



Town of Rowe
Board of Selectmen
Minutes

Thursday, December 18, 2025 – 6:00 PM
Rowe Town Hall, Meeting Room #1

BOARD OF SELECTMEN: Joanne Semanie, Bill Baker

TOWN OFFICIALS: Town Administrator Brooke Shulda

ZOOM PARTICIPATION: OSRC Justine Krumm, Kathy Atwood, Lori Ledger (joined at 7:17 pm)

IN-PERSON AUDIENCE: Wayne Zavotka, Dan Pallotta (joined at 6:27 pm)

Call to Order: Chair Semanie called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM

Announcement of recording devices: None.

Noteworthy Announcements: None.

Appointment:

6:00 PM – Open Space & Recreation Committee

Open Space and Recreation Committee (OSRC) member Justine Krumm participated in the meeting via Zoom to provide the Selectboard with an update on the Tunnel Road Land Acquisition and to inform the Selectboard that the OSRC has successfully submitted a second grant request regarding the property. Ms. Krumm clarified that Mass Audubon will cover the remaining land costs and any related expenses, including but not limited to legal fees. She also mentioned that another OSRC member had discussed with the Town Treasurer the process of opening an account to facilitate payments for expenses associated with the land purchase.

The Town Administrator noted some confusion regarding the OSRC member's request and explained the proper procedures, including the requirement to provide documentation when requesting that the Town Treasurer open an account for such purposes. She noted that the Treasurer is not the person to ask for this request, but that it is important for the Treasurer to be in the loop on such accounts. Ms. Krumm stated she would relay this information, request the required documentation from the accountant, and keep the treasurer informed of these requests.

OSRC Justine Krumm departed the meeting.

New Business:

1. School Committee Appointment

School Committee Chair Susie Zavotka notified the Selectboard that, at a recent School Committee meeting, she and School Committee member Matt Stine voted to recommend Patrick Gonder to fill the unexpired School Committee term vacated by Beth Balawick.

MOTION TO APPOINT: Chair Semanie motioned to appoint Patrick Gonder to the vacant position on the School Committee until the next annual election. The motion, seconded by Selectman Baker, was approved. (vote: 2-0-0)

2. National Grid – Electric Meter Replacement Notice

The Town Admin provided the Selectboard with an email and informational letter informing them that National Grid crews will be performing an electric meter upgrade by installing small devices on utility poles throughout town starting in the next 2 to 6 weeks. There are two phases of this project: Phase 1 is to build out the communications network by installing the small devices on the utility poles, and Phase 2 will include the installation of smart meters once the new communications network is operational.

3. FRCOG Construction Services Bid Signatory Authorization

- a. Authorizing the Highway Superintendent as the official signatory for all highway construction bids with the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG).

MOTION TO AUTHORIZE: Chair Semanie motioned to authorize Highway Superintendent Lance Larned as the official signatory for all highway construction services contracts in which the Selectboard chooses to participate. The motion, seconded by Selectman Baker, was approved. (vote: 2-0-0)

- b. Authorizing FRCOG to contract or renew Highway construction services on behalf of the Town.

MOTION TO AUTHORIZE: Chair Semanie motioned to authorize the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) to contract or renew contracts on our behalf and we have taken action to duly appoint the FRCOG as our agent for Materials bids which include Aggregates and Loam, Cold Patch, Geotextiles, Calcium Chloride Products, Culvert and Guardrail Products, and Hot Mix Asphalt Pick Up. The motion, seconded by Selectman Baker, was approved. (vote: 2-0-0)

4. Public Safety Admin Job Description – Needs Selectboard Signature

The Town Administrator made several minor revisions to the Public Safety Administrative Assistant job description. She clarified that she updated the formatting, corrected wording and date errors, eliminated redundant responsibilities, and added additional details. Moving forward, all job descriptions will be reviewed and signed off by the Selectboard, the supervisor(s), and the employee to acknowledge the responsibilities associated with the role.

