



**Town of Rowe
Board of Selectmen
Minutes**

Thursday, February 13, 2025 – 6:00 p.m.

Rowe Town Hall, Meeting Room #1 & Via Remote Participation

<u>Position</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>A</u>
Chair	Joanne Semanie	x	
V-Chair	Edward Silva	x	
Selectmen	William Baker	x	

FINANCE COMMITTEE: Dan Pallotta, Marilyn Wilson, Loretta Dione, Susan Gleason, Wayne Zavotka
DEPARTMENT HEARINGS: Fire Chief/EMD Dennis Annear, Public Safety Admin Julie Shippee, Police Chief Christopher Hyytinen, Police Officer Francis Noise
IN-PERSON AUDIENCE: Resident Kenneth Fensky (joined the meeting at 6:30 p.m.)
ZOOM PARTICIPATION: No Zoom participants
TOWN ADMINISTRATOR: Town Administrator Brooke Shulda

Call to Order: Chair Semanie called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Announcement of recording devices: NONE

Noteworthy Announcements: NONE

Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Hearings

1. Police Department

Police Chief Christopher Hyytinen presented his budget to the Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee. He presented the annual increase in employee wages and explained the reduction in the Police Officer Training account. The department has transitioned from three officers to two. Chief Hyytinen emphasized the necessity of implementing a revolving fund for detail wages. By law, any officer who works a detail must be compensated within the next pay period. Currently, an administrative fee is applied to all details, and there was a discussion about adding cruiser fees as well.

Police Chief Hyytinen and Office Noise departed the meeting at 6:18 p.m.

2. Fire Department/ Emergency Management Director (EMD)

Fire Chief/ EMD Dennis Annear presented his budget to the Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee. Chief Annear presented the annual increase in department wages and outlined the required increases for various budget lines within the Fire Department and Emergency Management Director (EMD) budgets, which are combined. He also highlighted a few accounts that will see a decrease. Additionally, Chief Annear noted that the town should start planning to replace the CPR device for fiscal year 2027.

Chief Annear is requesting the

Fire Chief/EMD Annear and Public Safety Admin/Assistant EMD Shippee departed the meeting at 6:35 p.m.

3. Municipal Light Plant (MLP)

MLP Manager David Dvore was not present at the meeting to present his budget to the Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee. Finance Committee Chair Dan Pallotta stated the MLP budget is straightforward and will reach out to Mr. Dvore directly if he has any questions.

Please note that the Finance Committee adjourned its meeting at 6:40 p.m., and all committee members departed the meeting.

Board of Selectmen Business

UNFORESEEN BUSINESS:

1. COMPLAINT: Kenneth Fensky –

Mr. Fensky attended the Board of Selectmen meeting to express his concerns regarding his mailbox. He reported that the town plow truck has damaged his mailbox at least five times, and he believes this is being done intentionally, making him feel harassed. Mr. Fensky is seeking guidance from the Board of Selectmen on how to put a stop to this issue.

BOS Chair Semanie and Vice-Chair Silva assured Mr. Fensky that the highway crew would not intentionally damage his mailbox.

The Town Administrator proposed scheduling a meeting that would include the Highway Superintendent, the Highway Crew member responsible for maintaining Brittingham Hill Road, a Selectboard member, the Town Administrator, and a police officer to address Mr. Fensky's complaint directly and immediately. Mr. Fensky agreed to the proposed meeting. The meeting has been set for the following morning, Friday, February 14, at 9:00 a.m.

New Business:

1. Surplus Property Goal Post Advertisement

The Town Administrator presented the draft advertisement for the surplus property of the Fire Department's 2010 Ford F550 to the Selectmen. After reviewing the advertisement, the Selectmen authorized the Town Administrator to submit it for the March publication in the town goal post.

2. Letter(s) of Resignation – Cultural Council & Open Space and Recreation Committee

Cultural Council Resignation – Kelly Quist

Open Space and Recreation Committee Resignation – Alex Riseman

3. Rural Development Fund Contract Amendment Request Form

The Town is requesting an amendment to the Rural Development (Executive Office of Economic Development) contract, which is set to expire on June 30, 2025. The proposed amendment seeks to extend the contract for an additional year, until June 30, 2026. This extension is necessary to ensure that the Town does not lose any funding for the Yankee Road Reconstruction Project.

