

**Town of Benton
Select Board Meeting
Monday, February 19, 2024**

Select Board Members: William R. Darcy, Chair; Kim Carpenter, and Gina Elliott (via phone)

Also Present: Dwight Swauger, Treasurer; Michael Stiebitz, Town Clerk and Tax Collector; Joe Boutin III, Chair, Board of Education; Gil Richardson, Town Moderator; and Laura Richardson, Chair, Trustees of Trust Funds.

These draft minutes of the Town of Benton Select Board are believed 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.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Darcy at 6:31 PM.

Member Elliott moved approval of the February 4, 2024 minutes, seconded by Member Carpenter and approved.

The Board discussed the 2024 proposed appropriations, estimated revenues, Select Board's Report, and warrant articles for the 2024 Annual Report and Town Meeting. The Board approved the draft budget expenditures and revenues, which would produce a surplus of about \$55,000. That amount equaled about a \$1 per thousand property tax reduction from the property taxes caused by the local board of education, state education and Grafton County taxes.

The Board approved the draft Select Board's Report to be included in the Annual Report. Given the increase in the unassigned fund balance, the Board agreed to ask the Town Meeting for approval to add \$30,000 to the Highway Capital Reserve Fund and \$20,000 to the Town Maintenance Expendable Trust. With those additions, the draft warrant articles were approved for posting and inclusion in the Annual Report.

The contract with Woodsville Ambulance was signed.

The Board discussed a requested tax abatement with the Tax Collector.

Treasurer Dwight Swauger reported that the operating account at the Woodsville bank had \$240,857.152 and the NH PDIP account had \$457,382.25.

School Board member Swauger discussed the superintendent search.

The Chair of the Trustee of the Trust Funds discussed various issues including keeping a minimum balance for accounts.

The Chair discussed a notice received from the Treasury Department about ARPA funds.

The next meeting of the Selectboard is March 4, 2024 at 6:30 PM.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:12 PM.