

Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire  
**Board of Selectmen**  
Meeting – November 24, 2015  
Swanzey Town Hall, 620 Old Homestead Highway, Swanzey, NH

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Deborah J. Davis at 6:00 p.m. at the Swanzey Town Hall. Present were Deborah J. Davis, Kenneth P. Colby, Jr., and W. William Hutwelker III. Also present was Town Administrator Michael Branley and Recording Secretary Beverly Bernard.

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Fire Chief Norm Skantze, Whitcomb Hall Committee Chair Peter Johnson, Conservation Commission Chair Wally Smith, Open Space Committee Chair Victoria Ames, and Richard Robidoux, Project Manager for Cheshire Buildings, Inc.

**MINUTES**

- The regular meeting Minutes of November 17, 2015 were considered. There was a **motion** by Hutwelker to approve the regular Minutes of November 17, 2015. The motion was seconded by Colby with no further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***
- The non-public meeting Minutes #1 of November 17, 2015 were considered. There was a **motion** by Colby to approve the non-public Minutes #1 of November 17, 2015. The motion was seconded by Hutwelker with no further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***
- The non-public meeting Minutes #2 of November 17, 2015 were considered. There was a **motion** by Colby to approve the non-public Minutes #2 of November 17, 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. There was no further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***

- Payroll Manifest
- Payables Manifest
- Event Permit #2015-30 – Monadnock Humane Society Handcrafted for the Holidays
- Event Permit #2016-01 – New England Sporting Group Dog Competition
- Permits to Trap – Art Whipple

**APPOINTMENTS**

**Fire Chief Norm Skantze - Ladder Truck Request for Purchase**

Chief Skantze met with the Board to discuss a possible purchase of a ladder truck. He said that in 2013 a reconditioned 1988 ladder truck was purchased by the Town and that apparatus has had some maintenance issues, in particular with the pump. He said that in one instance the pump over-heated. He said that he approached the dealership which sold the Town the truck about fixing the truck but there isn't any way to do so because of its age, according to the dealer. He spoke about the possibility of trading in the truck for another reconditioned truck. He felt that the best solution for the Town would be to get back some of the funds expended (\$35,000) on the truck and to trade in the rescue truck. He recommended purchasing a 2000 truck. He said the dealer offered to recondition the cab so that it looks new. Davis questioned the quality of the dealer, New England Apparatus, in recommending this truck and other trucks in the past that have had maintenance problems after being purchased. Skantze defended the dealer, saying that they have provided good service in many ways to the Town. Skantze said

that there isn't really any alternative. Skantze pointed out that the Town doesn't have the resources to buy new ladder trucks. The price for the 2000 truck would be \$190,000, and deducting the trade-in of the 1988 Pierce Aerial for \$35,000 and Rescue 2 for \$25,000 would end up being a cost to the town of \$130,000 to own this ladder/pumper. Skantze spoke about pushing out the dates for replacing other equipment in order to accommodate funding for the acquisition. Hutwelker asked about the cost for repairs for the truck. Colby asked if the price of the truck was inclusive of all the add-ons for the truck. Skantze said that there is no extra cost; the dealer is moving gear from one truck to the other. Smith asked about why the former owner didn't keep the vehicle. Skantze said there is no "car fax" for fire trucks so that it isn't possible to find out the history of the truck.

Hutwelker noted this is the third ladder truck in six years to be purchased by the Town. Skantze said the damage to the pump housing in the present truck is unusual. Hutwelker asked about the increase of the ladder to a 100 foot truck. Skantze said the length is only relevant to the condition of the truck. Aerials are designed for two and three story buildings and extending reach to a roof or window, he said. Davis asked if Skantze had considered other trucks and Skantze said that he didn't because no one would give him a trade-in value for the damaged ladder truck and the aerial that New England Apparatus is willing to sell the Town.

