

Rowe Board of Selectmen Meeting  
August 1, 2019  
6:30 P.M.  
Rowe Town Hall – Meeting Room 1

**Board of Selectmen:** Chair Charles Sokol, Vice-Chair Jennifer Morse, Selectman Ed Silva  
**Administrative Staff:** Paul McLatchy III, Administrative Assistant to the Boards  
**Other Attendees:** MLP Manager David Dvore  
**Audience of Citizens:** None

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Chair Sokol at 6:30 P.M., a quorum of the board present.

**Announcement of Recording Devices:** Two recording devices were present.

**FCRHRA:** The Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority sent a letter to the town informing them of some work they've done in town, as well as to say that there are still funds available for low-income residents. This will be mentioned in the next issue of the Goal Post.

**Cliff Swallows:** The cliff swallows that have been nesting on the side of the town hall have left for the season. The building was washed by resident Christopher Hyytinen and two out-of-town volunteers. It has been recommended by the Mass Audubon Society that the building be washed every week or two while they are here, which people have already stepped forward to do next year. A hose will be made available for them. Members seemed to be in agreement that this was a good solution for everyone.

**Social Media:** A town employee recently made certain remarks about town officials on a blog, and there was also a negative response by a town employee on a separate fire department posting on social media. Members discussed how and where to "draw the line" between appropriate behavior as an employee and protection of First Amendment rights. Chair Sokol will speak with Counsel and the employee to try and handle the matter in a "simple" way.

**Planning Board:** The Board will meet with the Planning Board on August 8<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 to jointly appoint a fifth member to the Planning Board. Member Doug Wilson resigned on July 17<sup>th</sup>.

**MLP Updates:** MLP Manager David Dvore entered the meeting at 6:50 and addressed the following items:

Intergovernmental Agreement: The Rowe and Heath Boards of Selectmen/MLP Boards have been in communication about a property owner whose driveway is in Rowe, but property is in Heath. A document has been drafted and approved by Town Counsel that allows Rowe to provide broadband service to the premises. Heath's Select Board/MLP Board has already signed.

**MOTION TO SIGN: A motion was made by Vice-Chair Morse and seconded by Chair Sokol to approve and sign the "Intergovernmental Agreement for Fiber Optic Network Services Between Town of Rowe/Rowe MLP and Town of Heath/Heath MLP". The vote was 3-0-0 in favor.**

Outage: There was an outage in service for the last two days. Apparently the problem was with the state's fiber line, not the town's lines or equipment. Whip City Fiber was quick to work with appropriate parties to remedy the issue, and feedback about their customer service was very positive.

Manager Dvore explained that the long-range plan is to either run lines that connect with the long-range lines running along the high-tension wires, or to have a redundant connection to the hub in Charlemont. This would reduce any downtime from future outages and make fixing the problem much easier.

Accounting/Finances: Manager Dvore had a meeting with Accountant Tracey Baronas and Auditor Tom Scanlon. The Department of Revenue's Division of Local Services (DLS) has made it clear they have no jurisdiction over MLP accounting. Only the debt services for the network construction is under DLS oversight. There should be very little for the town accountant to do for operations accounting. Manager Dvore explained the need to plan ahead for funding a depreciation reserve to replace technological components. Depending on costs, this may be able to be paid for through subscriber fees, but if not, the town may need to contribute. He's estimating \$100,000 will need to be funded over 10 years.

Fiber Hut: Members briefly discussed landscaping/beautification of the fiber hut. Manager Dvore will look into whether siding/roofing work will void any warranties, and Selectman Silva will look into some options for the landscaping.

Departure: Manager Dvore left the meeting at 7:30.

**Highway Updates:** Selectman Silva reported on the following:

- A resident may be coming into a meeting soon to make complaints about the Highway Department's work on Davis Mine Road.
- Another resident requested that the town replace dead maple trees on her property. Selectman Silva and Superintendent Larned looked at where the town easement ended, and the trees do not fall within it. Therefore, it is the owner's responsibility to replace any dead trees.
- Cyrus Stage Road is being paved this weekend.
- Monroe Hill Road has been patched up.
- The new DPW truck has been lettered.

