



Town of Rowe
Board of Selectmen
Minutes

Thursday, August 28, 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: Loretta Dione

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.

Appointments:

6:00 PM – Justine Krumm

Open Space and Recreation Committee: Land Acquisition Update – OSRC member Justine Krumm attended the meeting to update the Board of Selectmen that the OSRC is still waiting for feedback on the Tunnel Road land acquisition offer. She also informed the Board that the committee recently discussed the grant with land grant representatives, who indicated that the funding appears promising.

Historical Commission: Proposed Bylaw Update – Historical Commission member Justine Krumm attended the meeting to update the Board of Selectmen that the Historical Commission has held a public hearing and public meeting, has received over 20 petition signatures, and has the language needed for the next Annual Town Meeting or Special Town Meeting, whichever comes first. She has asked if there is anything else the BOS requires before the said meeting is held. The BOS was pleased with Ms. Krumm's update and stated that no further action was needed to include the proposed bylaw language in the next town meeting warrant.

*Please note, Ms. Krumm departed the meeting at 6:14 PM.

Highway Department:

New Hire Update: Chair Semanie informed Vice-Chair Wilson and Selectman Baker that she had spoken with the new highway department worker and made the following accommodations: prorated his vacation, personal, and sick time, and provided him with Holiday pay for September 1, Labor Day. Vice-Chair Wilson and Selectman Baker were in favor of Chair Semanie's decision.

February Storm Clean-up: Vice-Chair Wilson asked for an update on the Northern Tree Service estimate for the February storm cleanup. The Town Admin explained that the HWY Superintendent's email has been out of service for the past several weeks, and he has been unable to retrieve emails from it. She also mentioned that she had provided her email address to Northern Tree Service but did not receive the quote. She noted that she has scheduled IT to upgrade the Superintendent's workstation, and they are set to be on site at the Highway Department on Tuesday, September 02. Vice-Chair Wilson requested that the Highway Superintendent join each Selectboard meeting to update them on the progress of the storm cleanup until the cleanup is complete.

Citizen Comments:

Town resident Loretta Dionne attended the meeting to seek permission from the Board of Selectmen to build a cliff swallow nest structure on the Town Common. Chair Semanie advised Ms. Dionne that she must follow the proper procedures. She explained that the proposed structure must be reviewed by the planning board, accompanied by a public hearing. Additionally, there is a strong possibility that the project may require approval at a town meeting for voter approval.

New Business:

1. Franklin Land Trust – D2R2 Bike Race Concerns/Complaints/Park Damage

The Town Administrator drafted a letter to the Franklin Land Trust, informing them of damage and trash left at Pelham Lake Park after the D2R2 bike race held on Saturday, August 23, 2025. The letter also outlined how participating bikers did not comply with the rules of the road. Additionally, the letter noted that FLT failed to provide the town with a certificate of insurance and did not follow up with the town prior to the race, which meant the proper emergency personnel were not available should an incident occur. The letter details the requirements set forth by the town for the Franklin Land Trust should they continue using the town of Rowe for the D2R2 road race. Failure to meet these requirements will result in the town no longer permitting the Franklin Land Trust to use its roadways or park facilities for future events.

A final draft of the letter will be presented at a future BOS meeting for official approval and signature.

2. FRCOG – Northern Tier Passenger Rail Project Letter of Support

FRCOG requested that local towns submit support letters expressing their backing for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Project. The BOS agreed that the passenger rail project would be a great benefit to Massachusetts residents and fully supports it.

MOTION TO APPROVE AND SIGN: Chair Semanie motioned to approve and sign the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Project letter of support as written. The motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Wilson, was unanimously approved. (vote: 3-0-0)

3. DEP - Town Hall – Replacement of drinking water meter

The Town Administrator notified the BOS that the drinking water meter at the Town Hall requires replacement following a DEP inspection that identified it as being deficient.

4. 4Runner – alternate option

The Town Administrator informed the BOS that the Fire Department is interested in using the old PD cruiser for fire training exercises. The BOS agreed that the cruiser can be used for fire training by the fire department. If they choose not to use it for this purpose, the Town Administrator will then put it out to bid in the Goal Post.

Old Business:

1. Fire Chief Succession Plan/Fire District –

Chair Semanie informed the rest of the selectboard about the meeting held with the Town of Charlemont earlier in the day (Thursday, August 28, 2025, at 10:00 AM) regarding the open fire chief position coming in May 2026. During the meeting, the following topics were discussed:

- Update Fire Chief Job Description (Dennis is working on this)
- Develop a Fire Chief Contract that must be signed upon hire (Dennis is working on this)
- Update contract between Charlemont and Rowe (Sarah, Charlemont's Town Administrator, and Brooke)
- Establish starting salary; Dennis suggests \$75,000 - \$80,000 (to be discussed at a proposed joint meeting between Charlemont and Rowe BOS)
- Determine how shared costs will work (to be discussed at the proposed joint meeting between Charlemont and Rowe BOS)
- Instead of interviewing, Dennis suggested hiring through a local Assessment Center

Sarah requested that Rowe send her a list of dates from the Rowe BOS so she can coordinate with the Charlemont BOS on scheduling a joint meeting between the two.

