

## Benton School Board Minutes

April 16, 2025

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

**Also Present:** Dolores 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.*

Supt. Fox called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. Proceeded to reorganization of board.

Reorganization: J. Boutin made a motion to nominate D. Swauger for chair, second by B. Finoia, passed unanimously.

D. Swauger made a motion to nominate J. Boutin for co-chair, seconded by B. Finoia, passed unanimously.

D. Swauger made a motion to nominate B. Finoia as secretary, seconded by J. Boutin, passed unanimously.

Motion to approve the minutes of our meeting on 1/8/25 made by J. Boutin, second by D. Swauger, approved by D. Swauger and J. Boutin, B. Finoia abstained.

D. Swauger made a motion to accept the minutes of the public hearing of 1/29/25, seconded by B. Finoia, approved by D. Swauger and B. Finoia, J. Boutin abstained.

**Superintendents Report:** Supt. Fox brought a team of SAU #23 staff to PSU Spring Education Career Fair on April 3, 2025. It was a good opportunity for PSU students to learn about SAU #23 school districts. SAS and SAT: SAS testing of 3<sup>rd</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> grade students for state adequacy review for SAU and Haverhill schools. SAT testing is offered free of charge to students wanting to continue their education in college.

A Farm to Table grant was given to the SAU and will be shared across the SAU members (\$19,000) total.

A partial reimbursement for CTE transportation for FY 23 and FY 24. (\$382.26)

The State of NH Legislature is working on several bills. The NH School Board Association is tracking over 250 bills that could affect education.

The House version of the state budget includes a statewide budget cap. Even though in every district that voters brought forth a budget or tax rate cap was voted down. A school budget cap would severely limit the power of the school board and the community to provide quality education to students.

HB171 & 174 are proposed bills that would make every public school open to any New Hampshire student, not just resident students. Students who left their resident districts would take 80% of the per pupil cost with them. These "choice" bills would again reduce the power of the local school board to make decisions and budget appropriately for their communities. For communities without schools that rely on tuition agreements with neighboring districts, these bills would complicate (and probably increase) education budgeting.

**K. Ducharme, Business Administrator:** No report submitted.

**Kerri Reilly, Special Education Director:** No report submitted.

Policy DFA-R (Investment Policy) second reading and adopted unanimously.

Tuition agreements with HCSB for 24-25 and 25-26 were signed by Chair Swauger.

Grant Assurances from the NH department of education were initialed and signed by Chair Swauger with 100% backing from the SAU administration that the Benton School District was in full compliance.

Motion was made by J. Boutin to adjourn the meeting and proceed to the non-public session at 6:40 pm, seconded by B. Finoia and passed unanimously. A motion to enter the non-public session was made by J. Boutin and seconded by Chair Swauger, passed unanimously.

A motion to adjourn non-public session was made by J. Boutin and seconded by B. Finoia and passed unanimously. A motion was made by D. Swauger to reconvene regular school board meeting at 6:49, seconded by J. Boutin, passed unanimously.

Next meeting is June 11, 2025 @ 6:00 pm

Motion to adjourn was made by J. Boutin, seconded by B. Finoia and passed unanimously.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:

Dwight Swauger, Chairman 4.22.25





