



Town of Rowe
Board of Selectmen
Minutes

Thursday, July 17, 2025 – 6:00 PM
Rowe Town Hall, Meeting Room #1

Position	Name	P	A
Chair	Joanne Semanie	x	
V-Chair	Marilyn Wilson	x	
Selectmen	William Baker	x	

IN-PERSON AUDIENCE: None.

ZOOM PARTICIPATION: None.

TOWN OFFICIALS: Town Administrator Brooke Shulda

Call to Order: Chair Semanie called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM

Announcement of recording devices: None.

Noteworthy Announcements: None.

New Business:

1. Fire District – Local Approval Documentation

For the Fire District to go through legislation, the Town needs to provide Representative Blais' and Senator Marks' offices with specific documentation referred to as "local approval". This includes a formal request from the town to the legislators to file the bill in the General Court, summarizing what the bill will do on Town Letterhead. Attached to the formal request, the town also needs to provide a copy of the article passed by the Board, notarized by the Town Clerk with their wet signature and the raised seal of the town, as well as a draft of the bill language.

The Town Administrator prepared the formal letter to both Rep Blais and Senator Mark, in which the Board of Selectmen signed. The Town Clerk notarized the article with a wet signature and the raised town seal. The Town Admin informed the BOS that she will be mailing the letter out the following day, Friday, July 18, 2025.

2. Adopt Proposed Board/Committee/Commission Handbook drafted by Justine Krumm.

3. Cultural Council Appointments

Susan Tomlinson submitted a letter of recommendation in favor of appointing the two residents below to the Cultural Council.

Thomas Chiofalo
Caitlyn Semanie

MOTION TO APPOINT: Chair Semanie motioned to appoint Thomas Chiofalo and Caitlyn Semanie to the Rowe Cultural Council as recommended by the Cultural Council Chair Susan Tomlinson. The motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Wilson, was unanimously approved. (vote: 3-0-0)

4. Highway Department – Job Advertisement/Roadside Expectations

Job Advertisement - The Town Administrator prepared a job advertisement for the upcoming heavy equipment operator/laborer position in the highway department. The BOS agreed that it was ready for posting and authorized placing it on Indeed, the Greenfield Recorder, Rowe Goal Post, and on the Town Website. The Town Administrator mentioned she would ensure the job is posted by the next day, July 18, 2025.

Roadside Expectations – Chair Semanie expressed concern regarding roadside expectations, specifically concerning tree and debris clean-up from the February windstorm, and requested to have the Highway Superintendent join a meeting to go over expectations amongst various other topics. Selectmen Baker agreed, also expressing concern. Vice-Chair Wilson was also in favor of bringing the Highway Superintendent in for a meeting to discuss expectations. The BOS agreed to meet with the Superintendent on Tuesday, July 22, 2025, at 8:30 AM.

The BOS listed topics they wish to discuss during the meeting:

1. Sick time buyout clarification
 2. Windstorm clean-up, set clear expectations and deadlines
 3. Purchase of proper equipment for larger storm clean-up purposes
 4. Roadside mowing.
 5. Road sealant/preservation
 6. Offer assistance in prioritizing projects/tasks and consequences should projects and tasks not be completed by deadline
 7. Free Safety Trainings provided by MIIA
5. Vacation Request

Public Safety Admin Julie Shippee has submitted a vacation request. The Town Admin referred this to the BOS to clarify who should approve vacation requests submitted by the Public Safety Admin. Chair Semanie stated that either Police Chief Hyytinen or Fire Chief Annear should approve and sign such requests.

Old Business:

1. Fire Chief Succession Plan/Fire District – please refer to #1 in New Business.
2. Personnel Policy Manual – Requested clarification on Holiday time.

