

Town of Benton
Select Board Meeting
Tuesday August 8, 2022

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

Also Present: Dwight Swauger, Treasurer; Michael Stiebitz, Town Clerk and Tax Collector; and Joe Boutin, Jr., road contractor and Surveyor of Wood & Lumber

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 6:33 PM.

Member Elliott moved approval of the minutes for the meetings of July 26, 2002, seconded by Member Carpenter and approved.

The Chairman reported on the filing of the annual federal System for Award Management (SAM) registration renewal so Benton could receive any federal grants that were available.

The Board discussed cutting back some vegetative growth at the end of Howe Hill Road to increase visibility and safety.

The Board discussed the use of federal ARPA funds, the second tranche of which had recently been received (about \$19,000, for a current total after computer expenses of about \$36,000). The alternatives were considered and the Board is leaning towards using the funds for a first year \$20 per month internet subsidy for each resident receiving NHEC electric service, if the federal government approves and NHEC would administer the program. Since the current NHEC rate is \$49.95 for 100 Mbps download and upload speeds, it would mean Benton residents would get high speed internet for about \$30/month and, if they qualified for the Affordable Connectivity Program, (making less than 200% of the poverty level income) they would receive an additional \$30/month subsidy. These incentives would provide direct financial benefits to Benton residents, increase the use of high-speed internet, increase property values, and provide significant economic and social benefits for Benton residents.

Treasurer Swauger reported the operating account balance was \$343,875.03 and the ICS account had \$233,806.39.

Mike Stiebitz reported a banner month for car registrations generating \$9,000 for the Town and that our tax receivables for the last three years was down to \$26,000.

The Board discussed the September 12 Primary Election and the availability of Selectboard members to perform their duties.

The next meeting will be August 22, 2022.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:22 PM.