

Town of Rowe – FY2013  
Board of Selectmen – Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, June 5, 2013 – 3:00pm  
Rowe Town Hall

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Chairman Wilson at 3:05pm.

**Present:** Chairman Marilyn Wilson, Vice Chairman Susan Gleason, Selectman Noel Abbott

**Also Present:** Town Coordinator Ellen Miller, Henry Dandeneau, Ann Foshay, Susan Wood, Betty Lenth, Judy Pierce, Jodi Brown, John Magnago, Carlos Heiligmann, Bill Loomis, Joyce Boutwell, David Cousineau, Susie Zavotka, Wayne Zavotka

**Audience:** Chair Wilson announced that audience members would be given two (2) minutes each to speak, for a total of 10 minutes.

**Recording of Meeting:** Audience member Paul McLatchy III declared that he was audio recording the meeting.

**Audience:**

Withdrawal of Name from BOH Letter: Board of Health member Jodi Brown wishes to have her name removed from the letter of complaint.

Voter's Name missing from voters' list: Judy Pierce read a letter to the Select Board about a private message from Cindy Laffond who could not be present. Town Coordinator made a statement about the issue.

Citizen Added Comments: William Loomis made comments about the voter's list.

**BOH Letter Asserting "Lack of Cooperation":** Ellen Miller stated that this matter is on this evening's agenda at the end of the meeting to be handled in Executive Session, but Ms. Miller is choosing to discuss the matter in open session. She asked the Chair if she could read a letter concerning the matter. Chair Wilson stated that she wanted to finish the audience comment period first and then we will go right to that.

**Building Permit Fees:** Susan Wood reported that she was shocked that the fee to obtain a building permit for an approximate 1,000 s.f. addition (2 small rooms) to their dwelling was \$964. Previously these permits were free, so she was quite surprised. She was also surprised that a convenience fee of \$27.50 was being charged for paying on line. She asked if anything can be done about these high fees. Chair Wilson stated that Ms. Wood had notified her last night about this matter, that the fee structure was astronomical, and that it would be addressed later in the meeting when appointments for FY2014 are discussed. Ms. Wood asked to be kept informed as to what was happening on this.

Chair Wilson had to invoke MA General Law Chapter 30A Section 20 to quell an unruly audience member.

**BOH Letter Concerning Lack of Cooperation:** Chair Wilson stated that a letter was received from the Board of Health citing lack of cooperation by Ms. Miller in not supplying a copy of the school septic system plans. The letter was signed by BOH Chair David Cousineau and members Jodi Brown and Jennifer Morse. [Note: BOH member Jodi Brown has withdrawn her name from that letter.] Chair Wilson stated that this was also corroborated by two other

individuals: BOH Clerk Marcella and Margie Morse. The Select Board had informed Ms. Miller that an executive session had been called for this evening to discuss the matter; however, Ms. Miller has waived the executive session and wanted the matter to be discussed in open session. Selectman Abbott stated that at the June 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting he had abstained from the vote to call for an executive session. He now states that he feels very uncomfortable about the process and that the subject should be dropped, and that it is wasting the Board's time. He states that he should have voted no at that time. Ms. Miller then read a letter from her to the Select Board in response to the BOH letter. Chair Wilson then made a motion that a warning be issued to Ms. Miller stating that this not happen again; that when she is asked for something that she provide it. The vote was seconded. The vote passed (2/1/0). Selectman Abbott voted no.

**IT Support:** The Board voted unanimously (3/0/0) to sign an agreement with Northeast IT Systems, Inc. for IT support. Chair Wilson stated that we will meet them on July 2<sup>nd</sup> at 11:00am for a kick-off meeting. Chair Wilson will provide Ms. Miller with a copy of the signed agreement.

**Repayment of Wages:** Ms. Miller reported that she had sent communication to School Counsel Russ Dupere asking that he send correspondence to Mary Scully asking for repayment of wages paid in error.

**HR Policy Manual:** Chair Wilson passed out several pages of a draft HR policy manual. She stated that she had been working with Town Counsel Joe Fair on the document. Chair Wilson will get complete copies of the manual to the select board members.

**Letter to Mohawk Central Office Concerning Outstanding Purchases for Replacement of School Contents:** Selectman Abbott presented a draft letter to Supt. Buonoconti and Business Manager Joanne Blier asking for an estimate of additional expenditures needed from insurance proceeds to replace contents for the school. There was a motion to send the letter to the Central Office. The motion was seconded, and passed (2/0/1). Vice Chairman Gleason abstained as this matter had been discussed before she was elected to the Board.

**School Invoice Processing Procedure:** Selectman Abbott made a motion to rescind the procedure that was adopted at last week's meeting. The motion failed for lack of a second.

**Tax Collector and Assessors Computer Replacements:** Chair Wilson stated that Sandy Daviau is going to get Chair Wilson a list of what computer equipment is needed by the Tax Collector and the Board of Assessors. Chair Wilson stated that \$77604.00 has been spent on computer hardware and software in 10 years. She stated that most equipment is 7 years old or more. Ellen Miller stated that the following workstations are new or relatively new: Town Coordinator workstation and laptop, Treasurer, Town Clerk, Nurse, BOH. The following are older: DPW laptop, Tax Collector, Assessors, Accountant. Note: the items mentioned by Ellen Miller as being new were not part of the \$77604.00 referenced by Chair Wilson.

