



Town of Rowe
Board of Selectmen
Minutes

Thursday, July 31, 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: Ed Silva

ZOOM PARTICIPATION: Greenfield Recorder Maddison Schofield

TOWN OFFICIALS: Finance Committee Dan Pallotta, Wayne Zavotka, Loretta Dione, Jeffery Bailey, Town Administrator Brooke Shulda

Call to Order: Vice-Chair Wilson called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM

Announcement of recording devices: None.

Noteworthy Announcements: None.

Board of Selectmen & Finance Committee Business:

1. Finance Committee Vacancy

Ed Silva and Dennis May expressed interest in filling the Finance Committee Vacancy. Mr. Silva was present at the meeting; Mr. May was absent.

The appointment followed Massachusetts law, as confirmed by Dan regarding the necessary voting procedure.

Ed Silva shared that he has not served on the Finance Committee, but his business experience includes managing finances. He plans to run for the position in May and highlighted the difficulty in finding younger volunteers for the committee. When asked about improvements needed in the Finance Committee, he committed to learning as he goes.

Finance Committee Chair Pallotta asked for a motion to appoint Ed Silva to the vacant seat on the Finance Committee.

MOTION TO APPOINT: Finance Committee member Dionne motioned to appoint Ed Silva to fill the unexpired Finance Committee term until next May's town election. The motion, seconded by Finance Committee member Jeff Bailey, was approved. (vote: 4-1-1)

Finance Committee
Dan Pallotta – yes
Loretta Dionne – yes, then requested to abstain
Wayne Zavotka – no
Jeff Bailey - yes

Board of Selectmen
Bill Baker - yes
Marilyn Wilson - yes

2. Hampshire County Group Insurance Trust (HCGIT) - Health Insurance Increase

A letter from Hampshire County Group Insurance Trust revealed another 20% increase in health insurance for FY2026.

FinCom Chair Pallotta mentioned that while changing policies poses challenges, it isn't impossible. He also stated that only PPO and HMO options are available, with PPO being slightly more expensive.

Mr. Silva inquired about reviewing the policy for unnecessary coverage.

BOS Vice-Chair Wilson reminded that health care falls under the Board of Selectmen's responsibility.

FinCom member Bailey questioned the reasons for the premium increase, to which the Town Administrator responded that rising weight loss drug costs and an increase in claims were the driving contributing factors.

FinCom Chair Pallotta seeks information on retirees' coverage and asks whether the town can switch insurance providers or adjust the percentage of coverage paid for employees.

The Treasurer and Town Administrator plan to conduct further research. They will follow up at a future meeting regarding their research and findings on Health Insurance.

UNFORESEEN BUSINESS:

1. FinCom Member Zavotka notified the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee about a powder beetle infestation at the Browning Bench building. The estimated remediation cost is \$9,836. He also mentioned that the Park Commission and Historical Society will follow up for further discussion, since the Browning Bench is a town-owned building.
2. Chair Pallotta announced that the Park truck has officially broken down and is no longer drivable. The Park manager is considering rental options to get through the rest of the summer and might need to request a reserve fund transfer at the end of the fiscal year.

Please note: The Finance Committee adjourned and departed the meeting at 6:45 PM.

New Business:

1. Fiscal Year 2026 Mileage Rate

The IRS has increased the Massachusetts mileage rate from \$0.67 per mile to \$0.70 per mile for FY2026. The Board of Selectmen agreed to increase the Town's mileage rate to follow the state's standard mileage set rate.

MOTION TO INCREASE: Vice-Chair Wilson motioned to increase the mileage rate from \$0.67 per mile to \$0.70 per mile for FY2026. The motion, seconded by Selectman Baker, was approved. (vote: 2-0-0)

2. Spring Job Openings – Town Clerk/Fire Chief - Determine advertising timeline – TALBED
3. Draft Job Description – Town Clerk

Vice-Chair Wilson recommended that the Town Administrator share the draft job description with Meg Pallotta, a local resident with extensive experience as a town clerk.

4. Current Job Description – Fire Chief - TALBED
5. Vacation Request

Vice-Chair Wilson reviewed and signed the vacation request submitted by Highway Superintendent Lance Larned.

6. Vacation Time – Clarification Needed

Clarified by Chair Semanie prior to meeting.

Old Business:

1. Fire Chief Succession Plan/Fire District – Town Admin explained that Chair Semanie, Fire Chief Annear, and herself will be meeting with the Town of Charlemont on how to proceed forward once Chief Annear is retired next spring.
2. Personnel Policy Manual – no update.

Ongoing Projects:

Yankee Road: The TA informed the Board that she has a meeting with HUD to clarify easements and requirements with the potential surveyor about specifications when using federal funds.

Tunnel Road Bridge: Briefly discussed the inspection dates.

Hazelton Road Culvert: no update.

Cyrus Stage Bridge: no update.

Warrants/Contracts:

1. Vice-Chair Wilson reviewed FY26 Vendor, Payroll, & NBSU Warrants #02

Minutes:

1. June 26, 2025 – Meeting Minutes
2. July 14, 2025 – Meeting Minutes
3. July 17, 2025 – Meeting Minutes
4. July 22, 2025 – Meeting Minutes

MOTION TO APPROVE & SIGN: Vice-Chair Wilson motioned to approve and sign the meeting minutes for June 26, 2025, July 14, 2025, July 17, 2025, and July 22, 2025, as written. The motion, seconded by Selectman Baker, was approved. (vote: 2-0-0)

Future Meetings:

1. Thursday, August 14, 2025 – 6:00 PM
2. Thursday, August 28, 2025 – 6:00 PM
3. Thursday, September 11, 2025 – 6:00 PM
4. Thursday, September 25, 2025 – 6:00 PM

Mail:

1. None

Unforeseen Business:

1. FRCOG – Electrical Inspector Appointment

On June 26, 2025, the BOS appointed Bill Erwin as the FRCOG Electrical Inspector. Soon afterward, the Town Administrator was informed by FRCOG that Bill Erwin is no longer serving as the Electrical Inspector and was asked to appoint Dana Spring instead.

MOTION TO APPOINT: Vice-Chair Wilson motioned to appoint Dana Spring as the FRCOG Electrical Inspector for FY2026. The motion, seconded by Selectman Baker, was approved. (vote: 2-0-0)

Citizen Comments: None.

Adjournment: 7:23 PM

MOTION TO ADJOURN: Vice-Chair Wilson motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:23 PM. The motion, seconded by Selectman Baker, was approved. (vote: 2-0-0)

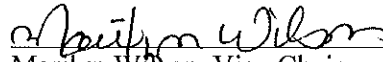
Respectfully Submitted,

Brooke E. Shulda, Town Administrator

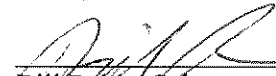
Approval Date: August 14, 2025

Approved by:

Joanne Semanie, Chair



Marilyn Wilson, Vice-Chair



Bill Baker, Selectmen

Documents:

1. Agenda for July 31, 2025
2. Draft Job Description – Town Clerk
3. Current Job Description – Fire Chief
4. Vacation Request
5. June 26, 2025 – Meeting Minutes
6. July 14, 2025 – Meeting Minutes
7. July 17, 2025 – Meeting Minutes
8. July 22, 2025 – Meeting Minutes