural drawings. Hutwelker said that the Board needs to get the report back from the Municipal Facilities Review Committee before an architect can be hired.

Skantze showed the Board a hand-written list for the 2015 FD Budget & Capital Outlay, Emergency Calls, and Staffing. He also showed possible billings for ambulance calls, listing the average charges, which the Town cannot charge for at this time. He spoke about the budget impact if the Town were to be able to take EMS calls. He also had estimated expenses and showed an estimated overall increase in his budget of \$46,000+ to have a full-time staff and EMS services. These numbers did not include initial purchase of two ambulances. There was a discussion about purchasing ambulances and eliminating the rescue vehicles to defray the costs of an ambulance.

Hutwelker asked why the Swanzey Fire Department provides staff to accompany the contracted firm, DiLuzio, and Skantze said that it is for safety purposes, when extra hands are needed. Skantze stressed Swanzey is a licensed rescue service, not an ambulance service, by rules from the State of New Hampshire.

Skantze spoke about the possibility of beefing up day-time coverage. He also spoke about staffing that would consist of four during the day and two overnight for six full-time people. Hutwelker pointed out that if two folks in an ambulance are not sufficient for DiLuzio, why would it be sufficient for Swanzey. Skantze responded that the situation is variable and sometimes two folks would be sufficient.

There was a discussion about mutual aid and how that would be impacted by a Swanzey ambulance service.

Skantze said he would like to see the Fire Inspector and EMS Coordinator positions full-time for day-time coverage and that he was going to include it in his budget. Colby reminded Skantze that the 3-year plan for raising pay rates for fire department personnel is still in force to be completed in 2016, and that has to be kept in mind for budget purposes.

The Board considered attendance at the Fire Department meeting September 14, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. to listen to the opinions of the fire-fighters. Skantze will confirm the meeting date.

#### **Follow up on California Dam dry hydrant**

Branley informed the Board that he spoke to Department of Public Works (DPW) Director Lee Dunham and Dunham agreed to assist with the project in the timeframe prior to the bulk of plowing season depending upon how much material is being hauled and where it is being hauled to. The Fire Chief acknowledged he is trying to firm up specifics with the potential contractor.

Colby mentioned the need to remove the boards at the dam so the pond can be drained and the land can be firmed up before construction begins. The Board agreed that Colby should speak to Dunham about the project. Branley suggested that a request for an extension of the agreement with the State of New Hampshire Department of Transportation regarding the project is something the Board should consider.

**Motion** was made by Hutwelker to request an extension of the agreement with the State of New Hampshire Department of Transportation regarding the California Dam dry hydrant project. There was a second by Davis. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

Skantze left the meeting at 8:11 p.m.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

##### **Affordable Care Act Compliance**

Branley reported to the Board that Bookkeeper Theresa Louder has provided some documentation for Board review in the hope of a Board tentative policy decision at the September 15th meeting.

### **Tax Deeded Properties –**

Branley provided an update on several properties previously discussed:

- The Town has been informed that Marshall Millwood passed away. In accordance with her previous commitment, his daughter, Michele Milton, paid off all taxes and interest on the property later that day so the property is now current.
- On Thursday Branley said he spoke again to Penny Reed from DHHS Elder Affairs again regarding Ms. Landry. Reed informed Branley that she met with Ms. Landry briefly on August 25, 2015 and Ms. Landry was not interested in accepting her assistance. Based on this information, Branley recommended to the Board that they begin eviction proceedings.

Hutwelker **moved** to direct the Town Attorney and Town staff to begin the eviction process of the occupants from the Town-owned property at 12 North Pine Street, Tax Map 18, Lot 234. There was a second to the motion by Colby and no further discussion. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

- 80 Old Lake Street was discussed briefly.

### **Homestead Woolen Mill Property**

Branley reported that he hasn't heard anything further on the sale of the mill despite several attempts to get one from Town Counsel Sam Bradley.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **2016 Budget Process and Schedule Discussion**

Branley asked the Board to provide meaningful direction regarding what you are hoping to see in the overall budget. The Board discussed the schedule provided by Branley for the budget process. Hutwelker suggested that the Board is looking at level funding. He spoke about major projects are down the road and therefore the budget needs to be kept as conservative as possible. The Board agreed they are looking for a level-funded budget with the potential for some modest increases.

There was a discussion about dealing with Department requests and how Branley should handle them. The Board agreed that they are definitely interested in Branley's input and want to hear his recommendations to try to comply with the Board's overall budgetary direction.

There was mention of the oil contract price being very good for Swanzey.

There was a brief mention of Chamber of Commerce presentation on September 15, 2015 from 4 – 6 p.m. on the state of the economy of New Hampshire.