Branley said the Fire Truck & Equipment fund has \$269,000 in it. Hutwelker repeated his request for the cost to repair it in order to keep the vehicle until the year it was scheduled to be replaced. He also asked for a schedule for replacement of the fire vehicles. Hutwelker said he would feel more comfortable getting five additional years out of the truck by investing around \$40,000 in it for repairs. Skantze said his yearly maintenance budget is only \$25,000. Hutwelker pointed out that the Board could budget for the additional cost. Skantze said it is his opinion that replacing the truck completely is the best choice. Discussion occurred about a drive shaft breaking. Colby said that he agreed with the point that Hutwelker made to find out what it would cost to make a repair. Skantze said he would try to get a firm quote on repairing the truck and how long it will take to do so. Davis stated if we repair the truck we want to have a reasonable assurance that it will last. He said he would provide it to the Board by next Tuesday. Colby asked Skantze to request of New England Apparatus to hold off selling the 2000 truck until Swanzey has made a decision on whether to repair or buy.

#### **Whitcomb Hall Committee Chair Peter Johnson - Whitcomb Hall Committee Request for Expenditure**

Whitcomb Hall Committee Chair Peter Johnson and Richard Robidoux, Project Manager for Cheshire Buildings, Inc., were present to request of the Board approval for an expenditure of \$1,500 to Cheshire Builders to develop a comprehensive Computer Aided Design (CAD) design for the first floor renovations to Whitcomb Hall. Johnson said that he felt that this would be a cheaper alternative to hiring an architect to do the job. Robidoux said that working with a committee means that everyone has individual ideas; working with a committee is tough without a plan and having a plan helps the committee focus. He spoke about life safety issues needing to be addressed. He said a CAD plan can be used by different contractors. He noted it can be sent out digitally to contractors.

Johnson said this request is a response to the request of the Board that the committee consider the entire costs for getting the building up and running. Johnson mentioned that the committee has spoken to a number of heating contractors to offer alternatives for heating the building. He said one contractor said the duct work in place is of good quality and only needs to be cleaned. Johnson mentioned heating units that could go under windows, which are not bulky and, which could heat the downstairs. He spoke about a second furnace providing forced hot air, which could heat up the large room upstairs rapidly. He also said the duct work could function for air conditioning as well. He said that a CAD design would provide solid cost figures and use every cent in a cost effective way. Hutwelker said that it made sense and the rest of the Board agreed.

**Motion** was made by Colby to authorize the Whitcomb Hall Committee to expend up to \$1,560 from the Whitcomb Hall Rehabilitation Expendable Trust Fund to develop a design for the first floor. There was a

second to the motion by Hutwelker. Johnson spoke briefly about the committee meetings and inviting the Board to attend some of the meetings. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

Johnson said that the goal is to have a comprehensive plan to present to the Board and not do it in a piecemeal fashion. Colby stressed the importance for residents to see what Johnson and the Committee are accomplishing. Johnson noted that Committee member Sharon Greatbatch said her \$10,000 donation requires a report by May 1, 2016. The Board thanked Johnson for his work. Johnson and Robidoux left the meeting at 7:03 p.m.

#### **Fire Chief Norm Skantze - Swanze Christmas**

There was a brief discussion about the plans for the "Very Swanze Christmas". Skantze spoke about the progress being made decorating West Swanze in anticipation of the event.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

##### **Open Space Committee Request to Expend Balance in Open Space Preservation & Protection Non-Restricted Account**

Open Space Committee Chair Victoria Ames was present to request of the Board expenditure from the Open Space Preservation and Protection Non-Restricted Account of the balance of the account to support scholarships in the Ashuelot River Pony Club.

Colby **moved** to approve expenditure of the current balance of the Open Space Committee Non-Restricted Account (not to exceed \$550) in accordance with the OSC meeting minutes of November 11, 2015 and request the Trustees of Trust Funds remit payment to the Ashuelot River Pony Club to support scholarships. There was a second to the motion by Hutwelker and no further discussion. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

#### **2015 Longevity Pay**

The Board was asked to authorize Longevity Pay for 2015. Using the November 24, 2015 as the cutoff date, there are 21 employees who qualify to receive payment on December 10, 2015, according to Branley. The total amount to be paid is \$13,250. The amounts were as follows:

<u>Years of Service</u>	<u>Longevity Payment</u>
4 years and under	\$0
Between 5 and 9 years of service	\$250
Between 10 and 14 years of service	\$500
Between 15 and 19 years of service	\$750
Over 20 years of service	\$1,000

Colby **moved** to award longevity pay to full-time employees for 2015 as follows, for years of service up to November 24, 2015:

- \$250 for between 5 and 9 years of service
- \$500 for between 10 and 14 years of service
- \$750 for between 15 and 19 years of service; and,
- \$1,000 for over 20 years of service.

