

Town of Rowe
Board of Selectmen
Minutes
Thursday, January 04, 2024 – 6:00 pm
Rowe Town Hall, Meeting Room #1

Board of Selectmen: Chair Sokol, Vice-Chair Semanie, Selectmen Silva
Town Officials: DPW Superintendent -Lance Larned, Admin Assistant -Donna Butzke, Town Administrator -Brooke Shulda
Audience: Matthew Stine
Zoom Participation: Rosle Gordon

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

Announcement of recording devices: NONE

Noteworthy Announcements: NONE

6:00pm Appointment – DPW Superintendent, Lance Larned

Discussion Topics, Led by Selectmen Silva:

-Snow Storm Clean-up Responsibilities – DPW Superintendent is responsible for after snowstorm clean-up including the falling of trees, limbs, and debris.

-Article IV, Section III – It was discussed, moving forward DPW Superintendent will be responsible for enforcing said bylaw.

-Natural Tree Falling – discussed the responsibilities of natural tree falling and who would be responsible for ensuring any debris or limbs are cleared from roadside. Town owned property is the responsibility of highway crew,

-Roadside Berms and Ditches – DPW Superintendent ensured Selectmen the road crew has been working on improving the berms and ditches throughout town.

-Potter Road Ruts – DPW Superintendent stated the mud ruts located on the upper end of Potter Road is due to ledge.

-Roadside Landscaping – Selectmen have requested DPW Superintendent to explore roadside landscaping in place of the grasshopper program.

-DPW Hours of Operations – Selectmen confirmed DPW hours of operations, December-March 6:30a-2:30p M-F, April-November 6:30a-5:30p M-Th.

-Town Sign – Selectmen requested either, DPW Superintendent or TA, to contact MassDOT in request of a new Town line sign.

*DPW Superintendent, Lance Larned, departed the meeting at 6:25pm.

New Business:

Town Official Appointment(s):

Council on Aging – Kellie Quist

MOTION TO APPOINT: Chair Sokol made a motion to appoint Kellie Quist as a member of the Council on Aging member, effective January 04, 2024, term ending June 30, 2024. The motion, Seconded Selectmen Silva was approved. (vote: 2-0-0)

Completed Cemetery Survey:

Vice-Chair Joanne Semanie, also member of the Cemetery Commission, agreed to call a meeting Cemetery Commission meeting to further discuss the parcel donation abutting the North Cemetery with Jim and Jay Williams (cemetery commission members, as well as parcel donator's).

Updates to Wage and Salary Chart:

Chair Sokol updated the wage and salary chart by adding 2 additional columns, O (steps 0-15 ranging from \$37.57 to \$45.22) and P (steps 0-15 ranging from \$43.36 to \$52.19).

MOTION TO ACCEPT: Vice-Chair Semanie made a motion to approve the updated wage and salary chart as presented. The motion, seconded by Selectmen Silva was unanimously approved. (vote: 3-0-0)

FY2025 COLA Increase:

After reviewing the Social Security Administrations COLA increase of 3.2%, the Selectboard decided to set the FY2025 COLA increase at 2.5%.

MOTION TO ACCEPT: Vice-Chair Semanie made a motion to accept the FY2025 COLA increase of 2.5%. The motion, seconded by Selectmen Silva was unanimously approved. (vote: 3-0-0)

Finance Committee Meeting Review:

Vice-Chair Semanie briefed on the Finance Committee meeting that included the Town Accountant, Treasurer/Collector, Assessors Chair, and Town Administration. The Town Accountant will provide the Town Administrator with a spreadsheet that is compatible with the current accounting software utilized by the Town that also complies with Massachusetts DOR Standards. Vice-Chair Semanie explained the Finance Committee was in agreeance with TA being the only one to access or update said spreadsheet. Said spreadsheet will be used to compare with Finance Committee Chair, Daniel Pollotta.

Road/Bridge Projects -

Yankee Road: No discussion.

