

**Town of Benton  
Select Board Meeting  
Monday, February 5, 2024**

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

Also Present: Dwight Swauger, Treasurer; Michael Stiebitz, Town Clerk and Tax Collector; and Joe Boutin, road contractor.

*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 6:34 PM. Member Carpenter was absent for medical reasons.

Member Elliott moved approval of the January 24, 2024 minutes, seconded by Chairman Darcy and approved. Also approved were the minutes of the January 31, 2024 budget hearing, the accuracy of which were attested to by the Town Clerk and Treasurer.

The Board approved supporting the retention of the Baker River as the name for the river that originates on the slopes of Mount Moosilauke in Benton.

The Board voted to increase the annual stipend for the Treasurer to be equal to that of the Town Clerk.

The Board discussed the proposed budget, with an increase in the appropriations for a few contract items (ambulance and property assessment services), to accommodate multiple elections this year, and a few other minor adjustments from the previous year. The estimated revenue increase is expected to exceed the additional expenses by a considerable amount.

Joe Boutin III, estimated that the 12,500 square feet of Tunnel Stream Road starting at Coventry Road where it is 100 feet wide would cost about \$30,000 to prepare and pave.

Treasurer Dwight Swauger reported that the operating account at the Woodsville bank had \$255,794.52 and the NH PDIP account had \$457,382.25.

There was a discussion of the preparation of the Annual Report.

School Board member Swauger discussed the budget hearing, school budget and the superintendent search, which included the withdrawal of the leading candidate.

Tax Collector Mike Stiebitz noted a tax abatement request had been forwarded to Avitar for a recommendation.

The next meeting of the Selectboard is February 19, 2024 at 6:30 PM.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:09 PM.