Second to the motion was made by Hutwelker, and there was no further discussion. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

#### **December Meeting Schedule**

- December 1 – 2<sup>nd</sup> RSA 41-14a Public Hearing regarding Haley Park easement
- December 8 – Board must vote regarding Haley Park easement
- December 15
- December 22 –the Board agreed not to meet unless something urgent came up
- December 29

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **Municipal Facilities Review Committee Update**

Branley provided a brief update on the work of the committee. He said plans are coming in and estimates for completing the work outlined in the plans should be arriving during the month of December.

### **Clarification of Capital Reserve, Expendable Trust, & Miscellaneous Expenditures**

Discussion was held regarding the need to clarify prior motions and name the funds from which the expenditures are to be sourced.

Colby **moved** to clarify that on July 28, 2015 the Board authorized the expenditure of up to \$19,000 from the Police Information Management System Expendable Trust Fund for the purchase of a new server and email program. There was a second to the motion and no further discussion. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

Colby **moved** to clarify that on September 22, 2015 the Board authorized the expenditure of up to \$10,000 from the Future Fire Station Capital Reserve Fund for the fire station related architectural work. There was a second to the motion by Hutwelker and no further discussion. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

Colby **moved** to clarify that on September 22, 2015 the Board authorized the expenditure of up to \$6,000 from the Town Hall Expansion Capital Reserve Fund for town hall related architectural work. There was a second to the motion by Hutwelker and no further discussion. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

Colby **moved** to clarify that on September 22, 2015 the Board authorized the expenditure of up to \$7,750 from the Police Facilities Expendable Trust Fund for the police station related architectural work. There was a second to the motion by Hutwelker and no further discussion. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

Colby **moved** to clarify that on September 22, 2015 the Board authorized the expenditure of up to \$2,000 from the Recycling Center Improvements Capital Reserve Fund for the recycling center related engineering work. There was a second to the motion by Hutwelker and no further discussion. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

Colby **moved** to clarify that on August 18, 2015 the Board authorized the expenditure of up to \$500 to the Fire Tools & Equipment Non-Restricted Trust account in the memory of Gerry Bell with the expense posted to the Selectmen's Miscellaneous Expenses line item 01-4130-1-690. There was a second to the motion by Hutwelker and no further discussion. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

### **Christian Hill Road Bridge Committee Discussion**

Discussion was held about forming a committee to consider future action on the bridge at Christian Hill Road. The following were suggested for Board consideration to be appointed to the committee: Dan Lane (who lives on Christian Hill Road), DPW Director Lee Dunham, Fire Chief Skantze, and either the Town Administrator or Director of Planning and Community Development Carbonneau. The Board agreed.

### **Tax Deed Properties Update**

- **52 Mountainview Road** – Branley informed the Board that the mortgage holder paid the deeding balance on this property so this property is no longer eligible for tax deeding. Discussion was held regarding helping the taxpayers from being in the same situation in 2016 by consideration of a \$300 per month payment agreement with them. Branley will finalize it with the taxpayer.
- **556 Swanzey Lake Road** – Discussion was held about the inability, thus far, of the taxpayers to comply with requested stipulations for deeding the property back to them: no proof of insurance on the property with the Town named as added insured has been received, nor has the taxpayers executed a tax payment agreement, nor made any further payments on taxes owed. Branley recommended moving ahead with eviction from the property should the taxpayers not respond to these requests by 5:00 p.m. Tuesday, November 24, 2015. Branley said that Mr. Joslyn informed Branley earlier this week that his personal life has changed, he was under the impression that his wife was taking care of the situation but she was not. Since the deadline of 5:00 p.m. November 24, 2015 had not been met by Joslyn by the time of the meeting, Branley said that the eviction process could begin now and actual eviction would occur by the spring at the latest, should the Board agree. Branley said he consulted with Town Counsel and Counsel opined that the course of action was reasonable.