MOTION TO APPROVE AND SIGN: Chair Semanie motioned to approve and sign the Public Safety Admin Assistants job description as revised. The motion, seconded by Selectman Baker, was approved. (vote: 2-0-0)

FUTURE STM Items:

1. FY26 Mid-Year 20% Health Insurance Increase
2. Yankee Road – Accept Easement Parcel(s)
3. ~~Yankee Road – Project Assistance~~
4. QDS Transition Costs - \$18,000

Unforeseen Discussions:

1. Mohawk Trail Regional School District (MTRSD) Sustainability Study

Chair Semanie mentioned that if the Town decided to move forward with the MTRSD Sustainability Study, the request would need to be added to the Special Town Meeting list for Town approval.

Wayne Zavotka clarified the straw poll: 8 residents were opposed, 6 were in favor, and 4 needed more information. Mr. Zavotka noted that some residents in other towns appear to oppose the proposal, though this does not represent the entirety of each community.

Kathy Atwood questioned the purpose of the meeting, to which Selectman Baker responded that he believes it aims to engage the community and provide them with information about the proposal, giving community members the option to weigh in on their opinions.

Dan Pallotta suggested looking into combining elementary-aged students from Rowe, Heath, Charlemont, and Hawley into a single school.

2. Refuse Garden Attendant – Holiday Hours

Board of Health Member Kathy Atwood stated that she had spoken with the Refuse Garden Attendant earlier that day regarding his regularly scheduled Transfer Station hours for Wednesday, 12/24, and that she felt it was vital that he be with his family that evening instead of working his regularly scheduled shift. Ms. Atwood informed the Selectboard that the Transfer Station would be open from 7 AM – 12 PM on Christmas Eve, Wednesday, 12/24/2025, instead of 7 AM – 10:00 AM and 4:00 PM – 7:00 PM.

3. FY2025 Cash Audit

Chair Semanie mentioned that she and the Town Administrator met with Sean from Eric Kinsherf's office regarding the FY2025 cash audit. She explained that things are moving along with the audit, but there are still some items that need to be worked out between the accountant and the treasurer.

4. Health Insurance

Finance Committee Chair Dan Pallotta asked whether the Town Administrator and Treasurer have determined the Health Insurance overage expected for this fiscal year due to the mid-year increase, so the figure can be properly budgeted for the upcoming STM. Chair Pallotta stated he expects to have the number no later than the next scheduled meeting.

Chair Pallotta suggested offering a stipend to employees who opt into their spouses' health insurance rather than the town's health insurance.

Old Business:

1. Fire Chief Succession Plan – update.
2. Personnel Policy Manual – no update.
3. Town Clerk Job Description – Chair Semanie will be working with Town Clerk Kevin Balawick on developing a Town Clerk job description at the start of the New Year.

Ongoing Projects:

Yankee Road: TA update:

MassWorks Grant – The Town Administrator submitted for a contract amendment extending the funds for June 30, 2027, vs. June 30, 2026.

Rural Development Grant – Requesting to amend the contract for extension will be necessary and will be submitted in late January or early February.

HUD Federal Funding – The contract documents were submitted on 12/04 but were returned because the Town's SAM.gov registration expired on 11/20, and the 1199A form submitted was filled out incorrectly. The Town Admin has updated the 1199A form and has been working with SAM.gov on the renewal process and hopes to have this issue resolved by Monday, 12/22.

Site Visit – The Town Admin coordinated a site visit with Great River Hydro (GRH), Yankee Atomic, Lamson Engineering, and the FRCOG to review the engineered plan and go over the easement areas requested by the Town from GRH for the project. The Town Admin explained that GRH expressed their willingness to donate the easement parcels to the Town for the project purposes and will draft the easement documents needed to proceed.

Survey – The Town Admin has been working with Lamson Engineering and ALPA Consulting on the easement plans for each parcel to be recorded with the Registry of Deeds.

Conservation Commission – The Town Admin has requested Town Council's assistance with preparing the Notice of Intent form needed to be filed with the Conservation Commission.

Tunnel Road Bridge: no update.

Sam Rice Brook Bridge: Please refer to warrants and contracts #2.

Hazelton Road Culvert: TA update:

The Town Admin will be working on gathering estimates to complete a survey, appraisal, and appraisal review for the two temporary easements needed for the culvert project. She explained that she will need to request funds at the annual town meeting for the following costs: survey, appraisal, appraisal review, easements, and legal consulting.

Cyrus Stage Bridge: no update.

Oil Tank Removal: no update.

National Grid – 10W19: no update.

Town Hall Heating/Cooling System: no update.

