Benton School Board Minutes
October 21, 2026

Benton School Board: Dwight Swauger, Chair, Amanda Bemis, Co-chair, Brenda Finoia.
Administration Present: Dolores Fox, SAU Superintendent, Taryn Noonan-Johnson, 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.

Meeting called to order at 6:03 pm.
Motion to approve the minutes of our meeting on September 22, 2026 made by Member Bemis, second by Member Swauger and passed unanimously.
Manifest were signed.
No public input.
Business Administrator: Most recent financial summary the general fund balance for FY 2027 is $535,552 with this being an early version of budget numbers. An updated budget will be different due to the lack of the state advising what the Adequacy gran amounts are for this year. Unassigned fund balance of $120,688 will be sent to the Trustee of the Trust for Education within two weeks.

Kerri Reilly, Special Education Director: No report submitted.

Superintendents Report:

NH State legislation: HB1300: Adds to the ballot during the November general election for 2026 and 2028 which has a question about adopting a tax rate cap(appropriations) and to cap the SAU administrative costs at 6 % of the combined SAU towns. Administrative costs of the SAU include superintendent services; business administration; human resources; finance; payroll; purchasing; district-level information technology administration; curriculum directors, legal services; public relations; and other non-school-based administrative functions, regardless of physical location or building assignment. 60% yes vote required to pass. Please note that this law makes these caps one question. If Haverhill voters pass this warrant, then there is a tax rate cap, but that does not automatically mean that the SAU cap would pass. The SAU cap would be determined by the number of yes votes across all 5 towns. SAU 23 provides these services (except curriculum director) to ALL towns. current SAU budget reflects the needs of 5 towns to meet regulatory requirements. HB564- HB564 changes the mechanism for approving SAU budgets. The SAU budget will appear as a separate warrant at the annual district meeting. If the voters do not pass the SAU budget by a simple majority, then the budget for FY27 is the default budget. 'Ille determination if the SAU budget passes is made by collecting the number of votes cast at each annual meeting and determining if a simple majority of all ballots cast approved of the SAU budget.

HB564: Changes the mechanism for approving SAU budgets. The SAU budget will appear as a separate warrant at the annual district meeting. If the voters do not pass the SAU budget by a simple majority, then the budget for FY27 is the default budget. 'Ille determination if the SAU budget passes is made by collecting the number of votes cast at each annual meeting and determining if a simple majority of all ballots cast approved the SAU budget. What does School Administration Unit (SAU) provide to the Benton School

District? PART 1 - The superintendent's office The Superintendent's office includes the Superintendent, Office Manager, and Assistant to the Superintendent. The Superintendent oversees the execution of board policies and state laws and is responsible for their compliance. The Superintendent is the executive responsible for the actions of employees at all levels and capacities. The job includes filing reports with the state Of New Hampshire and assuring data collection is accurate. The Superintendent organizes school board meeting agendas and provides guidance to school boards. New Hampshire is fortunate that superintendents in New Hampshire are educators. As this role includes driving continuous school improvement for our students and community. The Superintendent is responsible for the creation Of the budget and ensures that the implementation of the budget meets board priorities and legal requirements. At SAU #23, the Office Manager and Assistant to the Superintendent have many varied responsibilities. They participate in the hiring/onboarding process, including advertising on multiple sites and maintaining job descriptions. fie Office Manager gathers and maintains records for personnel files, maintains lists of home-school students, and maintains records of leaving staff. They manage communications from the SAU office, including phone, email, website, and US mail. They serve as the receptionist for both the superintendent's and business offices. They manage the supplies and resources to keep the office running smoothly. The Assistant to the Superintendent also manages our school lunch programs, which include distributing, collecting, and maintaining free and reduced lunch records. They prepare and distribute school board packets and post school board meetings. They manage the records of school board meeting minutes and maintain Other documentation Of the superintendent's office So that there is a smooth transition between administrators. These responsibilities not only provide for smooth operation Of the SAU and Benton School District but also are required by law.

Many questions were discussed by the board and also ideas for making the voters aware we discussed ranging from handouts sent to parents and a possible public hearing before election day in November. It was agreed upon to discuss these options again at our next meeting.

Discussion concerning public involvement due to the lack of a public hearing here in Benton Supt. Fox suggested a mailer to all Benton citizens advising them of the impact from both yay and nay voting results. Chair Swauger made a motion to allow the SAU to mail out informational flyers before the 11.3.26 election, seconded by Member Finoia and passed unanimously.

Policy update: Rescind policy JKD and JKD-R, Suspensions and Expulsions.
These policies are contained in another more recent policy making these policies an unnecessary duplication. Member Bemis made a motion to rescind these policies, seconded by Member Finoia and passed unanimously.
Business items for next meeting were discussed basically with what the budget process will entail if the HB1300 question is passed or not.

Non-public session needed. Motion to suspend regular meeting and open non-public meeting was made by Member Finoia seconded by Chair Swauger and passed unanimously.

Entered non-public meeting at 6:33 pm.

Motion to exit non-public meeting made by Chair Swauger, seconded by Member Bemis and passed unanimously

Returned to public meeting at 6:40 pm

Next meeting date is November 18, 2026 at 6:00 pm.

Motion to adjourn was made by Chair Swauger, seconded by Member Bemis and passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 6:42 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Dwight Swauger, Chair