



Town of Rowe
Board of Selectmen
Minutes
Thursday, January 18, 2024 – 6:00 pm
Rowe Town Hall, Meeting Room #1

Board of Selectmen: Vice-Chair Semanie, Selectmen Silva
Absent: Chair Sokol
Town Officials: Town Administrator -Brooke Shulda, Police Chief – Julie Shippee
Audience: Marilyn Wilson
Zoom Participation: Rosie Gordon, Laurie Pike

Call to Order: Vice-Chair Semanie called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

Announcement of recording devices: NONE

Noteworthy Announcements: NONE

6:00pm Appointment – Police Chief, Julie Shippee

-Detail Wage Increase: Chief Shippee informed the Board of Selectmen of the increase in Detail wages. Wages increased from \$57.00 per hour to \$62.00 per hour.

MOTION TO APPROVE: Vice-Chair Semanie made a motion to approve the increase in detail wages from \$57.00 per hour to \$62.00 per hour for the Rowe Police Department. (vote:2-0-0)

-Police Commissioner Proposal: Due to health-related reasons, Police Chief, Julie Shippee informed the Selectboard that she has made the decision not to follow through with the POST requirements that enable her to remain as acting Police Chief or an active police officer. With regret, June 30, 2024, will be her last day as the Town of Rowe Police Chief. Chief Shippee presented the Board of Selectmen with an alternative, a position that would allow her to continue with the Town’s Police Department. Julie has proposed to investigate the option of changing the Police Chief position into a Police Commissioner position. A Police Commissioner position will allow Ms. Shippee to continue the administration aspect of the Police position but will not allow for her to respond to calls as she will no longer be an active officer.

-Wage and Salary, FY2025: Chief Shippee informed Selectmen that Officer Selmi is at the bottom of the wage and salary line and is requesting assistance on what to do moving forward with the Police Departments FY25 Budget. Vice-Chair Semanie informed Chief Shippee she has the authority to request to assign him to another grade and step if she feels it is appropriate.

-Record Request: Chief Shippee received a record request that was requesting disciplinary and violation records within the Rowe Elementary school system. Due to a lack of sender information Chief Shippee forwarded said email to the Town of Rowe’s IT team, Northeast IT, to determine whether the email is fraudulent. Northeast IT determined that the email address is not a fraudulent address yet recommended she forward such email to Town Council. The Selectboard instructed TA to have the Town Clerk respond to the request as according.

CSO - Co-Response Clinicians: Chief Shippee requested TA to post a job opportunity/brief description to the Town website in search of a Co-Response Clinician to join the Hill Town Regional Police Departments participating in the Department of Mental Health Co-Responder Grant.

New Business:

1. Open Space and Recreation – Support Letter: Approved and signed corrected OSPR Plan support letter.

MOTION TO SIGN: Vice-Chair Semanie made a motion to approve and sign the OSPR Plan support letter as written. The motion seconded by Selectmen Silva was approved. (vote 2-0-0)

2. North Cemetery Compensation: Vice-Chair Joanne Semanie, met with Jim and Jay Williams to discuss compensation regarding the clearing costs of the additional parcel they are donating to the Town. All matters factored in; it was decided to appropriate \$20,000.00 to compensate the William's for the work completed to donate an additional parcel to the Town within the North Cemetery.

MOTION TO COMENSATE: Vice-Chair Semanie made a motion to request the appropriation of \$20,000.00 to compensate James H. Williams for the work completed on the donated parcel of land in expansion to the North Cemetery. The motion, seconded by Selectmen Silva was approved. (vote: 2-0-0)

3. Gracy House Committee: The Selectboard agrees to establish an official Committee on behalf of the restoration of the Gracy House.

MOTION TO FORM OFFICIAL COMMITTEE: Vice-Chair Semanie made a motion to form an official committee on behalf of the restoration of the Gracy House. The motion, seconded by Selectmen Silva was approved. (vote: 2-0-0)

4. Gracy House Committee Member Appointments:

Paul Graziano, Chair
Joanne Semanie
Susie Zavotka
Jay Williams
Matthew Stine
Walt Quist

MOTION TO APPOINT: Vice-Chair Semanie made a motion to appoint the above list of residents as member of the Gracy House Committee, effective immediately, term ending 06/30/2024. The motion seconded by Selectmen Silva was approved. (vote: 2-0-0)

5. Line-Item Transfer Policy: This policy was briefly discussed between Vice-Chair Semanie and Finance Committee Member Marilyn Wilson. It appears there is a bit of confusion regarding the transfer between lines within departments. TA was requested to further research the policy for clarification.

6. Rowe, Charlemont, and Hawley – Proposed Shared Ambulance Services – DISCUSSED BELOW

7. School Committee Resignation: Mary Paige has resigned from the School Committee, effective immediately. The School Committee is looking for someone to fill her position within the committee and will be conducting interviews beginning in February. It is unclear whether the appointment must go through the Board of Selectmen or if the School Committee has the appointing authority. TA was requested to further investigate this matter.

