



Town of Rowe
Board of Selectmen
Minutes

Thursday, September 25, 2025 – 6:00 PM
Rowe Town Hall, Meeting Room #1

BOARD OF SELECTMENT: Joanne Semanie, Marilyn Wilson, Bill Baker

TOWN OFFICIALS: Police Chief Christopher Hyytinen, Police Officer Francis Noyes, Public Safety Admin Julie Shippee, School Committee Chair Susie Zavotka, Town Administrator Brooke Shulda

ZOOM PARTICIPATION: unidentified participant 413-339-5526, Rosie Gordon, unidentified participant named "i-pad", unknown participant Alexander Franklin, unknown participant Thomas Jones

IN PERSON AUDIENCE: None.

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

Announcement of recording devices: Yes – Zoom Recording

Noteworthy Announcements: Vice Chair Wilson stated that Davenport hasn't worked on the bridge for three weeks. They plan to return to the job site in a couple of weeks to do more work and are currently waiting for materials like steel and concrete. Work will pause during the winter. Paving is scheduled for June and July of next year, and the project is now projected to be completed by July 2026.

APPOINTMENTS:

6:00 PM – Police Department and Public Safety Admin – Out of Town Detail Pay

Matter in Question:

Police Chief Hyytinen, Police Officer Noyes, and Public Safety Administrator Julie Shippee participated in the meeting to discuss compensation for out-of-town detail assignments and to evaluate whether the Town of Rowe should fund and pay for its officers' participation in such details. It should be noted that the town will receive reimbursement from the vendor requesting the details. The town is NOT funding the details in question.

Discussion:

Public Safety Administrator Julie Shippee expressed concerns regarding the practice of compensating officers through their home municipality, even when the officers were not working in that jurisdiction. She highlighted the potential issues related to administrative processes and the accuracy of payroll allocations in such cases.

Officer Francis Noyes pointed out that, according to the existing county agreement, if an out-of-town officer is assigned to a detail within a town, the sending town is responsible for compensating the officer. Additionally, the billing for such services is also to be handled by the sending town. He also recited the Western Massachusetts Law Enforcement Mutual Aid Agreement, emphasizing the section that indicates the "sending" town is responsible for paying its officers' wages when requested for a police detail in another town. This has been the law governing such situations since the town became a signatory in 2014.

Decision:

The Selectboard has decided that as long as the vendor promptly issues reimbursement checks to the town, there are no issues with paying the Rowe officers through the town, even for work performed outside of town. The Selectboard also agreed that Rowe officers receive their detail pay within the pay period in which they worked.

*At approximately 6:20 PM, the meeting was disrupted by an unidentified participant, potentially the individual using the device labeled "i-pad," Alexander Franklin, or Thomas Jones, who broadcasted inappropriate videos and hate speech. The Town Administrator immediately deactivated the Zoom recording and terminated the Zoom session. At around 6:22 PM, Officer Noyes informed the Selectboard that he would be utilizing his own personal device to record the remaining portion of the Police Department's appointment, with the intention of keeping the recordings for his own record.

*Public Safety Admin Julie Shippee, Police Chief Christopher Hyytinen, and Officer Francis Noyes departed the meeting at 6:35 PM.

6:30 PM – DPW Highway Superintendent – February Storm Cleanup Progress & Check in

Highway Superintendent Lance Larned was unable to attend the meeting but provided a status update on ongoing cleanup efforts. He reported that the highway crew has been actively removing storm debris from Monroe Hill Road, Zoar Road, Middletown Hill Road, Pond Road, Leshure Road, Newell Cross Road, and Cross Road. According to Mr. Larned, approximately 50% of the cleanup has been completed. Additionally, he noted that Northern Tree Service will address the hazardous trees on County Road.

Unforeseen Business:

School Committee Chair Susie Zavotka attended the meeting to present a recommendation regarding the Berk12 MTRSD Sustainability Study. Ms. Zavotka stated that she recently met with a Berk12 representative, Jake Eberwein, who suggested revising the original estimate from \$10,000.00 to \$9,950.00. This revision would include the Town of Rowe in the study, eliminating the need to bid the study formally.

New Business:

1. Fire Department –
 - a. Authorized payroll /timesheet signatory
 - b. Authorized vendor bill schedule signatory

The board agreed to designate Danielle Beaumier as the authorized timesheet signer and Public Safety Admin Julie Shippee as the authorized bill schedule signer on behalf of the Rowe Fire Department.