List of Dates for proposed joint BOS meeting:

- October 02, 2025, any time after 4 PM
- October 06, 2025, any time after 4 PM
- October 07, 2025, any time after 4 PM
- October 08, 2025, any time after 4 PM
- October 09, 2025, at 6:00 PM (TOR BOS meeting)

The BOS also stated they would be willing to join one of the Tuesday BOS meetings in Charlemont.

Town Admin Brooke Shulda will send the proposed dates to Sarah to determine the joint meeting date with the Charlemont Selectboard.

2. Personnel Policy Manual – no update.

Ongoing Projects:

Yankee Road: no update.

Tunnel Road Bridge: no update.

Zoar Rd. Sam Rice Brook Bridge: The Town Administrator informed the board that a resident had reached out to the Police Chief, stating she felt that "Stop" signs should be installed at the location of the bridge instead of "Yield" signs. According to MassDOT, the Highway Superintendent, the Police Chief, and the Board of Selectmen agreed that the current signage at this location is sufficient and do not feel that any additional signage is needed.

Hazelton Road Culvert: no update.

Cyrus Stage Bridge: The BOS requested an update on the bridge's completion. The Town Admin stated she would ask the Highway Superintendent to check in with Davenport Trucking LLC.

Warrants/Contracts:

1. Chair Semanie Reviewed Warrants – FY26 Vendor, Payroll, & NBSU Warrants #4
2. Park Commission – FY26 MVP Grant Contract

The Park Commission was awarded \$90,820 in FY26 MVP grant funds for the “Adapting Pelham Lake Park to Changing Climate” project. The BOS voted to approve the funding and to have Chair Semanie sign the grant documents at a later date (the week of September 01 – September 04), as the contract documents must be signed in the presence of a notary, and there was not a notary available at the time of the meeting.

MOTION TO APPROVE AND SIGN CONTRACT: Chair Semanie motioned to approve and sign the FY26 MVP grant agreement as written. The motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Wilson, was unanimously approved. (vote: 3-0-0)

Minutes:

1. August 14, 2025 – Meeting Minutes – Incomplete

Unforeseen Business:

1. Green Communities Grant Agreement–

In late spring the Town Administrator and Administrative Assistant applied for Green Communities Grant Funding. On, August 15, 2025, the Town was notified that the town was awarded \$218,892.00 in Green Communities funding to upgrade the heating and cooling system in the Town Hall.

MOTION TO APPROVE AND SIGN: Chair Semanie motioned to approve and sign the Green Communities Grant Agreement as written. The motion, seconded by Selectmen Baker, was unanimously approved. (vote: 3-0-0)

Future Meetings:

1. Thursday, September 11, 2025 – 6:00 PM – BOS requested to reschedule meeting for 9/10/2025
2. Thursday, September 25, 2025 – 6:00 PM
3. Thursday, October 09, 2025 – 6:00 PM

Mail:

1. Sun Property Group

Citizen Comments:

1. Please refer to the entry on page 2.

Adjournment: 8:03 PM

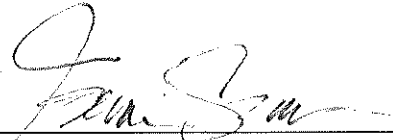
MOTION TO ADJOURN: Chair Semanie motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:03 PM. The motion, seconded by Selectman Baker, was unanimously approved. (vote: 3-0-0)

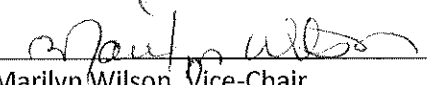
Respectfully Submitted,

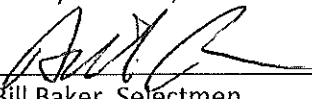
Brooke E. Shulda, Town Administrator

Approval Date: _____

Approved by:


Joanne Semanie, Chair


Marilyn Wilson, Vice-Chair


Bill Baker, Selectmen

Documents:

1. Agenda for August 28, 2025
2. FLT D2R2 – DRAFT Letter
3. FRCOG – Northern Tier Rail Project Letter of Support
4. DEP – Drinking Water Sanitary Survey Inspection Report
5. Park - MVP Grant Contract(s)
6. MAIL: Sun Property Group
7. August 14, 2025 – Meeting Minutes