

Town of Benton
Select Board Meeting
Monday January 6, 2020

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

Also Present: Dwight Swauger, Treasurer

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 6:35 PM.

Member Elliott moved approval of the December 23, 2019 minutes, seconded by Chairman Darcy and approved.

Because of the Board of Education meeting scheduled at the same time, the budget workshop was moved from Wednesday to Thursday, January 9 at 6:30 PM.

The Board signed the NH DRA form MS-60-W, the audit waiver request form and prepared to file the MS-60-A upon approval of the MS-60-W by the DRA.

One of the items impairing the grant application for the Tunnel Stream Road Culvert Project last year was the lack of a “Commitment Letter” for the 25% municipal funds match. So that we will be prepared the next time a grant opportunity presents itself Chairman Darcy made the following motion: “That the Town of Benton commits \$32,750 to the Tunnel Stream Road Culvert project, which funds are to come from the Town’s unassigned fund balance or expendable trust fund for roads and bridges, and authorizes the Chairman to sign a commitment letter for those funds as a part of a NHSEM/FEMA grant application.” Member Elliott seconded the motion and it was approved.

Chairman Darcy presented an outline of the Selectboard’s report to be included in the Annual Report, which was then discussed:

Taxes and Budgets: 5 year rate stability and increased reserves; Bd of Ed

2019 Accomplishments:

Multi-Hazard mitigation Plan (eligibility for grants)

Environmental Permits for Tunnel Steam Road culvert near Davis Brook, work on grants

Lawsuit against USFS for underpaying PILOT for WMNF land in Benton

Cemetery: Removed some trees, bushes, stumps, moved some of the granite posts dividing old from new cemetery plot to border parking lot. Mention first year of contracted maintenance and worked out well and within budget. Mention proposed work in next year through warrant article.

Sand/salt shed behind Town Hall built and painted (credit Stiebitz, Boutin and Cameron Bennett) talked about since 2014 Town Meeting

Excavation of Town Hall sump pump drain

Barrier and signs on Tunnel Stream Road (talked about since 2014 Town Meeting).

Snowplow turnaround area and No Parking signage on Long Pond Road.

Future Projects included in warrant articles

In addition to Cemetery projects mentioned above; Paving Tunnel Stream Rd; Town Hall Fence: Bring Broadband to Benton

Proposed Warrant Articles in addition to elections, reports, etc.

Tunnel Stream Road repaving (\$35K for another 500 ft)

Cemetery: tree & stump removal and survey for additional gravesites and, wall and gravestone repairs (\$20K non-lapsing)

Add \$30K to Expendable Capital Reserve Fund

Bringing Broadband to Benton (DSL, cable) from Capital Reserve Fund (\$25K non-lapsing)

Erect fence on for Town Hall side lawn for aesthetics and protection of septic, propane and generator, discussed in 2013 Town Meeting (\$10K)

Member Elliott noted that signage should be added to the cemetery and town hall warrant articles.

Treasurer Swauger reported that \$150,000 was moved from the operating account to the ICS account before the start of the year, resulting in an operating account balance, after checks to be

signed today, of \$207,471.40 and an ICS balance of \$383,108. 30. Checks for bills prepared by the Treasurer were signed by the Board.

A notice of intent to cut timber was received for a project on Long Pond Road and duly posted. The bond funds have not yet been received and the notice was not signed by the Board.

Woodsville Ambulance sent two letters, one alerting us to a fee increase and the other asking for permission to reassign High Street to Warren Ambulance, which is closer and can get there faster. The Board agreed to the reassignment of High Street and prepared to include the fee increase in the new budget. The Chairman agreed to send a letter to Woodsville Ambulance regarding the reassignment of High Street and the calculation of the fee increase.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for January 20, 2019.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 PM.