



Town of Rowe  
Joint Meeting  
Finance Committee & Board of Selectmen  
Minutes  
Thursday, February 08, 2024 – 6:00 pm  
Rowe Town Hall, Meeting Room #1

**Board of Selectmen:** Chair Sokol, Vice-Chair Semanie  
**Finance Committee:** Chair Dan Pallotta, Vice-Chair Marilyn Wilson, Loretta Dione, Wayne Zavotka  
**Absent:** Selectmen Ed Silva, Finance Committee Susan Gleason  
**Departments:** Fire Chief Dennis Annear, Police Chief Julie Shippee, Officer Selmi Hyytinen  
**Town Officials:** Town Administrator Brooke Shulda

**Call to Order:** Chair Sokol called the meeting to order at 6:01pm.

**Announcement of recording devices:** NONE

**Noteworthy Announcements:** Finance Committee Vice-Chair, Marilyn Wilson – suggested Park Commission investigate certified preowned vehicle – requested look into the procurement process within a municipality.

## **6:00pm Budget Hearings**

1. Fire/EMD: Increases in personnel wages and heating fuel, as electricity is expected to decrease tremendously due to solar panel installation.  
CIRRP Requests:
  1. Heating/Cooling – originally requested \$16,810.00 for this project but money that was appropriated at prior Town Meetings has been applied. New Requested amount: \$7,455.00.
  2. 2003 Mac Truck Tire Replacement – Requesting: \$10,000.00
  3. New Tanker - Communications Installation – Requesting: \$18735.14.
  4. Completion of New Tanker – Requesting: \$21,849.00.
2. Municipal Light Plant (MLP) – Requesting an additional \$3,000.00 as a stipend for the MLP Deputy.
3. Police Department – Most line items remain level funded accept; Police training in which will be less than what was requested the prior year, the final training request will be updated once information is obtained from the Police Chief. Requesting a “revolving fund” for detail pay as there have been many instances where companies (such as National Grid) have not paid detail officers for over a year plus. It was recommended by the Finance Committee to appropriate this request into the General Fund vs Revolving Fund.  
Job titles/descriptions, and wage/compensation for (2) employees within this department are in question.  
(Explained in further detail below)

## **Board of Selectmen Business:**

### **New Business:**

1. Police Department – Police Chief Julie Shippee and Office Selmi Hyytinen briefly discussed the future of the Police Department, as Julie will be retiring as Police Chief at the end of June. The selectboard discussed the importance of keeping such department active in town.

Officer Hyytinen stated that he doesn't believe the town should have a “Strong Chief” but would rather see a “Weak Chief's” position instead.

Proposed Positions –  
Public Safety Administrator  
“Weak” Chief or Officer In Charge

Chief Shippee and Officer Hyytinen were asked to review the current Chiefs job description and research each position further and will meet with TA Wednesday February 14<sup>th</sup> to review and discuss their findings. Chief Shippee, Officer Hyytinen and TA will generate job description points to then present to the Selectboard.

### **Old Business:**

1. Fire Chief Succession Plan: Vice-Chair Semanie reviewed and discussed topics from the prior fire chief succession plan meeting had with the Town of Charlemont.
2. 2022 Audit – awaiting response from Scanlon & Associates.
3. Town Line Sign – Informed the Selectboard that a sign has been ordered but is currently on backorder.
4. Safety Complex – Exterior Paint – no update.

### **2024 ATM/STM Articles:**

1. Police Chief – Police Chief vs. Police Administrator – See 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 – TABLED
6. North Cemetery Donation Compensation – TABLED
7. Highway Department – RFP – Roadside Mowing - TABLED
8. Library - Feasibility Study - TABLED

### **Road/Bridge Projects:**

Yankee Road: Awaiting response from Lamson Engineering regarding a meeting proposal.

Cyrus Stage Bridge: No discussion.

Ford Hill Bridge: Amended MassDOT Contract.

Tunnel Road Bridge: Informed Selectmen that Highway Superintendent received an invoice for the plowing and sanding of Lower Tunnel Road.