2. Police Department –
 - a. Authorized PD payroll /timesheet signatory
 - b. Authorized PD vendor bill schedule signatory

The board agreed to designate Public Safety Admin Julie Shippee as the authorized timesheet and bill schedule signatory for the Rowe Police Department.

3. Treasurer/Collector/HR – Applicant Resumes

The Town Administrator provided the Selectboard with the applicant resumes received so far.

October STM Items:

1. Fire Department Turnout Gear
2. Browning Bench Powder Beetle Infestation
3. FY25 Cash Audit/Cash Reconciliation
4. MTRSD Sustainability Study
5. Historic Commission Bylaws – The Chair of the Selectboard has requested that this item be added to the STM list, as the Historic Commission has completed its due diligence. –

Future STM Items:

1. FY26 Mid-Year 20% Health Insurance Increase
2. Fire Chief Salary/Benefits – not prepared for upcoming STM
3. Oil Tank Removal – The Town Administrator requested to add this item to the STM list in case the bid is over the original budgeted amount. – not prepared for STM

The Selectboard assessed the proposed items to identify those ready for presentation at the proposed October Special Town Meeting, as well as those requiring further preparation. It was concluded that an additional special town meeting will be necessary following the October STM.

Old Business:

1. Fire Chief Succession Plan – Meeting scheduled with the Town of Charlemont for Monday, October 06, 2025, at 6:00 PM.
2. Personnel Policy Manual – no update.

Ongoing Projects:

Yankee Road: no update.

Tunnel Road Bridge: no update.

Sam Rice Brook Bridge: awaiting plan approval from MassDOT.

Hazelton Road Culvert: no update.

Cyrus Stage Bridge: no update.

Warrants/Contracts:

1. Chair Semanie Reviewed Warrants – FY26 Vendor, Payroll, & NBSU Warrants #4
2. Clinician Co-Responder (Jail Diversion Program) Regional Partner Agreement – Third Year Participating

MOTION TO APPROVE AND SIGN: Chair Semanie motioned to approve and sign the Clinician Co-Responder (Jail Diversion Program) Regional Partner Agreement as written. The motion, seconded by Bill Baker, was unanimously approved. (vote: 3-0-0)

3. Upper Pioneer Valley Veteran's District – 2-Year Agreement

MOTION TO APPROVE AND SIGN: Chair Semanie motioned to approve and sign the 2-Year Agreement with the Upper Pioneer Valley Veterans' District as written. The motion, seconded by Selectman Baker, was unanimously approved. (vote: 3-0-0)

Mail:

1. None.

Minutes:

1. August 14, 2025 – Meeting Minutes
2. August 28, 2025 – Meeting Minutes
3. September 08, 2025 – Meeting Minutes

Meeting minutes were tabled until the 10/09/2025 meeting.

Future Meetings:

1. Monday, October 06, 2025 – 6:00 PM – Location: Charlemont Town Hall
2. Thursday, October 09, 2025 – 6:00 PM
3. Thursday, October 23, 2025 – 6:00 PM

Citizen Comments

Unforeseen Business (within preceding 48 hours): Please see above.

Adjournment

Joanne Semanie, Board of Selectmen Chair

The Listing of matters are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair which may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed, and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law.

Citizen Comments:

None.

Adjournment: 7:57 PM

MOTION TO ADJOURN: Chair Semanie motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:57 PM. The motion, seconded by Selectman Baker, was unanimously approved. (vote: 3-0-0)

Respectfully Submitted,

Brooke E. Shulda, Town Administrator

Approval Date: 11/06/2025

Approved by:


Joanne Semanie, Chair

Marilyn Wilson, Vice-Chair

Bill Baker, Selectmen

BOS Documents:

1. Agenda for September 25, 2025
2. PD – Detail Pay Research Documents
3. HWY – Feb Storm Clean-up Estimate
4. Treasurer/Collector/HR Applicant Resumes
5. Clinician Co-Responder (Jail Diversion Program) Regional Partner Agreement
6. Upper Pioneer Valley Veteran's District – 2-Year Agreement
7. August 14, 2025 – Meeting Minutes
8. August 28, 2025 – Meeting Minutes
9. September 08, 2025 – Meeting Minutes