



Town of Rowe
Board of Selectmen
Minutes

Thursday, October 23, 2025 – 6:00 PM
Rowe Town Hall, Meeting Room #1

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

TOWN OFFICIALS: Highway Superintendent Lance Larned, Park Commission Chair Laurie Pike, Park Manager Briel Gibson, School Committee Chair Susie Zavotka, Town Administrator Brooke Shulda

IN-PERSON AUDIENCE: None

ZOOM PARTICIPATION: Resident Rosie Gordon

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 – Highway Superintendent – February Storm Cleanup Progress

Vice-Chair Marilyn Wilson raised concerns about hazardous logs on the side of Joe King Hill on Zoar Road and requested that the highway department address the issue if it is within their capabilities without being too hazardous for the crew. The Highway Superintendent stated that Northern Tree Service was scheduled to remove the logs on Joe King Hill, but their services were canceled because the Selectboard was unclear on where the funds were coming from.

Mr. Larned explained that there was a misunderstanding regarding the scope of work assigned to Northern Tree Service. He said that Northern Tree Service planned to address the logs of concern on Joe King Hill and remove two dangerous trees along County Road. The Selectboard and Town Administrator were under the impression that Mr. Larned hired the Tree Company for a complete canopy trimming along the entirety of Zoar Road, to remove the dangerous logs along Joe King Hill, and to remove the two trees on County Road. Yet they were unaware that no budget had been allocated for such a project, as no vote had been taken at any recent Town meetings or discussed with the Selectboard to appropriate funds for it, as tree services are costly.

Vice-Chair Wilson noted that, as the Highway Superintendent and Tree Warden, he has the authority under Chapter 87, Section 5 of MGL to remove or address dangerous trees that pose a hazard to town roads or drivers, even if they are on private property. She recommended that he consult with an arborist to develop a plan to address such hazards and suggested presenting it during the FY2027 budget season.

Selectman Baker stated that before engaging any tree removal company, he would prefer the Highway Crew to address as much of the tree removal as possible within their capabilities and within their safety.

Vice-Chair Wilson requested that Mr. Larned join her on a ride-along tomorrow morning (Friday, October 24, at 8:00 am) to review and address the specific hazardous trees she is referring to. Mr. Larned agreed to her proposal.

The Selectboard requested Mr. Larned's attendance at their next scheduled meeting, Thursday, November 06, 2025, at 6:00 PM.

*Note: Highway Superintendent departed the meeting.

6:15 PM – Park Commission – Cliff Swallows

Park Commission Chair Laurie Pike and Park Manager Briel Gibson joined the meeting to discuss the future of the Cliff Swallows. They have been working with Cliff Swallow specialist Mara Silver on a plan to try to get the Cliff Swallow to nest on the Soule Barn.

Park Commission Chair Pike and Park Manager Gibson are requesting permission from the Selectboard to remove a couple of cherry trees and a few other larger trees near the Soule Barn to open the space surrounding the barn to make the barn more attractive to swallows for nesting. They will also need to remove knotweed that grows on the barn and are proposing to dig artificial mud sources or possibly add a kids' pool for the birds to supplement their artificial nests, which will be placed along the barn's roof eaves.

Chair Semanie noted that if artificial mud sources are to be implemented, they will need to obtain approval from the conservation commission.

The Selectboard was in favor of the plan proposed by Pike and Gibson.

MOTION TO PERMIT CLIFF PLAN: Chair Semanie motioned to permit the Park Commission and Park Manager's plan to remove trees along the Soule Barn for the purpose of attracting the Cliff Swallows nesting site. The motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Wilson, was unanimously approved. (vote: 3-0-0)

A brief discussion was held regarding designating the Park Manager as the primary Point of Contact for Mara Silver, the Swallow Specialist, instead of the Town Hall Staff. The Selectboard, Park Commission Chair, and Park Manager were all in agreement.

*Note: Park Commission Chair Pike and Park Manager Gibson departed the meeting.

6:30 PM – School Committee Chair – RE: MTRSD Sustainability Study Meeting

School Committee Chair Susie Zavotka joined the meeting to update the Selectboard on a proposed informational meeting on the Berk12 Mohawk Trail Regional School District (MTRSD) Sustainability Study. She wanted to ensure there was no conflict with the proposed date for the meeting: Thursday, December 11, 2025, at the Rowe Elementary School, with a suggested time of 5:30 -7:30 PM. The Town Administrator assured Mrs. Zavotka that no Selectboard meeting was scheduled for that date.

Mrs. Zavotka explained that the meeting will include a presentation on the proposed MTRSD plan, breakout groups for questions and concerns, and either a straw poll or an electronic vote at the end of the meeting. She also explained that Berk12 will provide advertising for the Town and requested that the advertisement be placed in the town Goal Post, Town Hall, and Town Library, and that the information about the meeting date be sent out on a town-wide ROBO call. The Town Administrator stated that staff within the Town Hall can assist with these requests.

It was discussed that Mrs. Zavotka, as Chair of the School Committee, will sign any contracts related to the study and that the billing will be handled by the Town Administrator.

*Note: School Committee Chair Zavotka departed the meeting.

New Business:

1. Letter of Resignation – OSRC

Laurie Pike submitted her resignation letter for her position on the Open Space and Recreation Committee.