MOTION TO APPROVE AND SIGN: Chair Semanie motioned to approve and sign the Executive Office of Economic Development Request for Amendment Form as written. The motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Silva was unanimously approved. (vote: 3-0-0)

4. Draft Complaint Policy

The Town Council recommended not having a formal "policy" for handling complaints, as some issues may be more complex than just complaints. They emphasized the importance of

encouraging employees and residents to discuss any concerns with the Town Administrator or a Selectboard member, but they highly recommend that any complaints should be addressed together as the Board of Selectmen instead of individually. Additionally, the Council suggested guiding individuals in the right direction if their issue extends beyond matters that can be addressed by these officials.

5. April 24th, Meeting – Request to change date or time

The Town Administrator has requested to change the date of the April 24th meeting to Wednesday, April 23rd. All three Selectmen were agreeable to the proposed change. It was decided that the meeting on Wednesday, April 23rd will have a scheduled time of 4:00 p.m.

Old Business:

1. Fire Chief Succession Plan –
 - TA requested a meeting date and time with the Town of Charlemont
 - Bill H.3989 passed – received parchment allowing DA to continue as an “on-call” firefighter for the TOR.
2. Personnel Policy Manual – no updates.

Road/Bridge Projects:

Yankee Road:

1. Rural Development Fund Contract Amendment Request
2. HUD Federal Funding – the DRGR system requires an additional approver for various forms and contracts. It was suggested that this person should be the Chair of the BOS.
3. Environmental Review – the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) has agreed to be the responsible entity for the town to sign off and approve the environmental review.

Hazelton Road Culvert: no update.

Tunnel Road Bridge: no update.

Cyrus Stage Bridge: no update.

Warrants/Contracts:

1. Chair Semanie Reviewed Warrants - FY25 Vendor, Payroll, & NBSU Warrants #17

Chair Semanie reviewed and signed the FY2025 vendor, payroll

2. Rural Development Fund Contract Amendment Request

Mail:

1. Franklin Land Trust – D2R2 bike ride scheduled for Saturday, August 23, 2025
2. Franklin County Regional Housing Authority – Annual Report
3. Common Wealth of Massachusetts – Department of Public Utilities

Minutes:

1. January 16, 2025, Minutes - TABLED

2. January 30, 2025, Minutes - TABLED
3. January 30, 2025, Joint Meeting Minutes - TABLED
4. February 06, 2025, Joint Meeting Minutes - TABLED

Citizen Comments:

NONE

Future Meetings:

Thursday, February 20, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. – Joint BOS/FinCom

Thursday, February 27, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. – Joint BOS/FinCom

Adjournment: 7:58 p.m.

MOTION TO ADJOURN: Chair Semanie motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:58 p.m. The motion, seconded by Selectmen Baker, was unanimously approved. (vote: 3-0-0)

Respectfully Submitted,

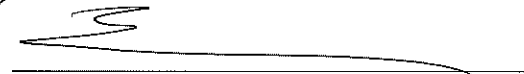
Brooke E. Shulda, Town Administrator

Approval Date: April 10, 2025

Approved by:



Joanne Semanie, Chair



Ed Silva, Vice-Chair



Bill Baker, Selectmen

Documents:

1. Agenda for January 30, 2025
2. Police Department FY26 Budget Submission Documents
3. EMD/Fire Department FY26 Budget Submission Documents
4. MLP FY26 Budget Submission Documents
5. Surplus Property Goal Post Advertisement
6. Cultural Council Letter of Resignation
7. OSRC Letter of Resignation
8. Rural Development Fund Amendment Request
9. Draft Complaint Policy
10. Bill H.3989 – Parchment
11. Mail – FLT: D2R2
12. Mail – FCRHA: Annual Report
13. Mail – CWM: Department of Public Utilities
14. January 16, 2025, Meeting Minutes
15. January 30, 2025, Meeting Minutes
16. January 30, 2025, Joint Meeting Minutes
17. February 06, 2025, Joint Meeting Minutes