Old Business:

1. Police Chief Succession Plan – **DISCUSSED ABOVE**
2. Fire Chief Succession Plan: Vice-Chair Semanie briefly went over topics of discussion had between Charlemont and Rowe Officials, earlier this week. Vice-Chair and Town Administrator will meet with Charlemont again on February 08, 2024, at 9:00am for further discussion.
3. 2022 Audit – awaiting response from Scanlon & Associates
4. Town Line Sign – awaiting sign measurements from DPW Superintendent
5. Safety Complex – Exterior Paint – Administrative Assistant has been in communication with Franklin County Sheriff's Office

2024 ATM/STM Articles:

1. Police Chief – Police Chief vs. Police Commissioner – **DISCUSSED ABOVE**
2. Town Clerk – Appointed vs. Elected – **TABLED**
3. Town Administrator – Add job description to Gen. Bylaws – **TABLED**
4. Gracy House Funding – Stabilization of Structure - **TABLED**
5. Fire/EMS District – **DISCUSSED ABOVE**
6. North Cemetery Donation Compensation – **DISCUSSED ABOVE**

Road/Bridge Projects:

Yankee Road: Selectmen Silva has agreed to meet with TA and Lamson Engineering to discuss in detail the increase in construction costs, engineering costs and construction schedule.

Cyrus Stage Bridge: No discussion.

Ford Hill Bridge: Brief discussion regarding additional funding provided by MassDOT.

Tunnel Road Bridge: No discussion.

Warrants/Contracts:

1. Vice-Chair Semanie reviewed, FY2024 Vendor & Payroll Warrants #15
2. OPSR Plan – Support Letter

Unforeseen Business:

1. Park Commission – Mini Excavator Grant, Letter of Support

MOTION TO SIGN: Vice-Chair Semanie made a motion to sign the Letter of Support, as written, on behalf of the Park Commission Mini Excavator grant for park and trail improvements. The motion, seconded by Selectmen Silva was approved. (vote 2-0-0)

2. OSPR Committee – Laurie Pike – Discussed 2 suggested options with the Selectboard on the utilization of District Local Technical Assistance funding through FRCOG. Options presented: Option 1. Part 1., To complete a detailed hydraulic and hydrologic study to identify an appropriate method to improve the pelham lake dams' hydraulic capacity and, Option 1. Part 2., Investigate and identify measures to improve hydraulic capacity of the dam to safely pass the spillway flood design with one foot of freeboard, as suggested in the most recent dam inspection. **OPTION 2.** To hire a consultant (FRCOF staff, perhaps) to complete an assessment of all culverts and drainage system in Town that would include an evaluation of the physical stat of the culverts and GIS data to record where culverts are located. It was suggested by Vice-Chair Semanie and Selectmen Silva to apply for Option 1, as the Town has been working closely with the Small Town Bridge Program (including culverts) offered by MassDOT.

Minutes:

1. Board of Selectmen Minutes – January 04, 2024

MOTION TO APPROVE MINUTES: Vice-Chair Semanie made a motion to approve the January 04, 2024, minutes as written. The motion, seconded by Selectmen Silva was approved. (vote: 2-0-0)

Citizen Comments:

1. Marilyn Wilson – Submitted to the Selectmen a letter of recommendation for Sue Gleason, on behalf of filling the open space on the Finance Committee. Vice-Chair Semanie and Selectmen Silva were both in agreement with the letter and fully support appointing Sue Gleason as a member of the Committee.

MOTION TO APPOINT: Vice-Chair Semanie made a motion to appoint Susan Gleason as a member of the Finance Committee, effective immediately, term ending 06/30/2024. The motion, seconded by Selectmen Silva was approved. (vote: 2-0-0)

Future Meetings:

Thursday, January 25, 2024, at 6:00pm – Joint Meeting BOS/Finance
Thursday, February 01, 2024, at 6:00pm – Joint Meeting BOS/Finance
Thursday, February 08, 2024, at 6:00pm – Joint Meeting BOS/Finance
Thursday, February 15, 2024, at 6:00pm – Joint Meeting BOS/Finance

Adjournment: 7:52pm

MOTION TO ADJOURN: Vice-Chair Semanie made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:54pm. The motion, seconded by Selectmen Silva was approved. (vote: 2-0-0)

Respectfully Submitted,

Brooke Shulda, Town Administrator

Approval Date: 01/25/2024

Approved:

Chuck Sokol, Chair

Ed Silva, Selectman

Joanne Semanie, Vice-Chair

Documents:

1. Agenda for January 18, 2024
2. OSPR – Revised Support Letter
3. Board of Selectmen Minutes – January 04, 2024