### **Warrants/Contracts:**

1. Ford Hill Road Bridge – Amended MassDOT Contract - MassDOT granted the Town of Rowe an additional \$166,438.97 to cover the costs of the overages with this project.

**MOTION TO SIGN CONTRACT: Chair Sokol made a motion to sign the Amended MassDOT Contract granting the Town of Rowe additional funding in the amount of \$166,438.97 to cover the costs of the overages with the Ford Hill Road Bridge Project. The motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Semanie was approved. (vote 2-0-0)**

2. FY24 Firefighter Safety Equipment Grant Award – the fire department was granted \$6,719.11 toward new firefighter safety equipment.

**MOTION TO SIGN CONTRACT: Chair Sokol made a motion to sign the FY24 Firefighter Safety Equipment Grant contract, provided by the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security and the Department of Fire Services, grant amount \$6,719.11, on behalf of the Town of Rowe’s Fire department. The motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Semanie was approved. (vote: 2-0-0)**

3. Board of Health – Narcan Lock Boxes - NaloxBox Partner Letter of Commitment was provided by the Opioid Task Force (OTF) of Franklin County and the North Quabbin and/or Tapestry Health. Each of these organizations provide the box and supplies at no cost.

**MOTION TO SIGN LETTER OF COMMITMENT: Chair Sokol made a motion to sign the NaloxBox Partner letter of commitment to agree to serve as a partner organization with the Opioid Task Force of Franklin County and the North Quabbin Region and Tapestry Health on the regional overdose prevention NaloxBox initiative. The motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Semanie was approved: (vote:2-0-0)**

4. Mass Cultural Council – Chair Sokol completed the necessary forms through the Commonwealth's DocuSign account for the FY24 Local Cultural Council Allocation Contract.

#### **Unforeseen Business:**

1. Fire Department – Equipment Grant Contract
2. Board of Health – Narcan Lock Boxes
3. Lower Tunnel Road – Invoice for plowing and sanding – Selectmen reviewed invoice and briefly went over the letter sent to the landowners on lower tunnel road from Town Council, stating the Town is disallowed to use town funds for all maintenance to this road/bridge.
4. Mass Cultural Council – FY24 DocuSign agreement – Chair Sokol

#### **Minutes:**

1. Board of Selectmen Minutes – January 25, 2024 – **Approved on 2/01/2024 – Selectmen signed approved minutes.**
2. Board of Selectmen Minutes – February 01, 2024 - **TABLED**

#### **Citizen Comments:**

None

#### **Mail:**

1. Brookfield Renewables – Yearly Operational Plan
2. Opioid Funding – Local Government Opioid Claims

#### **Future Meetings:**

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

Thursday, February 29, 2024, at 6:00pm – Joint Meeting BOS/Finance

Thursday, March 14, 2024, at 6:00pm – Board of Selectmen

Thursday, March 28, 2024, at 6:00pm – Board of Selectmen

#### **Adjournment: 8:40pm**

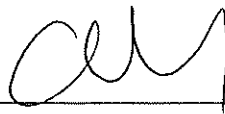
**MOTION TO ADJOURN: Chair Sokol made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:47pm. The motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Semanie was approved. (vote: 3-0-0)**

Respectfully Submitted,

Brooke Shulda, Town Administrator


Approval Date: 02/15/2024

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 February 08, 2024
2. Budget Hearing Documents
3. Ford Hill Road Bridge – MassDOT Contract Amendment
4. Board of Selectmen Minutes – January 25, 2024
5. Board of Selectmen Minutes – February 01, 2024
6. **Mail:** Brookfield Energy – Yearly Operational Plan
7. **Mail:** Opioid Claim
8. **Unforeseen:** Fire Department Grant Award
9. **Unforeseen:** Board of Health – Narcan Lock Box Letter of Commitment
10. **Unforeseen:** Lower Tunnel Road Maintenance Invoice
11. **Unforeseen:** FY24 Cultural Council Allocation Contract