**Fire Department Truck:** The fire engine that the town will be purchasing from Charlemont should be coming in roughly the third week in August. This will replace Engine 4.

**Old Home Day:** Old Home Day went well. The Rowe Fire Department and/or Fire Association have expressed an interest in taking a lead on the event next year. Fireworks have been reserved for July 11, 2020.

**Assistant Treasurer:** In order to be bonded for payroll and as a backup signatory, Mr. McLatchy has to officially be appointed as assistant treasurer.

**MOTION TO APPOINT: A motion was made by Vice-Chair Morse and seconded by Chair Sokol to appoint Paul McLatchy III as assistant treasurer. The vote was 3-0-0 in favor.**

**Assistant EMD:** It was requested that an assistant emergency management director be appointed to attend meetings during the day when the emergency management director could not.

**MOTION TO APPOINT: A motion was made by Chair Sokol and seconded by Selectman Silva to appoint Dennis Annear as assistant emergency management director. The vote was 3-0-0 in favor.**

**Summer Youth Program:** The Board has discussed the possibility of combining the park summer program with the grasshopper program under one supervisor. Park Manager Sean Loomis is in favor of this, but DPW Superintendent Lance Larned has reservations. Superintendent Larned will be invited to the next meeting and this will be discussed.

**Situation Awareness Training:** Vice-Chair Morse spoke with AJ from North Adams Ambulance. He is able to come to the town and offer situational awareness training for \$250. All public-facing employees would be asked to attend, and perhaps even some from surrounding towns.

**Code of Conduct Policy:** Members reviewed a draft code of conduct policy offered by Vice-Chair Morse from Ashfield. This lays out how employees and officials should be treated while in their capacity at town hall. There was a recent incident when an employee was alone in town hall in the evening, and a resident made her feel very uncomfortable. Posted hours and door locking practices were briefly discussed.

**MOTION TO ADOPT: A motion was made by Chair Sokol and seconded by Selectman Silva to adopt the Code of Conduct Policy as amended. The vote was 3-0-0 in favor.**

**Town Report:** Vice-Chair Morse requested that the Board consider having the town clerk do the town report. Chair Sokol recommended that the administrative staff coordinate who would be best to do the work, and also opined that the Board cannot task an elected official with such a project.

**MOTION: A motion was made by Chair Sokol and seconded by Vice-Chair Morse to give the town clerk the first right of refusal to generate the town report each year. The vote was 3-0-0 in favor.**

**Town-wide Calling System:** Members would like to come up with a policy, as they feel it may be overused and people are not listening to the messages. Perhaps a new “social events” category could be set up that people can opt out of. Vice-Chair Morse will work on a draft policy.

**Website:** Mr. McLatchy is working with other departments on updating their pages on the website.

**Vacation Time:** Park Manager Loomis was not told about his excess vacation time, and did not use it by the end of the fiscal year. He is required to use it by September 1<sup>st</sup>, but as summers are his busiest times, he will not be able to do so. Vice-Chair Morse asked if there was a way to remedy this. Discussion followed about how vacation is tracked and whether it can appear on pay stubs. Chair Sokol will speak with the treasurer about this.

**Wired West Delegates:** Delegates to Wired West were not included in the Board’s annual appointments.

**MOTION TO APPOINT: A motion was made by Vice-Chair Morse and seconded by Chair Sokol to appoint David Dvore as delegate and Russell Jolly as alternate. The vote was 3-0-0 in favor.**

**Police Officer:** A request was received from Police Chief Shippee that Kyle Shippee be permitted to work details and special events. She pointed out that other employees in town had relatives working under them. Members referenced an opinion from Town Counsel that *did* mention a concern about family oversight, but focused more on the fact that Mr. Shippee is a full-time employee and that any time worked as an officer would

be overtime. The Board discussed, but took no vote, to allow Mr. Shippee to work details in town only if they were paid by an outside entity (and therefore would not require overtime).

