

**2019 TOWN WARRANT**  
**Town of Benton March 12, 2019**

The Town Meeting was called to order at 7:00PM by the Moderator, Gil Richardson.

He asked that we recognize any members, past or present, of the Armed Forces, as well as any First Responders and thank them for their service to our community and country. A round of applause was given to those members. We were then led through the Pledge of Allegiance. At 7:04PM a motion was made to recess to the School District meeting. The motion was seconded, and by voice vote, the Town Meeting was recessed to the School District meeting.

At 7:22PM, the Moderator reconvened the Town Meeting.

**ARTICLE 1.** To choose persons for the following positions and terms of service:  
(Majority vote required)

The following Town Officers were elected after a voice vote:

<u>Position</u>	<u>Term</u>	<u>Expires</u>	
Selectman	3 years	2022	Regina Elliott
Treasurer	1 year	2020	Dwight Swauger
Town Clerk	1 year	2020	Michael Stiebitz
Tax Collector	1 year	2020	Michael Stiebitz
Supervisor of the Checklist	3 years	2022	Marguerite Christopher
Ballot Clerk	1 year	2020	Frances Hadden
Ballot Inspector	1 year	2020	Maxine Tyler
Surveyor of Wood and Lumber	1 year	2020	Joseph Boutin, Jr.
Planning Board Member	3 years	2022	Kenneth Kealey
Trustee of the Trust Funds	3 years	2022	Martin Noble

**ARTICLE 2.** To see if the Town will vote to accept the reports of the officers and agents as printed. Selectmen recommend this article. (Majority vote required)

Motion was made and seconded to accept article as written. No discussion was forthcoming and article passed by unanimous voice vote.

**ARTICLE 3.** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$126,450 for General Municipal Operations. This article does not include appropriations contained in special or individual articles addressed separately. Selectmen recommend this article. (Majority vote required)

Motion was made and seconded to accept article as written.

Chairman Darcy explained that because the taxes were projected to increase to \$26 per thousand as a direct result of the proposed School Budget, the Selectboard opted to use reserve funds and unassigned fund balances instead of tax dollars to fund road improvements and additions to off-budget funds. Doing so increased the Town Budget's contribution to reducing the tax increase.

The article then was passed with a unanimous voice vote.

**ARTICLE 4.** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$30,000 for paving 500 feet of Tunnel Stream Road with funds to come from the Capital Reserve – Highways/Roads. Selectmen recommend this article. (Majority vote required)

Motion was made and seconded to accept article as written.

Selectman Darcy explained that because of the financial situation this year, this project will refurbish and repave the section of Tunnel Stream Road from the Davis Brook Bridge up the west slope only to the top of the hill. This will leave approximately \$30,000 in the Fund.

The article then was passed by unanimous voice vote.

**ARTICLE 5.** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$3,000 to add to the Revaluation Capital Reserve Fund with the funds to come from the Town's unassigned fund balance. Selectmen recommend this article. (Majority vote required)

Motion was made and seconded to accept article as written.

Selectman Darcy explained that NH law specifies that the Town shall reassess property values every 5 years. It makes sense to put some money away every year to avoid a big charge during the reassessment year.

The article was then passed by unanimous voice vote.

**ARTICLE 6.** To see if the Town will vote to create the Capital Repair and Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund per RSA 31:19-a, for the purpose of paying for unanticipated capital repair and maintenance expenses to Town property, including roads and bridges, cemeteries and Town Hall, and to raise and appropriate \$30,000 to add to the fund, with this amount to come from unassigned fund balance; further to name the Board of Selectmen as agents to expend from said fund. Selectmen recommend this article. (Majority vote required)

Motion was made and seconded to accept article as written.

Chairman Darcy explained that last year we had put \$15,000 into the Capital Reserve Fund – Highways/Roads. The Town wants to collapse that fund into the new Capital Repair and Maintenance Fund. The \$30,000 will come from the \$78,000 FEMA grants, with the remainder of those monies to be made available to reduce the 2019 tax rate to \$20/thousand from the previously estimated \$26/thousand. The new Expendable Trust fund will allow the Town to use the proceeds for any unexpected capital repair or maintenance expense that comes up, rather than requiring a warrant article to appropriate the funds from a conventional Capital Reserve fund.

The article was then passed by unanimous voice vote.

**ARTICLE 7.** To see if the Town will vote to discontinue the Roads and Bridges Expendable Trust Fund. Said funds, with accumulated interest to date of withdrawal, are to be transferred to the municipality's general fund. (Majority vote required).

Motion was made and seconded to accept article as written.

Chairman Darcy explained that at the end of the fiscal year, any monies remaining in the General Fund get transferred into the Unassigned Fund Balance.

The article was passed by unanimous voice vote.

**ARTICLE 8.** Are you in favor of the adoption of the zoning ordinance amendments stated below as proposed by the planning board? The full text of the amendments and a comparison to existing language is available from the Town Clerk during business hours and posted on the Town website. Each Amendment is to be voted on separately:

The article was motioned, seconded and it was voted unanimously to accept as written.

Chairman Darcy stated that the Planning Board member who was to discuss the amendments was unable to attend so he read and explained each amendment.

**Amendment No. 1:** Are you in favor of updating statutory references to current law and clarifying the meaning of language with no substantive changes in Sections 101, 102, 103, 105, 401-A, 505, 507, 801, 802, 803 and 804?

The amendment was motioned, seconded and it was voted unanimously to accept as written.

A paper ballot was distributed and when collected and tallied the final votes were:

30 – Yes

0 – No

The amendment passed by a majority vote.

**Amendment No. 2:** Are you in favor of changing Section 401-C 6 to have the Planning Board rather than Board of Adjustment determine whether to permit a specific commercial or small business use?

The amendment was motioned, seconded and it was voted unanimously to accept as written.

This amendment simplifies the permit process for business applications by eliminating the Zoning Board of Adjustment as the first step. Chairman Darcy explained that this makes sense for our situation as we do not have a standing Board of Adjustment and to constitute one if such an application came in would unduly lengthen the permit process. Existing businesses would only be affected by this Section when applying for a building permit.

A paper ballot was distributed and when collected and tallied the final votes were:

28 – Yes

2 – No

The amendment passed by a majority vote.

**Amendment No. 3:** Are you in favor of changing Section 703 to add requirements to the building permit application and authorizing all land use boards to set fees for applications and professional assistance?

The amendment was motioned, seconded and it was voted unanimously to accept as written.

Chairman Darcy explained that the need for this amendment came up last year when a landowner applied for a lot line adjustment and we realized that we didn't have a fee schedule for such procedures. This will also allow the Town to pass on any professional services fees incurred during the permitting process.

A paper ballot was distributed and when collected and tallied the final votes were:

30 – Yes

0 – No

The amendment passed by a majority vote.

The Moderator asked for and received a motion and a second to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned by unanimous voice vote at 8:00PM.

Selectman Darcy administered the oath of office to all the newly elected present.

A true copy, Attest

*Michael P. Stiebitz* 3/26/19

Michael P. Stiebitz – Town Clerk of Benton