Ongoing Projects:

Yankee Road:

1. Responsible Entity for Environmental Review update: The TA informed the Board that she has touched base with Dan Tobyn from the Executive office of Housing and Livable communities who stated that the environmental review process is complete and that he is just finishing up some paperwork to send to HUD.
2. The Town Administrator continues to work on easements. Great River Hydro has agreed to donate the easements at no cost to the town. She is waiting to hear back from Yankee Atomic on whether they will donate their easement(s) to the town as well. She has been in contact with a surveyor, Kim Levitch, who she is hoping will take on the job. If Kim accepts the survey work, he will work closely with Lamson Engineering on establishing the right-of-way.

Tunnel Road Bridge:

1. Ownership: RR Entity owned
2. Inspection: A site assessment was conducted on Tuesday, July 07, 2025. An in-depth inspection is scheduled to take place on Monday, July 21, and is expected to last up to four days.
3. UNFORESEEN: Vice-Chair Wilson expressed her concerns to Chair Semanie and Selectman Baker, stating she does not support using state or federal tax funds for the bridge's remedy or replacement. She believes such funding is unreasonable, as it only provides access to two homes.

Wilson also prepared a letter to MassDOT District One Director Francisca Heming, voicing her opposition to using public funds for the bridge's remedy or replacement. She asked Chair Semanie and Selectman Baker for their opinions on spending state or federal funds on the bridge. After a brief discussion, both Semanie and Baker agreed to be part of the letter expressing their concerns about using any state or federal funding for the bridge's remediation or replacement. The Town Administrator asked if the BOS would like her to address and send a copy of the letter to Representative Natalie Blais and Senator Paul Mark. The board agreed and requested that the Town Admin send both Rep Blais and Senator Mark a signed copy of the letter.

MOTION TO APPROVE AND SIGN: Chair Semanie motioned to approve and sign the Tunnel Road Bridge letter prepared by Vice-Chair Wilson, expressing their concern regarding the utilization of state or federal funds in the remediation or replacement of Tunnel Road Bridge as written. The motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Wilson, was unanimously approved. (vote: 3-0-0)

Hazelton Road Culvert: no update.

Cyrus Stage Bridge: no update.

Warrants/Contracts:

1. Chair Semanie Reviewed Warrants - FY25 Vendor, Payroll, & NBSU Warrants #27, #28, FY26 Vendor Warrants #1 & 1.1, and Payroll Warrant #1

Minutes:

1. June 26, 2025 – Meeting Minutes – TABLED
2. July 14, 2025 – Meeting Minutes - TABLED

Future Meetings:

1. Thursday, July 22, 2025 – 8:30 AM
2. Thursday, July 31, 2025 – 6:00 PM
3. Thursday, August 14, 2025 – 6:00 PM
4. Thursday, August 28, 2025 – 6:00 PM

Mail:

1. Woodland Stewardship Survey

Unforeseen Business:

1. The Town Administrator informed the BOS that there will be a meeting taking place at the Town Hall on Friday, July 25, 2025, at 11:00 AM with the Massachusetts Department of Revenue for a meet and greet. She let them know they are more than welcome to attend the meeting, but to let her know in advance, as she will need to properly post a meeting agenda if there will be one or more selectmen attending.
2. The Town Administrator informed the BOS that there will most likely be another 15-20% increase in health insurance costs within FY2026. She does not have all the details but will keep the BOS updated as she receives more information.
3. Highway Department sick time buyout – to be discussed at the July 22 meeting.

Citizen Comments: None.

Adjournment: 7:18 PM

MOTION TO ADJOURN: Chair Semanie motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:18 PM. The motion, seconded by Selectman Baker, was unanimously approved. (vote: 3-0-0)


Respectfully Submitted,

Brooke E. Shulda, Town Administrator

Approval Date: July 31, 2025

Approved by:

Joanne Semanie, Chair



Marilyn Wilson, Vice-Chair



Bill Baker, Selectmen

Documents:

1. Agenda for July 17, 2025
2. Fire District – Local Approval Documentation
3. Proposed Board/Committee/Commission Handbook
4. Highway Department Job Advertisement
5. Vacation Request
6. MAIL: Woodland Stewardship Survey