Colby **moved** to accept the tax deed for the property 556 Swanzey Lake Road, Tax Map 61/Map 2-0011, previously owned by Nicholas E. and Nicole Joslyn, to direct Town staff to evict the occupants, and to notify the owners of the Town's intent to sell the property. There was a second by Hutwelker, and no further discussion. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

### **2016 BUDGET REVIEW**

Colby asked what other towns are doing in regard to pay raises since there is no raise in 2016 for Social Security. Branley said he is already working on collecting this info and will get back to the Board.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATE**

Branley said that Town Counsel Gary Kinyon has availability the week of December 7<sup>th</sup> to meet with the Board and consider the Cheshire Fair Association situation with regard to taxes. Branley will set up an appointment with Kinyon, and the Board will attend the meeting at Town Counsel's location.

### **CORRESPONDENCE**

Branley noted that the Town has received correspondence from Property-Liability Trust confirming that they will be ceasing operations as of June 30, 2016. He also noted that staff will be putting together a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the Town's insurance needs.

Hutwelker asked about placing discussing sending a letter to the PUC regarding Liberty Utilities on next week's agenda.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### **Wednesday Afternoon Town Hall Closure**

The Board discussed Town Hall closures on Wednesday afternoons. Davis said the original idea was to give staff time to work without interruption from the public but that it appears that staff is actually attending to other matters such as doctor's appointments. Branley said that the staff felt the uninterrupted time is helpful to get caught up. He could be more proactive to maintain staff in the building if the Board felt that was a priority. Colby said the original idea was to give staff time to catch up on work and it appears to have evolved into time out of the office and is subject to abuse. Colby noted that it sometimes appears to residents that Town Hall is deserted on Wednesday afternoons. Hutwelker said that Town Hall should be open all day, five days a week. Branley said that

the way the building is setup makes it difficult today to keep folks from wandering around the building and if they cannot find someone in the Town Clerk's office or Tax Collector's office, they interrupt other staff. Discussion was held about keeping folks from wandering around the building.

There was a discussion about full-time hours being possibly changed from 37.5 hours per week to 40 hours per week. The Board discussed work days of 8:00 – 5:00 p.m. five days a week with one hour for lunch, with staggered lunch times. A discussion of one hour vs. half hour lunches was had. Discussion occurred regarding Town Clerk hours and closures. Hutwelker asked Branley to confirm who takes Minutes at the Deliberative Session. The Board agreed to have Branley look at the Town Hall schedule based on 40 hours for Town Hall staff without the Wednesday afternoon closure and report back next week.

Smith, Ames, and Skantze left the meeting at 7:43 p.m.

#### **Non-public session(s) per RSA 91-A3II(b) – Hiring of Public Employee(s)**

**Motion** was made by Colby to enter Non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3II(b) Hiring of Public Employee(s). The motion was seconded by Hutwelker. The Selectmen voted unanimously by roll call to go into non-public session at 7:44 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 Hutwelker to leave non-public session and return to public session. The motion was seconded by Colby, with all in favor. **Motion passed.** Non-public session ended at 7:48 p.m.

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

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

**Motion** was made 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 7:49 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 7:53 p.m.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion** to adjourn was made by Colby, second by Hutwelker. No further discussion. All were in favor. **Motion passed.** Adjournment occurred at 7:54 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Beverly Bernard, Recording Secretary  
Approved on December 1, 2015

Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire  
**Board of Selectmen**  
Non-Public Meeting #2 Minutes – November 24, 2015

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

**Motion** was made 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 7:49 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.

The Board addressed Branley and told him that since he is doing a good job as Town Administrator, they want to shorten his probation period. Davis said that he is a really good fit for the job and therefore the Board is authorizing an increase in his salary to \$75,000 per year as of next pay period and ending his probationary period. The Board expressed appreciation for all Branley has done.

**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 7:53 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Beverly Bernard, Recording Secretary

Approved on December 1, 2015