

**Town of Benton
Select Board Meeting
Monday, January 5, 2026**

Select Board Members: William Darcy, Chair, Regina Elliott, and Philip Chicoine

Also Present: Dwight Swauger, Treasurer and School Board Chair; Mike Stiebitz, Town Clerk and Tax Collector; and Joe Boutin, Jr., road contractor

These draft minutes of the Town of Benton Select Board are believed to be accurate and correct, but they are subject to additions, deletions, and corrections by the Select 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.

Chairman Darcy called the meeting to order at 6:31 PM.

Member Chicoine moved approval of the December 15, 2025, minutes, seconded by Member Elliott, and the motion was approved.

The Board discussed a proposed letter to the automobile junkyard owner on Coventry Road to cease and desist from maintaining the unlawful facility, and suggested a meeting with the owner to explain steps to remediate the issue. The Board members signed the letter.

There was a discussion of the 2026 budget and warrant articles. The Board agreed that there would be no new road paving project for 2026. The Board also considered the warrant article needed to resolve issues with the Town Hall ramp and entrance door. They discussed an alternative method of replacing the Town Hall ramp that did not require a separate subterranean utilities investigation and remediation.

The Board decided they would consider the budget and required warrant articles at the January 19 meeting and hold a budget hearing in concert with the Board of Education on January 26, immediately following the Board of Education budget hearing. .

There was a discussion of the draft School Board budget, which Chair Swauger provided and was developed by SAU 23 staff. It showed a significant reduction, largely due to a decline in expected student enrollment. There was some confusion concerning the special education costs, which Chair Swauger was asked to resolve at the next Board of Education meeting scheduled for later that week.

Treasurer Swauger reported \$392,242.62 in the Bar Harbor Bank & Trust operating account and \$246,989.40 in the NH PDIP account. The Treasurer submitted the checks for the Board's signature.

Member Elliott informed the Board of a seminar to be held by the New Hampshire Old Graveyard Association on cemetery management.

There was also discussion of whether the current Moderator would want to serve or be available in November to perform the Moderator's election functions.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.