**FCCIP Contract:** The annual Franklin County Cooperative Inspection Program contract was received.

**MOTION TO RENEW: A motion was made by Chair Sokol and seconded by Vice-Chair Morse to renew the FCCIP Contract. The vote was 3-0-0 in favor.**

**Fitzgerald Fencing Contract:** Fitzgerald Fencing has submitted a contract in the amount of \$6,563.40 to install a fence at West Cemetery. The labor was originally much lower (almost half), but increased due to prevailing wages. Vice-Chair Morse encouraged the Board to reconsider how the cemetery projects were funded, as most of their work is done as the fiscal year turns over and requires any unspent funds to be returned.

**MOTION TO SIGN: A motion was made by Vice-Chair Morse and seconded by Chair Sokol to sign the Fitzgerald Fencing Contract. The vote was 3-0-0 in favor.**

**Goal Post:** The first issue under the new editor has been released. Members agreed it looks nice. The new editor is going to work on updating/culling the out-of-town recipients, removing those who don't want one. She will also ensure non-taxpayer subscribers are paying for their issues.

**I.T.:** A number of options were given to the Board by Northeast IT for license agreements and email. The Board seemed to be leaning towards Office 365 Premium and the third-party SPAM filtering, encryption, and archiving options, provided funding is available. Mr. McLatchy was given authorization to have the Fire Department's computer upgraded by Northeast IT, as it had been having problems with operating.

**Liberty Flag:** The Liberty Flag and pole have been installed at the base of Potter Road. The pole was supposedly crafted in 1976 for the bicentennial. The pole was donated by Clayton and Ellen Miller, and the flag was donated by Jennifer Morse and Brandon Sprague. A note of thanks will appear in the next Goal Post.

**Action Item Updates:** Board members gave updates that hadn't already been addressed in the meeting:

Vice-Chair Morse is working on setting up a meeting with the entities involved in the Emergency Action Plans (EAP). She is going to work on seeing if the bushes behind the Gracy House might be able to be moved to the fiber hut.

Selectman Silva has worked with the DPW and Fire Department regarding the pouring of a concrete pad for the new Fire Station generator. The town will prepare the site, but someone will need to come in and pour the pad when the generator has been ordered. He also added dirt road grading to the DPW's work list for the next eight weeks.

**Administrative Assistant Updates:** Mr. McLatchy asked whether he should offer his services as a notary during his office hours. He was told to do so. He also asked about whether the books in his office can be disposed of, as they are not needed and are available online.

**MOTION TO AUTHORIZE: A motion was made by Chair Sokol and seconded by Vice-Chair Morse to authorize the disposal of the books in the Administrative Assistant's office. The vote was 3-0-0 in favor.**

**Hazelton Road Property:** Vice-Chair Morse went on an inspection last week. Progress is being made.

**Town Administrator:** Selectman Silva asked if this was still being looked at. Members seemed to still be interested in pursuing this. Discussion of salaries followed, and it seems most towns pay between \$55,000 and \$60,000 for a full-time administrator.

**Minutes:** The following was addressed:

June 27, 2019: Several small changes were made to the wording and formatting. Mr. McLatchy will update the document and bring it to the next meeting.

**MOTION TO APPROVE: A motion was made by Chair Sokol and seconded by Vice-Chair Morse to approve the minutes as amended. The vote was 3-0-0 in favor.**

July 11, 2019: Members found a number of issues with wording clarity, and wanted to wait to address these issues with Executive Secretary Janice Boudreau. There were concerns about having minutes proofread prior to submission, as they become an official document once in draft form.

Level of Detail: Members discussed how to try and find a middle ground between an outline and too detailed. It was suggested that minutes lean towards being detailed, and that if more detail can be added without making something *less* clear, it should be done.

**Next Meeting:** The Board will meet on Thursday, August 8<sup>th</sup> to make a joint appointment to the Planning Board, meet with Superintendent Lance Larned, and also discuss Town Counsel. Chair Sokol will participate remotely, and Vice-Chair Morse will chair the meeting.

**Adjourn:** A motion was made by Chair Sokol and seconded by Selectman Silva to adjourn. The vote was 3-0-0 in favor, and the meeting was closed at 9:15 P.M.

*Respectfully Submitted,*  
Paul McLatchy III  
Administrative Assistant to the Boards

Approved on: August 8, 2019

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Charles Sokol, Chairman*

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
*Jennifer Morse, Vice-Chair*

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
*Edward Silva, Selectman*