

APPROVED MINUTES  
SELECTBOARD MEETING  
TOWN OF BENSON, VT  
MARCH 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024, 7:00pm

**Selectboard Present:**

Linda Peltier (Chair), Guy Charlton, Brad Barrett, Tom Bartholomew, Jerod Glover

**Others Present:**

Heidi Chandler (Town Clerk/Treasurer), Carrie LaFond (Selectboard Assistant)

**Public Present:** Ben Bartholomew, Norma Philips, Jack Helm, Dave Bartholomew, Jim Pritchard, Wayne Fletcher, Jon Dodd, Daphne Bartholomew, Paul LaFond

**Call to Order:**

Linda Peltier (Chair) called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

**Approved Agenda:**

Motion to approve the agenda as presented was made by Brad Barrett, seconded by Jerod Glover, motion passed unanimously.

**Public Comment:**

- The dirt roads out by the lake have some potholes that could use filling.

**Approve Selectboard Minutes:**

Motion to approve February 20<sup>th</sup> Selectboard minutes as presented by Jerod Glover, seconded by Brad Barrett, motion passed unanimously.

**Pay Bills:**

Motion by Guy Charlton to pay Regular Bills in the amount of \$26,987.03 second by Jerod Glover, motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Guy Charlton to pay Regular Payroll in the amount of \$4,612.35, second by Jerod Glover motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Guy Charlton to pay Highway Payroll in the amount of \$5,186.35 second by Jerod Glover, motion passed, Brad Barrett abstained from the vote.

**Highway Department:**

Rd Foreman Report

- Loader has been serviced.
- Grader has been serviced.
- Excavator has been serviced.

- (5) loads of stone put on the roads
- Emergency culvert repair on Howard Hill Rd
- On schedule to have everything done for the garage demolition

Overweight Permits

Motion by Brad Barrett, second by Guy Charlton for Linda Peltier (Chair) to sign the excess weight permits for S & J Stearns Inc Excavation, Panoramic Landscaping, Lake Champlain Coal Co, AmeriGas, Consolidated Communications and Orwell Sand and Gravel, motion passed unanimously.

**Transfer Station:** Nothing

**Town Clerk Report:**

- Energy audit report is back and available.
- Preparing for Town Meeting tomorrow

**Old Business:**

Town Garage

- Tom Bartholomew provided a list of items that still need to be done for the new town garage (see list in file).
- Still have not received the Labor and Industry permit- needs to be followed- up- on.

Personnel Policy Overtime Amendment

Motion by Jerod Glover, second by Guy Charton to sign the previously approved amendment to the personnel Policy adopted 10/14/13, revised 10-13-14, revised 10-23-17, revised 2/20/24, motion passed unanimously.

ARPA Funds

- Discussion on using ARPA funds.
- ARPA funds need to be used in compliance with the Town’s procurement policy.
- ARPA funds can not be put in Reserve Accounts
- ARPA funds can not be used to pay down old debt.
- Discussion on whether the garage meets the procurement policy to use ARPA funds.

**New Business:**

Town Meeting Preparation

- Areas of the budget were divided up for questions to be answered at Town Meeting by specific board members.
- Tom Batholomew provided the board with options to use ARPA funds to reduce the tax burden (see file for handout).
- Discussion on areas the budget could have possibly reductions.
- Discussion on the need for a five-year plan
- Discussion on making a motion to present the letter with funding options at Town Meeting if all members of the board were in support.

Motion by Jerod Glover, second by Tom Bartholomew present the 2024-2025 Funding Proposal (see file) at Town Meeting with three different options with full support of the Selectboard; Jerod -yes. Tom- yes, Linda-yes, Guy -no, Brad-no, motion not carried.

Discussion on 4 things that could potentially happen at Town Meeting 1. Pass Budget, 2. Use ARPA to reduce amount of taxes to be raised, 3. Reduce Budget or 4. Vote No and start over.

MRGP Permit- Tabled

**Correspondence:**

Letter of Concern Stage Rd- Read at meeting, copy in file, no action taken.

Email- Sam Bartholomew-

- Discussion on emails (see file for emails).
- Board needs to take a hard look at road standards.
- Discussion on paving Stage Rd
- No action taken, tabled until after town meeting.

Everyone wishes to thank Tom Bartholmew for his service.

**Adjournment:**

Motion to adjourn by Brad Barrett at 8:58pm.

Respectfully submitted.

Carrie LaFond

Selectboard Assistant

***Documents referenced in these minutes can be found at the Benson Town Office.***