

**Benton School Board Minutes**  
**October 23, 2024**

**Benton School Board:** Dwight Swauger, chair, J.B. Boutin, vice chair, Brenda Finoia.

**Also Present:** Delores Fox, SAU Superintendent, Kathryn Ducharme, SAU Business Administrator.

**Public:** None

*These draft minutes of the Town of Benton School Board are believed accurate and correct, but they are subject to additions, deletions, and corrections by the School Board at the next meeting when the Board votes its final approval of the minutes. These minutes are made available at this time to conform to the requirements of New Hampshire RSA 91-A:2.*

Chair Swauger called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

Member Boutin made a motion to approve the minutes from 8/21/24. Seconded by Member Finoia and passed unanimously.

Manifests were signed.

**Superintendents Report:** Superintendent Fox learning curve involving OESU superintendent, regional superintendent meetings, NCEs, Crotched Mountain Kids organization and toured River Bend Tech Center. Suicide prevention SAU-wide was October 11, 2024. SAU has purchased 200 30-second radio ads from WYKR. A new law requires districts to post on their website all funding from the state of NH and all other federal grants, state allocations and Medicaid payments. This is posted on the website under the Business Office tab.

**K. Ducharme, Business Administrator:** The FY2026 general fund budget is \$737,959, which is an increase of \$45,811 or a 6.62% increase from 2025. No estimated revenues yet from the State until November 15. Tuition is currently budgeted with a 3% increase in rates for Haverhill & Riverbend and a zero increase for French Pond/King Street schools. Haverhill tuition does reflect the 11.72% discount for sending 100% of students. The budget does not include contingencies for regular tuition.

FY2025 BUDGET: \$387,760 (23 STUDENTS)

FY2025 ACTUAL: \$368,119 (22 STUDENTS) -under budget \$19,641

FY2026 BUDGET: \$356,197 (21 STUDENTS)

SAU assessment is based on the FY2026 estimated amount in draft #1. This amount will change.

Increases/decreases from FY2025 to FY2026 budget:

- Tuition (including regular education, French Pond, King Street, Vocational, and charter school) — decreased \$31,563 (Regular education looks like it increased \$51,193 — however this amount was reduced by \$60,000 in the current year to use trust monies).
- Special Education (including summer school, speech, physical/occupational therapy) increased \$8,645

- Transportation (regular/special education) increased \$1,132
- SAU Assessment — increased \$6,876
- School Board — liability insurance — increased \$721

Tax Rate: The estimated tax rate is \$10.17 which is an increase of \$.91 or 9.8% from the current year.

**Kerri Reilly, Special Education Director:** Director Reilly was unable to attend due to health problems. Discussion ensued about questions about the number of children in special education and Chair Swauger asked how many instructional aids you employ, and Supt. Fox said she would get the information.

EEBB-Transportation Policy needed for Benton. A draft proposal for the new policy was suggested and changes to wording were made and will bring final policy to the next board meeting for vote.

“USE OF PRIVATE VEHICLES TO TRANSPORT STUDENTS OR ON SCHOOL BUSINESS”

Motion was made by Member Boutin to adjourn regular meeting for non-public session at 6:51 pm, seconded by Member Finoia and passed unanimously.

Motion was made by Member Finoia to enter non-public session at 6:52 pm, seconded by Member Boutin and passed unanimously.

Non-public session adjourned at 7:10 pm and a motion to return to regular meeting was made by Chair Swauger, seconded by Member Finoia and passed unanimously.

Next meeting January 8, 2024, at 6:00 pm (w/Tentative budget hearing)

Motion to adjourn was made by Member Boutin and passed unanimously at 7:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Dwight Swauger, Chair

