



Town of Rowe  
**Board of Selectmen** Minutes  
Thursday, December 15, 2022–6:00 p.m.  
Rowe Town Hall – Hearing Room 1  
and Via Remote Participation

**Board of Selectmen:** Chair Charles Sokol, Vice-Chair Joanne Semanie, Selectman Silva  
**Present:** Executive Secretary Janice Boudreau  
**Audience:** Treasurer Green, Rick Williams, Ellen Miller

**Call to Order:** Chair Sokol called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

Announcement of recording devices- One  
Noteworthy Announcements- None

**6:00 p.m. - TAX CLASSIFICATION HEARING TOWN OF ROWE – Rowe Board of Assessors**

The Rowe Select Board will hold a Public Hearing on to establish a minimum residential factor in accordance with the provisions in Mass. Gen. Law Chap. 58, Sec. 1A

Assessors Chair Rick Williams explained the decision to select the percentage of the tax levy that each class of real property and personal property will bear. The split tax rate is established by adopting a Minimum Residential Factor (MRF) of less than 1.0 at a Tax Classification Hearing.

Rick reported that the Board of Assessors voted unanimously to recommend that the Board adopt a MRF of 0.5804 which will result in a Residential/Commercial/Industrial/Property split rate of \$5.18 (residential) and 9.48 (Commercial/Industrial/Property) rates.

The largest impact on total town valuation was resolution of the Bear Swamp Appellate Tax Board (ATB) appeals cases via a negotiated settlement tax agreement and Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) agreement. This resulted in an approximate 10% reduction in Bear Swamp's valuation which will remain in effect for a 5-year duration. The other ATB appeals cases remain unresolved and still pending.

**MOTION: Following discussion, Chair Sokol made a motion to accept the Board of Assessors adoption of a Minimum Residential Factor of 0.5804 resulting in a Residential/Commercial/Industrial/Property split rate of \$5.18 (residential) and 9.48 (Commercial/Industrial/Property) rates. Property split rate of \$5.18 (residential) and 9.48 (Commercial/Industrial/Property) rates for FY23. The motion, seconded by Selectman Silva, was unanimously accepted. (vote: 3-0-0)**

Rick Williams and Ellen Miller left the meeting at 6:25 p.m.

**Citizen Comments**

Laurie Pike, Chair of the Park Commission said that the Park Commission received a sole bid for the tennis court reconstruction for over the \$100,000 that was approved at the Town Meeting in May. There was a shortfall of \$11,700.00 which could be met by transferring funds from 2 special accounts leaving a gap of \$6,325.00 that would have to be met through a town vote. There was discussion about having a special town meeting and, at that time discuss how the park would save additional funds. A mid-February Special Town Meeting was discussed.

Laurie Pike left the meeting at 6:34 p.m.

**Minutes:**

Board of Selectmen Minutes of December 1, 2022:

**MOTION TO APPROVE MINUTES: Chair Sokol made a motion to approve the Minutes of December 1, 2022. The motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Semanie, was unanimously approved. (Vote: 3-0-0)**

**Ongoing Projects:**

Policy Updates and Review:

Police Policies Review Submissions:

**MOTION TO DELAY: Chair Sokol made a motion to delay approving the police policies until further review and editing. The motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Semanie, was unanimously accepted. (vote: 3-0-0)**

Road/Bridge Projects: Yankee Road Project/ Ford Hill Road Bridge/ Cyrus Stage Road Bridge:

There was no discussion.

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN BUSINESS:**

**Old Business:**

Wage & Salary for FY24 and COLA:

There was discussion about updating the Wage & Salary Chart for FY24. The step increase was set at 1.24% and following discussion, it was agreed to a recommendation of a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) of 2.5%. Chair Sokol would send an updated Chart with the updates to the department heads.

There was discussion about replacement of the Municipal Light Plant Manager and training someone for the future.

**New Business:**

Discussion about Pelham Lake and Mill Pond Dams:

There was discussion about the problem with the Pelham Lake Dam and that the dam mechanism would open. Vice-Chair Semanie said she had spoken with Sean Loomis about the mechanism to open the dam on the Mill Pond Dam that needed repair and that he was picking it up this weekend for Clayton Miller to work on. Selectmen are discussed details on ways to improve the situation with required repairs to both Pelham and Mill Pond Dams to be safer for workers and having mechanisms work more effectively. It was heartening to see the collective effort that went into solving the issue. The grants received by the Fire Dept. allowed purchase of more effective radio equipment which enhanced communication between people working on the dam using a headset.

