



Town of Rowe  
Joint Meeting  
**Board of Selectmen**  
Minutes  
Thursday, December 07, 2023 – 6:00 p.m.  
Rowe Town Hall, Meeting Room #1

**Board of Selectmen:** Chair Charles Sokol, Vice-Chair Semanie, Selectmen Silva  
**Town Officials:** Town Clerk -Kevin Balawick, Town Treasurer -Ben Gelb, Town Administrator -Brooke Shulda  
**Audience:** 6:45pm Marilyn Wilson, Loretta Dione, 6:50pm Ellen Miller  
**Zoom Participation:** 6:00pm-6:20pm Hannah Poplawski

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

**Announcement of recording devices:** ONE

**Noteworthy Announcements:** NONE

**New Business:**

Broad Band/Roads Note Renewal – Town Treasurer, Ben Gelb acquired the Selectboard’s and Town Clerk’s signature and Town Clerk seal to move forward with the renewal of the note/loan on behalf of the Town’s Broadband/Roads project.

**MOTION TO APPROVE: Chair Sokol made a motion to approve the renewal of the note/loan in the amount of \$1,680,000.00 on behalf of the Town’s Broadband and Road projects. The motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Semanie was unanimously approved. (vote: 3-0-0)**

6:00pm Appointment – Hannah Poplawski – 6:08pm – Mahigan Trail update: Hannah explained the first half of the grant on behalf of the Mahigan trail (runs through Heath, Rowe, and into Charlemont State Park) has been completed. The second half of the grant will be used for outreach to homeowners to obtain trail easements. Hannah stated the second half of the grant is due, June 30, 2024.

Town Official Appointments:

Cultural Council – Barabara Gottesman and Kellie Quist

**MOTION TO APPOINT: Chair Sokol made a motion to appoint Barbara Gottesman and Kelli Quist as members of the Cultural Council for three-year terms, effective December 07, 2023, term ending June 30, 2026. The motion, Seconded by Vice-Chair Semanie was unanimously approved. (vote: 3-0-0)**

Tree Removal (not on agenda): Selectmen Silva followed up with Town Administrator on behalf of National Grid tree removal, regarding the large trees that were cut and left on Pond Road next to the Elementary School. TA informed Selectmen Silva of the response received by National Grid stating, this is the responsibility of the landowner. It was requested that TA research a tree removal bylaw.

DPW Superintendent Concerns: Selectmen have requested TA to request the Highway Superintendents presence at the January 04, 2024 meeting to discuss their concerns.

**Road/Bridge Projects -**

Yankee Road: No discussion.

Cyrus Stage Bridge: No discussion.

Ford Hill Bridge: Brief discussion regarding the financial standpoint of this project. Thus far the project is over budget, \$166,000.00. Selectmen have requested Town Administrator to invite Gill Engineering to December 21, 2023, meeting to further discuss the projects finances.

Ford Hill Bridge Extension Contract: Selectmen reviewed the contract provided by MASS DOT on behalf of the extension request submitted by the Town Administrator. This contract will allow for an additional 6 month extension on behalf of this the completion of this project.

**MOTION TO SIGN CONTRACT: Chair Sokol made a motion to sign the Ford Hill Road Project extension contract provided by the MASS DOT. The motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Semanie was unanimously approved. (vote: 3-0-0)**

Tunnel Road Bridge: TA informed Selectmen the letters sent to landowners were delivered via certified mail, return receipt requested. TA received both requested receipts but has not heard anything further from the landowners.

#### **Audience Comments/Concerns:**

1. Marilyn Wilson: Briefly discussed the meeting she attended at the Berkshire Innovation Center regarding the high energy costs.
2. Loretta Dione: Expressed she feels it is important for Town Buildings to have alarms systems and suggests looking into installing a system within the Town Hall and the Library.

#### **Old Business:**

1. Police Chief Succession Plan – Finance Committee member, Marilyn Wilson, followed up with Selectmen regarding her research on the “Home Rule Petition” on behalf of the Police Chief’s POST requirements to remain acting Chief. Ms. Wilson found that the Town can add “Home Rule Petition” as a Town Meeting article for the Town to vote on. The Selectboard requested TA to present this situation to Town Council to better determine the process and requirements of such Petition. It was requested that Town Council also target specific things the Town/Chief can opt out of.