Cyrus Stage Bridge: No discussion.

Ford Hill Bridge: No discussion.

Tunnel Road Bridge: No discussion.

Old Business:

1. Police Chief Succession Plan –

TA informed the Selectboard of the follow up conversation that was had with Town Council regarding the "Home Rule" proposal provided by Finance Committee Member, Marilyn Wilson. Town Council expressed this could take 2-3 years to complete and may not be passed by legislation. TA was informed of another option that the Town may be able to take, exemption. Town Council is currently looking into the logistics and will inquire with TA upon their findings.

2. Fire Chief Succession Plan: TABLED

2024 ATM/STM Articles:

1. Police Chief – Home Rule – Discussed Above.
2. Town Clerk – Appointed vs. Elected – TABLED
3. Town Administrator – Add job description to Gen. Bylaws – TABLED
4. General Bylaw Revisions: Article III, Section I – **RESOLVED** (updates to organization chart)

Warrants/Contracts:

1. Vice-Chair Semanie reviewed, FY2024 Vendor & Payroll Warrants #14.

Unforeseen Business:

1. Mayflower Valuation LTD., Assessing Services Quote –

MOTION TO APPROVE QUOTE: Chair Sokol made a motion to approve the Assessing Services Quote provided by Mayflower Valuation LTD. The motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Semanie was unanimously approved. (vote: 3-0-0)

2. Open Space and Recreation, Letter of Support –

MOTION TO SIGN LETTER: Chair Sokol made a motion to sign the Support Letter on behalf of the Open Space and Recreation Committee, in support of the OPSR 7-year Plan. The motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Semanie was unanimously approved. (vote: 3-0-0)

3. FRCOG FY25 Construction Services & Bid Contract Agreement -

MOTION TO APPROVE AGREEMENT: Chair Sokol made a motion to approve the Construction Services and Bid Contract Agreement between the Town of Rowe and the Franklin Regional Council of Governments for fiscal year 2025. The motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Semanie was unanimously approved. (vote: 3-0-0)

4. Principal Concern – Principal, Bill Knittle, requested TA to inquire with the Selectboard whether something could be said or done regarding language on a sign hanging on a Town residents barn. His concern is the children seeing said sign while riding on the school bus. The Selectboard informed TA there is nothing that can be done as this sign is on private property.

5. Planning Board Chair, Matthew Stine – Attended meeting to clarify the following: 1. which board (Select or Planning) is responsible for tree hearings. After brief discussion it was determined this category falls under the responsibilities of the Planning Board. 2. National Grid 45-Day Yearly Operational Plan, confirming this does not need to involve planning board. 3. To review the Planning Board responsibilities with the North Cemetery Survey.

Minutes:

1. Board of Selectmen Minutes – December 21, 2023

MOTION TO APPROVE MINUTES: Vice-Chair Semanie made a motion to approve the December 21, 2023, minutes as written. The motion, seconded by Selectmen Silva was approved. (vote: 2-0-1)

Future Meetings:

Thursday, January 18, 2024, at 6:00pm

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

Adjournment: 7:54pm

MOTION TO ADJOURN: Chair Sokol made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:54pm. The motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Semanie was approved. (vote: 3-0-0)

Respectfully Submitted,

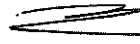
Brooke Shulda, Town Administrator

Approval Date: 01/18/2024

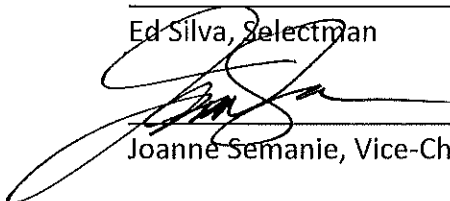
Approved:



Chuck Sokol, Chair



Ed Silva, Selectman



Joanne Semanie, Vice-Chair

Documents:

1. Agenda for December 21, 2023
2. Board of Selectmen Minutes – December 21, 2023