2. Oil Tank Removal Bids

Two bids were submitted for the Oil Tank Removal project at the Rowe Elementary School.

1. CD Davenport Trucking, Inc. - Bid Price: \$207,306.00
2. Green Site Services – Bid Price: \$144,050.00

After careful review and consideration of both bids, the Selectboard decided to award the bid to Green Site Services.

MOTION TO AWARD BID: Chair Semanie motioned to award the Oil Tank Removal Project bid to Green Site Services. The motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Wilson, was unanimously approved. (vote: 3-0-0)

FUTURE STM Items:

1. FY26 Mid-Year 20% Health Insurance Increase

Once a new Treasurer is in place and settled, the Town Administrator will work closely with that person to determine the overage cost.

2. Oil Tank Removal Project

This item will be removed from the STM list as the bid price came in lower than anticipated and the town has sufficient funding to complete this project.

3. Yankee Road – Parcel Donations

Old Business:

1. Fire Chief Succession Plan – no update.
2. Personnel Policy Manual – no update.
3. Franklin Land Trust: 08/23/2025 Bike Race Letter – no update.

Ongoing Projects:

Yankee Road: The Town Administrator will be touching base with Town Council's Katie Klein on the status of the waivers for Great River Hydro and Yankee Atomic.

Tunnel Road Bridge: no update.

Sam Rice Brook Bridge: Still awaiting plan approval from MassDOT.

Hazelton Road Culvert: no update.

Cyrus Stage Bridge: no update.

Oil Tank Removal: Please refer to New Business #2.

National Grid – 10W19: According to the National Grid arborist, the Rowe portion of the project remains in the preliminary stages. Currently, it is anticipated that permits will be submitted in mid to late November or early December. In conjunction with the Tree Warden, the Forster will contact the Town Administrator to review all marked trees for the project. The Town Administrator highly suggested the involvement of a Selectboard member in this process. There will be a joint tree/pole hearing held; the timeline of this meeting is yet to be determined.

Town Hall Heating/Cooling System: This project is scheduled for completion by the end of the year.

Warrants/Contracts:

1. Chair Semanie Reviewed Warrants – FY26 Vendor, Payroll, Deduction & NBSU Warrants #8
2. Municipal Financial Consulting Contract – FY2025 Cash Reconciliation

The Town Administrator requested that the Selectboard review the contract proposal between the Town of Rowe and Eric A. Kinshurf, CPA LLC, for the FY2025 Cash Reconciliation Audit prior to her signing and submission. The Selectboard concurred with the scope of consulting services outlined in the proposal.

Mail:

1. FEMA – Flood Plains Management Plan

The Selectboard reviewed and agreed that the FEMA Flood Plain Management Plan was more informative rather than something they needed to act on.

Minutes:

1. October 06, 2025 – Meeting Minutes

MOTION TO APPROVE & SIGN: Chair Semanie motioned to approve and sign the October 06, 2025, meeting minutes as written. The motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Wilson, was unanimously approved. (vote: 3-0-0)

Unforeseen Business:

1. FY2025 Green Communities Annual Report

Administrative Assistant Donna Butzke managed and prepared the FY2025 Green Communities Annual Report.

MOTION TO APPROVE AND SIGN: Chair Semanie motioned to approve and sign the FY2025 Green Communities Annual Report as prepared by Administrative Assistant Donna Butzke. The motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Wilson, was unanimously approved. (vote: 3-0-0)

2. Treasurer/Collector/HR Hire Letter

The Town Administrator drafted a formal hire letter for Jakob Voelker, extending an offer for the position of Treasurer/Collector/HR for the Town of Rowe. The Selectboard concurred that the

letter was finalized and ready for signing. They instructed the Town Administrator to contact Mr. Voelker promptly the following morning to formally present the offer.

Future Meetings:

1. STM - Monday, October 27, 2025 – 6:00 PM
2. Thursday, November 06, 2025 – 6:00 PM
3. Thursday, November 20, 2025 – 6:00 PM
4. Thursday, December 04, 2025 – 6:00 PM
5. Thursday, December 18, 2025 – 6:00 PM

Citizen Comments: None.

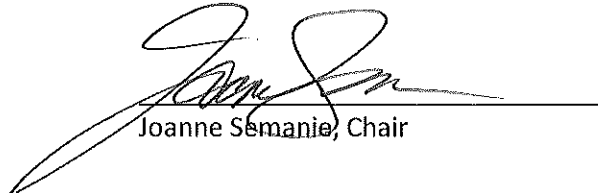
Adjournment: 7:14 PM

MOTION TO ADJOURN: Chair Semanie motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:14 PM. The motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Wilson, was unanimously approved. (vote: 3-0-0)

Respectfully Submitted,
Brooke E. Shulda, Town Administrator

Approval Date: 12/18/2025

Approved by:


Joanne Semanie, Chair

Marilyn Wilson, Vice-Chair


Bill Baker, Selectman

BOS Documents:

1. Agenda for October 23, 2025
2. Letter of Resignation – OSRC
3. Oil Tank Removal Bids
4. Yankee Road – Admin Update
5. National Grid 10W19 Project – Admin Update
6. Municipal Financial Consulting Contract – FY2025 Cash Reconciliation
7. MAIL: FEMA – Flood Plains Management Plan
8. October 06, 2025 – Meeting Minutes