### **Administrative Update**

- **Tour of Dillant-Hopkins Airport** with Airport Director Ed Mattern
- **Settlement of Bedaw Abatement Request** – the Board was informed that the family has agreed to the settlement proposed by the Board.
- **West Swanzey Park brush cutting** – no violation from Department of Environmental Services (DES) – there was a brief discussion regarding the fact that DES has determined there are no violations regarding the brush cutting at the park.
- **Upcoming Projects**

- **Postage meter replacement**
- **Insurance** – there was a brief discussion – Branley will contact Kapiloff Insurance for a possible bid for covering Swanzey’s insurance needs.
- **Copier replacement** – a brief discussion occurred in regard to Branley researching replacing copiers for greater efficiency by staff using them.
- **Contract Reviews** – Branley said that it is good to have a conversation periodically with vendors. He suggested perhaps looking at auditors, assessing, and computer support as the types of contracts he would review in the future. The Board agreed he should perform a review and report back.

### **Correspondence**

- Letter from Rodney A. Bouchard, Assistant County Commissioner, with regard to a possible Swanzey spur to the proposed Kinder Morgan pipeline project
- Letter from Stillman Rogers, Chairman, Cheshire County Board of Commissioners with regard to the proposed Kinder Morgan pipeline project.
- Copy of Letter to Ms. Lori Ferry, AECOM Project Manager from Stillman Rogers, Chairman of the Cheshire County Board of Commissions, with regard to a request for information pertinent to the proposed Kinder Morgan pipeline project.
- Budget report for July, 2015
- Copy of Letter of Fire Chief Norm Skantze to David j. Dvoid and Geordie Fifield

A brief discussion occurred regarding the anticipated effects of the pipeline on Swanzey and meetings scheduled for either September 9, 2015 or September 16, 2015 at 4 p.m. Branley will research the correct date as the letter stated the meetings would take place on a Friday, but the dates provided are Wednesday dates. The Board agreed they would like someone from Swanzey to attend and there was discussion regarding whether Branley, Skantze, and/or Carbonneau may attend.

### **Appointment for Chief DeAngelis to discuss SRO**

Davis spoke briefly about the need for a conversation with Police Chief Tom DeAngelis about the School Resource Officer (SRO) situation for the Monadnock Regional School District. The Board agreed to invite DeAngelis to the September 15, 2015 meeting of the Board to discuss this topic so the Town is on the same page if they are approached by the School District.

### **Chesterfield Town Administrator to meet with Swanzey Town Administrator**

Hutwelker mentioned a possible meeting between Branley and the Chesterfield Town Administrator.

Smith left the meeting 8:56 p.m.

### **Non-public session(s) per RSA 91-A3II(a) Personnel Matter(s)**

**Motion** by Colby to enter Non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3II(a) Personnel Matter(s). The motion was seconded by Hutwelker. The Selectmen voted unanimously by roll call to go into non-public session at 8:56 p.m. **Motion passed.** Present were the Board members Kenneth P. Colby, Jr., Deborah J. Davis, W. William Hutwelker, III, Town Administrator Michael Branley and Recording Secretary Beverly Bernard.

**Motion** was made by Colby to leave non-public session and return to public session. The motion was seconded by Hutwelker, with all in favor. **Motion passed.** Non-public session ended at 9:05 p.m.

**Motion** was made by Colby to seal the minutes of the non-public session because it was determined that the minutes could adversely affect an individual's reputation other than the Board. The motion was seconded by Hutwelker. The Selectmen voted unanimously by roll call to seal the minutes. **Motion passed.**

#### **Non-public session(s) per RSA 91-A3II(c) Reputation**

**Motion** by Colby to enter Non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3II(c) Reputation. The motion was seconded by Hutwelker. The Selectmen voted unanimously by roll call to go into non-public session at 9:05 p.m. **Motion passed.** Present were the Board members Kenneth P. Colby, Jr., Deborah J. Davis, W. William Hutwelker, III, Town Administrator Michael Branley and Recording Secretary Beverly Bernard.

**Motion** was made by Colby to leave non-public session and return to public session. The motion was seconded by Hutwelker, with all in favor. **Motion passed.** Non-public session ended at 9:08 p.m.

**Motion** was made by Colby to seal the minutes of the non-public session because it was determined that the minutes could adversely affect an individual's reputation other than the Board. The motion was seconded by Hutwelker. The Selectmen voted unanimously by roll call to seal the minutes. **Motion passed.**

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion** to adjourn was made by Hutwelker, second by Colby. No further discussion. All were in favor. **Motion passed.** Adjournment occurred at 9:08 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Beverly Bernard, Recording Secretary

Approved on September 15, 2015