#### **Planning Board Request:**

Ellen Miller – sent subdivision plans for Planning Board to review and sign.

#### **Planning Board Plan:**

Town Clerk, Kevin Balawick has agreed to fill in as a Planning Board Member until year end 6/30/2024. This will allow the Planning Board to meet and make decisions should a member be unable to attend a meeting. Mr. Balawick also inquired about another resident that may be interested in filling the other open Planning Board position. Mr. Balawick will be appointed by the Board of Selectmen on Thursday December 14<sup>th</sup> at 9:30am.

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

1. Vice-Chair Semanie reviewed, FY2024 Vendor & Payroll Warrants #10, #11, and #12.

**Minutes:**

1. Board of Selectmen Minutes - October 26, 2023

**MOTION TO APPROVE MINUTES: Chair Sokol made a motion to approve the October 26, 2023, minutes as written. The motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Semanie was approved. (vote: 2-0-1)**

2. Board of Selectmen Minutes - November 09, 2023

**MOTION TO APPROVE MINUTES: Chair Sokol made a motion to approve the November 09, 2023, minutes as written. The motion, seconded by Selectmen Silva was approved. (vote: 2-0-1)**

## **CHAIR SOKOL LEFT THE MEETING AT 7:21PM**

**Budget Season Suggestions:**

- Complete employee reviews by Dec. 01.
- Wage and Salary Chart expansion (BOH)

**Town Administrator 90-Day Review:**

**MOTION TO APPOINT: Vice-Chair Semanie made a motion to appoint Brooke Shulda as the Town Administrator effective immediately. The motion, seconded by Selectmen Silva was approved. (vote: 2-0-0)**

**Future Meetings:**

- Thursday, December 14, 2023, at 9:30am
- Thursday, December 21, 2023, at 6:00pm
- Thursday, January 04, 2023, at 6:00pm
- Thursday, January 25, 2024, at 6:00pm – Joint Meeting BOS/Finance

**Adjournment: 8:08pm**

**MOTION TO ADJOURN: Vice-Chair Semanie made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:08pm. The motion, seconded by Selectmen Silva was approved. (vote: 2-0-0)**

Respectfully Submitted,

Brooke Shulda, Town Administrator

Approval Date: *December 21, 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 for December 07, 2023
2. Board of Selectmen Minutes October 26, 2023
3. Board of Selectmen Minutes November 09, 2023
4. Ford Hill Road – MASS DOT Extension Contract
5. Broadband/Road Resurfacing Note Renewal
6. Town Administrator's 90-Day Review



Town of Rowe  
**Board of Selectmen Minutes**  
Thursday, December 14, 2023 – 9:30am  
Rowe Town Hall, Meeting Room #1 or Via Zoom

**Board of Selectmen:** Chair Charles Sokol, Vice-Chair Joanne Semanie, Selectmen Ed Silva (via zoom)  
**Town Officials:** Town Clerk – Kevin Balawick, Moderator – Bob Clancy, TA Brooke Shulda  
**Audience:** Matthew Stine, Ellen Miller (via zoom)

**Call to Order:** Chair Sokol called the meeting to order at 9:30pm.

Announcement of recording devices- **NONE**

Noteworthy Announcements: **NONE**

## **PLANNING BOARD APPOINTMENTS**

### **Kevin Balawick & Matthew Stine**

**MOTION TO APPOINT:** Chair Sokol made a motion to appoint Kevin Balawick and Matthew Stine as Planning Board members effective immediately (Thursday December 14, 2023) until year end, 6/30/2024. The motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Semanie was unanimously approved. (roll call vote: 3-0-0)

**Adjournment:** 9:31am

**MOTION TO ADJOURN:** Chair Sokol made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:32pm. The motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Semanie was accepted. (roll call vote: 3-0-0)

Respectfully Submitted,

Brooke Shulda, Town Administrator

Approval Date: December 21, 2023

Approved:

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Chuck Sokol, Chair

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Ed Silva, Selectman

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Joanne Semanie, Vice Chair