

Town of Benton
Select Board Meeting of March 5, 2018

Select Board Members: William R. Darcy, Chair; Regina Elliott and Paula Boutin

Also Present: Dwight Swauger, Treasurer; Joe Boutin, road contractor; Wayne Chevalier, Board of Education; Sue Bird (re building code and zoning regulations)

**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.*

Chairman Darcy called the meeting to order at 6:39 PM.

Chairman Darcy moved approval of the February 19, 2018 meeting minutes, seconded by Member Boutin and approved.

The 2018 Town Warrant was signed certifying that the Warrant was posted at Town Hall. The Warrant was also posted on the website and mailed to all property owners of record.

Wayne R. Chevalier submitted his resignation as a Benton School Board member, effective March 13, 2018, when a replacement will be voted upon at the Town Meeting.

Chairman Darcy reported on efforts to gain funding for the repairs necessitated by two Presidentially declared major disasters in July and October 2017 and to develop a Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) to make the Town eligible for state and federal mitigation grants (e.g., culvert enlargement):

- FEMA submitted our permit application to the Army Corp of Engineers (COE) after adding some maps to the application Benton previously submitted to FEMA;
- Scott Matz and the Chairman met with United States Forest Service (USFS) officials to gain information necessary to complete the Wildfire Management portion of the Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) (notes of the meeting were provided to Members and are appended to these minutes);
- Scott Matz and the Chairman are working on another draft of the HMP to be presented to the Town Meeting and posted on our website and were pleased to find out only the NH Emergency Management staff needs to approve the Plan, not FEMA; and

- NH Emergency Management supplied us with an application for increasing the culvert diameter of the culvert just South of the Davis Brook bridge on Tunnel Stream Road.

The New Hampshire Department of Transportation provided us with a map and forms to complete regarding the roads that were town maintained, which is the basis for the annual highway grants. The Town needs to update their information, including a portion of Long Pond Road, if it is added to our road maintenance responsibilities after the Town Meeting.

Treasurer Dwight Swauger reported that we had \$45,561.29 in our operating account after paying the School Board bill of \$123,785. He also reported \$300,163.96 in the ICS account.

A building permit was received from Ralph Crosswell to erect a two story residence with full basement at 67 Tunnel Stream Road. The drawing provided of the building lot did not address the location of the new residence and its distances from the water well and septic system and did not make clear if a new driveway is required (and resulting driveway permit). Chairman Darcy was tasked with writing a letter asking for supplemental information.

The Chairman also made note of the following items:

- A meeting with the Department of Revenue Administration (DRA) assessment specialists and Steve Allen is scheduled for the March 19 Selectboard meeting;
- A meeting with the NH DOT is scheduled for the April 30 meeting to discuss DOT bridge work on Route 25;
- Annual Reports were mailed and received by residents and both the Report and Warrant were posted on our website;
- The NH Department of Environmental Services is requiring more information of Glenclyff before approving their dredge and fill application; and
- The DRA sent Benton its latest property assessment equalization ratio analysis which will be sent to Steve Allen and be a subject at the next Selectboard meeting.

Sue Bird, who owns property on Tunnel Stream Road which was cleared last year, asked for information about what uses could be made of her property consistent with Benton's building permit and zoning regulations. It was noted that the State Building Code also had to be complied with and a copy of Benton's zoning regulations will be emailed to her.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 PM.

Notes on Meeting with John Neely USFS 2.21.18
Re Wildfire Management

Analysis:

Benton relatively low risk; no Benton wildfires since last HMP in 2011

Greatest natural fire risk, red oak, blueberries, etc., in areas away from population (Owls Head, Blueberry Mt, Black Mt.)

Benton Flats area has grasses for fire potential; also power lines (Granite State Power Link) and pipelines (location?).

Places where humans congregate, like picnic area at Long Pond higher risk (about 80% of fires human created).

Small Benton population with low population density, few human congregation areas, and no or very few multi-family housing means relatively low risk.

Mitigation:

Identify, mark, maintain and improve dry hydrants

Put Forest Fire awareness sign out at Town Hall where it can be seen from road to remind citizens

UNH study of Blueberry and Black Mountains to determine effect of mitigation fires to be performed in cooperation with USFS to reduce future fire risk in high risk areas.

Consider measures to protect other higher risk areas identified by Fire Chiefs (N. Haverhill and Haverhill Corner)

Maintenance of woodland roads to reduce fire hazards (borders)

Zoning/building code changes to consider higher fire risk areas

Require street numbers at end of driveways to assist fire responders