Fire Chief Succession Planning:

Discussions were continuing with the Town of Charlemont to come to some resolve with the Fire Chief reaching the mandatory 65 retirement age according to MA General Law. A job description is being formulated and Vice-Chair Semanie and Janice Boudreau will continue discussions on January 13<sup>th</sup>. It was thought that the Fire Chief could remain on as a consultant to aid in the transition with a new employee.

#### Update 'Recycled Product Purchasing Policy'

Executive Secretary presented the updated 'Recycled Product Purchasing Policy' that goes out to department heads each year as a requirement of the Dept. of Environmental Protection grants associated with the transfer station.

**MOTION TO ACCEPT: Chair Sokol made a motion to accept the updated 'Recycled Product Purchasing Policy' for FY23. The motion, seconded by Selectman Silva, was unanimously accepted. (vote: 3-0-0)**

#### **Warrants/Contracts:**

##### MA Standard Contract – Compact Community Grant:

Treasurer Terry Green had presented the Board with the MA State Compact Community Grant contract for \$133,400.00 to upgrade obsolete software for the Tax Collector's Office and add 2 components to better communicate with the Accountant and the Assessor's by converting to the same software for review. The grant will cover software, support and installation.

**MOTION TO SIGN CONTRACT: Following review, Chair Sokol made a motion to accept the MA State Compact Community Grant contract for \$133,400.00 to upgrade obsolete software for the Tax Collector's Office and components for the Accountant and Assessors. The motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Semanie, was unanimously accepted. (vote: 3-0-0)**

##### QDS and Zobrio Products – Letter of Commitment:

A 'Letter of Commitment with QDS' for the purchase of software upgrade fee and 2024FY SaaS and Support Fees.

**MOTION TO SIGN CONTRACT: Following review, Chair Sokol made a motion to accept 'Letter of Commitment with QDS' for the purchase of software upgrade fee and 2024FY SaaS and Support Fees to upgrade obsolete software for the Tax Collector's Office and components for the Accountant and Assessors. The motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Semanie, was unanimously accepted. (vote: 3-0-0)**

##### Snow Plow/Sanding Contract 2022-2023:

An updated contract for 'Snow Plow/Sanding Contract 2022-2023' with Danek Excavating was reviewed and discussed. The Board agreed that in the future contracting should be done by the school and should be in the school budget.

**MOTION TO SIGN: Chair Sokol made a motion to sign the Snow Plow/Sanding Contract 2022-2023 with the Town of Rowe and Danek Excavating for the estimated amount of \$7,200.00. The motion, seconded by Selectman Silva, was unanimously accepted. (vote: 3-0-0)**

#### **Executive Secretary/Administrative Assistant Updates:**

Janice Boudreau discussed the Administrative Assistant position and the possibility of adding additional hours to the position. She said that the position had additional funds for the additional hours and the thought that it would encourage the retention of a good employee. Following discussion, it was agreed that the increase of hours is acceptable to up to 32 hours.

#### **Correspondence Review:**

No action was required.

#### **Future Meetings:**

The next Board of Selectmen meeting would be on January 6, 2022 at 6:00 pm.

**Adjournment:**


**MOTION TO ADJOURN: Chair Sokol made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:53 p.m. The motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Semanie, was unanimously accepted. (vote: 3-0-0)**


Respectfully Submitted,

Janice Boudreau, Executive Secretary

Approval Date: *January 5, 2023*

Approved:

  
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Chuck Sokol, Chair

  
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Ed Silva, Selectman

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Joanne Semanie, Vice-Chair

**Documents:**

1. Agenda December 15, 2022
2. FY23 Classification Hearing – BOA Recommendation MRF (12-15-202)
3. Tax Rate Information through FY23
4. FY23 MRF Options Table (1)
5. FY23 RECAP
6. FY23 Levy Limit
7. Board of Selectmen Minutes of December 1, 2022
8. Update 'Recycled Product Purchasing Policy'
9. QDS and Zobrio Products – Letter of Commitment
10. MA Standard Contract Form – Compact Community Grant
11. Fire Chief Shared Services Charlemont-Rowe Draft Job Description
12. Rowe Fire Chief Job Description – (January 6, 2022)
13. Town Employees Wage & Salary Chart
14. Snow Plow/Sanding Contract 2022-2023
15. Executive Secretary Updates

Mail:

1. Dog Incident – Tatro Road