**Town Hall Hours:** Chair Wilson stated that she has heard from many people that they would like the town hall open regularly Monday through Friday. Vice Chair Gleason stated that she hears a lot about no one being in the town hall on Fridays, and stated that Sheila needs to answer the phone on Fridays. She said we need to look and see what will be better for people. Ms. Miller stated that it is not necessary for Sheila to answer the phone on Fridays and that people should be leaving messages via the phone systems voice message system. Selectman Abbott stated that because of Ellen's workload, and the need to work at differing times (evenings, weekends, off site meetings, etc.) that it would be impossible to do her job effectively. In addition, employees who are in executive positions are responsible for achieving

results rather than being at a desk all of the time. He believes we need to look at this in depth. He added that other area Towns have their Town Halls open only at limited times and some have open hours once or twice per week. Many townspeople have voice concern about the inaccessibility of the Town Hall on Fridays.

**Meeting Minutes:** Chair Wilson had asked Ms. Miller where Select Board meeting minutes are kept. She stated that the originals are locked in a cabinet in her office. The Board voted unanimously (3/0/0) that copies of Select Board meeting minutes be kept in a binder that is readily available, that copies be given to the Town Clerk and that the originals be kept locked up. Ms. Miller stated that copies of Select Board meeting minutes from 2011 through present are available on the town website.

**ZBA Resignation:** Paul McLatchy III turned in to the Select Board his written resignation from the Zoning Board of Appeals effective June 5, 2013.

**Building Inspection Program:** Chair Wilson stated that perhaps Shawn Kimberly of Colrain would be willing to be the Building Inspector for Rowe. She will call him this evening and report at the next meeting. She will find out how he would be compensated for the position (stipend, retained fees, etc.), and will find out what his building permit application process would be. She presumed the permit fee would be \$125.00.

**FY2014 Appointments:** The Select Board voted unanimously (3/0/0) to re-appoint all officers whose terms are expiring, with the exception of the Police Chief, the FCCIP Building Inspector, and the WiredWest Committee.

**Franklin County Emergency Communication System:** The Select Board voted unanimously (3/0/0) to renew the agreement for the FC Emergency Communications System for another three years to June 20, 2016 on the recommendation of Ellen Miller. It will automatically renew for another three years at the time, and then one additional year after that, unless reviews/changes to the agreement take place in any of these years.

**c.32B Annual Report:** The Select Board voted (2/0/1) to approve and sign the c.32B annual report prepared by Hampshire County Group Insurance Trust, which shows an annual savings of \$21,313.44 over the GIC Benchmark. The report is to be filed with the Secretary of Administration and Finance year. The report is submitted by HCGIT on behalf of the town. This is the second annual report. Last year's report showed similar savings. [Note: Selectman Abbott was out of the room at the time of the vote.]

**Attorney General Letter re OML Complaint 2013-68:** Communication was received from the Attorney General's Office stating that their investigation into this complaint has concluded, and that no violation was found. The matter has been concluded.

**HRA—CDBG Funds:** Ms. Miller reported that Franklin County Housing and Redevelopment Authority has contacted the town to see if the town wants to apply for CDBG funds. They stated that a few Rowe residents are on the waiting list for funds to have home repairs done. The Select Board is interested in pursuing funds. Ellen Miller stated that she does not have the time to take on the application process. Chair Wilson stated that she would meet with Ellen Miller to review what is required to apply for these funds.

**Town Hall Window Cleaning:** Ms. Miller asked that since there are ample funds left in the town hall custodian wage account could Danielle Larned work on cleaning the town hall windows. Permission was given to have this work done.

**Town Hall Custodian:** Ms. Miller reported that two (2) applications for this position have been received. The application deadline is June 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Emails to Attorney Marc Terry:** A Freedom of Information request dated June 4, 2013, for records was received from Cindy Laffond. She has requested copies of two (2) emails sent to Attorney Marc Terry by Marilyn Wilson.

**FCCIP Activity:** Activity for May 2013 was reviewed.

**Officers Returned to Duty:** Police Chief Dandeneau reported that two officers that were on (personal) medical leave have been returned to full duty by their doctors.

**Executive Session:** At 5:25pm the Select Board took the following roll call vote to go into Executive Session to review the twelve (12) applications for the Police Chief's position, and to reconvene in open session to sign treasury and payroll warrants following the executive session:

Chair Wilson: aye  
Vice Chair Gleason: aye  
Selectman Abbott: aye

Town Coordinator Ellen Miller left the meeting at 5:25pm and did not attend the executive session, nor the reconvened open session.

Reviewed and discussed applications; narrowed field to 4 applicants. Decided to review independently and come back next week ready to vote on Police Chief. Roll call vote to come out of Executive Session at 6:10pm to reconvene in Open Session :

Chair Wilson: aye  
Vice Chair Gleason: aye  
Selectman Abbott: aye

Meeting continued in Open Session for the signing of Warrants.

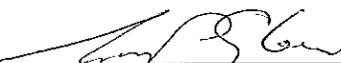
**Adjournment:** The Select Board voted unanimously (3/0/0) to adjourn the meeting at 6:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen B. Miller, Town Coordinator

Approved:

  
Marilyn Wilson, Chairman

  
Susan P. Gleason, Vice Chairman

July 17, 2013

Date Approved

Noel Abbott, Selectman

**Documents:**

- Agenda
- Jodi Brown letter of withdrawal of name from BOH letter
- Letter from Cindy Laffond read aloud by Judy Pierce
- Board of Health letter citing lack of cooperation
- Ellen Miller reponse to BOH letter
- Northeast IT Systems contract
- Letter to Mohawk Central Office Concerning Outstanding Purchases for Replacement of School Contents
- Paul McLatchy III ZBA Resignation
- FC Emergency Communication System agreement
- c32B Annual Report to Office of Admin & Finance
- Attorney General Letter re OML Complaint 2013-68
- Freedom of Information Act request from Cindy Laffond for two documents