Warrants/Contracts:

1. Chair Semanie reviewed and signed Warrants - FY26 Accounts Payable, Payroll, Deduction & NBSU Warrants #12

2. FRCOG Procurement Agreement – RE: Zoar Road over Sam Rice Brook Bridge

The Franklin Regional Council of Government has agreed to work with the Town to put the beam-end repair work out to bid, as required for the bridge on Zoar Road over Sam Rice Brook. The repair work will bring the bridge back into compliance with MassDOT standards and reopen it to two-lane traffic upon completion.

MOTION TO APPROVE AND SIGN CONTRACT: Chair Semanie motioned to approve and sign the Professional Services Agreement by and between the Franklin Regional Council of Governments and the Town of Rowe for Procurement of Public Works Construction Services for Bridge R-10-006 on Zoar Road over Sam Rice Brook as written. The motion, seconded by Selectman Baker, was approved. (vote: 2-0-0)

3. Park Commission – Agreement for Services - Mass Audubon RE: Adapting Pelham Lake Park to a Changing Climate Agreement – Davis Mine Slash Wall Project

MOTION TO APPROVE & SIGN: Chair Semanie motioned to approve and sign the Agreement for Services by and between the Town of Rowe and the Massachusetts Audubon Society for Adapting Pelham Lake Park to a Changing Climate, as written. The motion, seconded by Selectman Baker, was approved. (vote: 2-0-0)

4. FRCOG Procurement Agreement – RE: Yankee Road Reconstruction Project

The Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) has agreed to work with the Town to place the Yankee Road Reconstruction Project out to bid.

MOTION TO APPROVE & SIGN: Chair Semanie motioned to approve and sign the Professional Services Agreement by and between the Franklin Regional Council of Governments and the Town of Rowe for Procurement Services for the MassWorks/ Rural Development/ HUD Highway Construction Bid for the Yankee Road Reconstruction Project, as written. The motion, seconded by Selectman Baker, was approved. (2-0-0)

Mail:

1. None.

Minutes:

1. October 23, 2025 – Meeting Minutes
2. November 06, 2025 – Meeting Minutes
3. November 20, 2025 – Meeting Minutes
4. December 04, 2025 – Meeting Minutes – Selectboard
5. December 04, 2025 – Meeting Minutes – Joint Selectboard/FinCom

MOTION TO APPROVE AND SIGN: Chair Semanie motioned to approve and sign the meeting minutes for October 23, 2025, November 06, 2025, November 20, 2025, December 04, 2025 (Selectboard), and December 04, 2025 (Joint Selectboard/FinCom), as written. The motion, seconded by Selectman Baker, was approved. (vote: 2-0-0)

Future Meetings:

1. Thursday, January 15, 2026 – 5:00 PM - Selectboard
2. Thursday, January 15, 2026 – 6:00 PM – Budget Hearing
3. Thursday, January 22, 2026 – 6:00 PM – Budget Hearing
4. Thursday, January 29, 2026 – 5:00 PM – Selectboard
5. Thursday, January 29, 2026 – 6:00 PM – Budget Hearing

Citizen Comments: None.

Unforeseen Business:

Adjournment: 7:19 PM

MOTION TO ADJOURN: Chair Semanie motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:19 PM. The motion, seconded by Selectman Baker, was approved. (vote: 2-0-0)

Respectfully Submitted,
Brooke E. Shulda, Town Administrator

Approval Date: 02/05/2026

Approved by:



Joanne Semanie, Chair

VACANT, Vice-Chair



Bill Baker, Selectman

BOS Documents:

1. Agenda for December 18, 2025
2. National Grid Electric Meter Replacement Notice
3. FRCOG Construction Services Bid Signatory Authorization
4. Public Safety Admin Asst. Job Description
5. FRCOG Procurement Agreement – RE: Zoar Rd. Bridge over Sam Rice Brook
6. Park Commission – Agreement for Services – Mass Audubon
7. FRCOG Procurement Agreement – RE: Yankee Road Reconstruction Project
8. October 23, 2025 – Meeting Minutes
9. November 06, 2025 – Meeting Minutes
10. November 20, 2025 – Meeting Minutes
11. December 04, 2025 – Meeting Minutes – Selectboard
12. December 04, 2025 – Meeting Minutes – Joint Selectboard/FinCom