

Town of Rowe
Board of Selectmen

MINUTES

Monday, March 30, 2023 – 5:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Chair Sokol, Vice-Chair Semanie, Selectman Silva
ALSO PRESENT: Executive Secretary Janice Boudreau, Administrative Assistant Brooke Shulda
AUDIENCE: School Committee: Susan Zavotka, Matt Crowningshield, Mary Paige
Finance Committee: Loretta Dionne, Marilyn Wilson, Wayne Zavotka (via remote)
NBSU: Sup. John Franzoni, Lisa Blackmer, Tara Barnes, Prin. Bill Knittle
Jessica Albrecht, Buster Reed, Kerry McLatchy, Herb Butzke, Jim Lively, Claudine
Poplawski, Bill Baker, Roberta Baker, Hannah French, Lori Laffond, Kevin Balawick, Donna
Butzke, Cathy Atwood, Mike Bardley, Dawn Beaumier

Call to Order: Chair Sokol called the meeting to order at 5:03PM

Announcement of recording devices: One

Noteworthy Announcements: None

JOINT MEETING WITH SCHOOL COMMITTEE:

Space Usage Addressed:

A series of questions were presented to the school officials submitted from the Board of Selectmen and were addressed by Superintendent John Franzoni prior to the meeting. School Committee members explained the classroom arrangements in greater detail and accommodations that were made in Covid-19. There were questions about the use of the gym as a cafeteria space and that they had modified the school to accommodate 7 teaching spaces and 5 classroom spaces and were using the alcoves in the building.

Test Scores Addressed:

Questions concerning Rowe Elementary being identified as a low performance school due to low testing scores in the State by MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Schools (DESE) were addressed. Factors contributing to the low scores included the compromised learning due to Covid, and the number of students who had opted out of taking the tests. Principal Knittle said the issue was being addressed and that they had met with a team from DESE and are working with them to address the issue with strategies, new approaches and with a new curriculum. An audience member said that given the student to teacher ratio is high, the expectations are high.

Rising Cost of Mohawk Addressed:

There were concerns expressed about the rising costs of sending Rowe students to Mohawk Trail Regional School (MTRS) with tuition projected at \$26,692.00 per student. It was noted that a 3-year contract had just been signed for 2023-2025. There was discussion about investigating other options, including Superintendent Franzoni's suggestion to investigate the North Adams options. It was agreed that it would be good to start the investigation now and research for the future.

The meeting ended and continued with the Board of Selectmen at 7:40pm

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)

Minutes:

Board of Selectmen Minutes of February 16, 2023:

Board of Selectmen Minutes of March 9, 2023:

MOTION TO APPROVE MINUTES: Chair Sokol made a motion to approve the Minutes of February 16, 2023 and March 9, 2023 as presented. The motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Semanie, was unanimously accepted. (vote: 3-0-0)

Board of Selectmen Minutes of March 2, 2023:

Board of Selectmen Minutes of March 16, 2023

MOTION TO APPROVE MINUTES: Chair Sokol made a motion to approve the Minutes of March 2, 2023 and March 16, 2023 as presented. The motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Semanie, was accepted. (vote: 2-0-1) Selectmen Silva abstained from the vote.

Executive Secretary/Administrative Assistant Updates

List of Current Projects were reviewed and discussed:

Town Administrator: Executive Secretary asked whether the Board had come to a decision about the Town Administrator position. Following discussion, it was decided that it would be a good plan moving forward to advertise Ms. Boudreau's replacement as an administrator to attract a high-quality candidate and make the position a 40 hour per week position as the demands of the job continue to grow. It was agreed to review the Job Description in the near future.

Fire Chief: Executive Secretary noted that after review of the specific legislation Charlemont Town Administrator referred to thinking it would accomplish the succession plan for the Fire Chief to continue to serve past the mandatory retirement age that he will attain in May, did not fit the requirement. The process would be to bring the article to the town for a vote. Then, the vote would have to be passed on to our legislators to bring to vote in the house, senate and signed by the governor. Details would have to be worked out and continue to meet with Charlemont.

Maintenance Position: There has been discussion over the years about having an additional person to perform small maintenance projects on town buildings. Issues are the difficulty getting someone to do small projects and come to Rowe and the cost of the MA Prevailing Wage Schedule with a larger firm.

Following discussion, it was agreed to discuss 16 hours a week position at \$25.00 per hour with the Finance Committee.

Cemetery Commission: Since the Cemetery Commission did not provide an estimate of the work that was accomplished in the North Cemetery, it was decided to wait until later to meet with them at the cemetery.

Mail Reviewed:

KP Law provided a letter with their new rates. No action required.

Future Meetings:

The next Board of Selectmen meeting would be April 6, 2023 at 6:00 pm with the Finance Committee.

Adjournment:

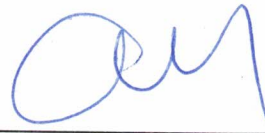
MOTION TO ADJOURN: Chair Sokol made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:46 p.m. The motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Semanie was unanimously accepted. (vote: 3-0-0)

Respectfully Submitted,

Janice Boudreau, Executive Secretary

Approval Date: *mm 4, 2023*

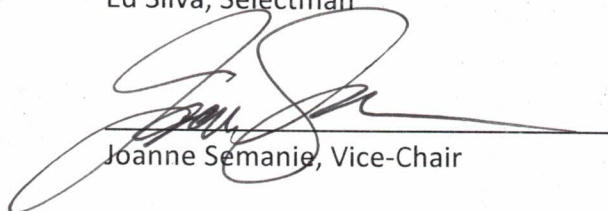
Approved:



Chuck Sokol, Chair



Ed Silva, Selectman



Joanne Semanie, Vice-Chair

Documents:

1. Agenda March 30, 2023
2. Board of Selectmen Minutes of February 16, 2023
3. Board of Selectmen Minutes of March 2, 2023
4. Board of Selectmen Minutes of March 9, 2023
5. Board of Selectmen Minutes of March 16, 2023
6. School Questions Answered
7. MDESE – School Attending Children
8. Rowe 2024 Budget Breakdown
9. FY24 Rowe Elementary School Budget Breakdown
10. FY24 Rowe Budget Notes – Rowe Elementary School
11. Executive Secretary Updates