



Town of Rowe
Board of Selectmen
Minutes
Thursday, January 15, 2026 – 5:00 PM
Rowe Town Hall, Meeting Room #1

BOARD OF SELECTMEN: Joanne Semarie, Bill Baker

TOWN OFFICIALS: Treasurer/Collector Jakob Voelker, Accountant Angela Garrity, Constable Henry Dandeneau (arrived at 5:27 PM), Town Administrator Brooke Shulda

ZOOM PARTICIPATION: None

IN-PERSON AUDIENCE: None

Call to Order: Chair Semarie called the meeting to order at 5:06 PM

Announcement of recording devices: None.

Noteworthy Announcements: Town Administrator Shulda notified the Selectboard of State Representative Blais's decision to resign effective January 19 and prepared a thank-you card for the members to sign.

Appointment:

5:00 PM – Treasurer & Accountant – Update on FY25 Cash Reconciliation

Accountant Angela Garrity and Treasurer/Collector Jakob Voelker attended the meeting to give the Select Board an update on the FY25 Cash Reconciliation Audit conducted by Eric A. Kinsherf, CPA LLC.

Accountant Garrity stated that the \$30,000 discrepancy identified during the FY2024 audit conducted by Roselli and Clark has been resolved, reducing the FY2025 variance to \$1,136. The plan is to write off the \$1,136 variance.

Both Treasurer Voelker and Accountant Garrity explained that throughout FY2025, several factors contributed to discrepancies in the treasurer's and accounting books, including wires not reflected in warrants, warrants not appearing on wire reports, multiple double postings, and monthly reconciliations not being conducted.

They reported that the FY2025 Free Cash has been submitted and is in the DOR's hands for certification.

Currently, the Treasurer has reconstructed the FY2026 cash book and has recorded the static accounts up to November 2025. His objective is to complete recording all other accounts up to November 2025 and to continue working toward updating all accounts to the present date. It was communicated that Treasurer Voelker and Accountant Garrity maintain daily communication and plan to perform monthly reconciliations once Treasurer Voelker has brought the FY2026 cash book up to date.

Other Treasurer/Accountant Topics Discussed:

FY2026 Health Insurance Mid-Year Increase

Treasurer Voelker reported that the Town is looking at a \$160,000 deficit due to the mid-year health insurance increase. He explained that there are a couple of ways this deficit can be handled: at a special

town meeting (STM) (proposed to be held sometime this winter), or during the May 11, 2026, Annual Town Meeting (an STM can be incorporated into the warrant).

FY2026 Cash Audit

Accountant Garrity mentioned that she contacted Tony Roselli at Roselli & Clark Associates to inquire whether Rowe should undertake another audit for FY2026, aiming to ensure the town's financial progress is on track. Mr. Roselli indicated that a full audit is not necessary, but he recommends that the town proceed with a cash audit for FY2026.

The Select Board was in favor of moving forward with an FY2026 cash audit, which will be discussed with the Finance Committee during the Accountant's and Treasurer/Collector's budget hearing in February.

FY2027 Vadar System

The Town Administrator highlighted the importance of the contract with Vadar for transitioning the collector software from QDS for FY2027. Both Garrity and Voelker emphasized that this transition is essential. The estimated initial cost for the first year is approximately \$25,000. Additionally, the Vadar transition from QDS will be addressed at the upcoming Accountant and Treasurer/Collector budget hearing in February.

Northern Berkshire School Union (NBSU) Accounts Payable

Treasurer Voelker briefly outlined Rowe's role in managing NBSU bill payments. Rowe currently handles the payment of NBSU bills and is responsible for invoicing three other towns within the union. Additionally, he manages the payroll for the elementary school. He clarified that, typically, school unions or districts oversee accounts payable and payroll functions. He suggested that Rowe should either charge a processing fee or propose an assessment.

It was questioned why the NBSU does not process these in-house, and if Rowe should continue managing this role.

New Business:

1. Sign Special Election Warrant

Constable Henry Dandeneau attended the meeting to sign and post the Special Election Warrant. The Special Election will be held on Saturday, February 07, 2026, to fill the vacant Select Board position.

MOTION TO APPROVE & SIGN: Chair Semanie motioned to approve and sign the Special Election Warrant. The motion, seconded by Selectman Baker, was approved. (vote: 2-0-0)

2. FY27 Capital Stabilization Override

Each year, the Selectboard votes on a 2.5% Capital Stabilization override for the upcoming fiscal year.

MOTION TO INCREASE FISCAL YEAR 2027 CAPITAL STABILIZATION: Chair Semarie motioned to increase the Capital Stabilization fund by 2.5% to \$239,794 for Fiscal Year 2027. The motion, seconded by Selectman Baker, was approved. (vote: 2-0-0)

3. DEP Sustainable Purchasing Policy

The DEP has requested Towns to adopt a Sustainable Purchasing Policy. This policy ensures that the town commits to sustainable purchasing practices.

MOTION TO ADOPT & SIGN POLICY: Chair Semarie motioned to adopt and sign the Sustainable Purchasing Policy as written. The motion, seconded by Selectman Baker, was approved. (vote: 2-0-0)

4. Franklin Regional Retirement System Letter

Chair Semarie and Selectman Baker reviewed the letter from the Franklin Regional Retirement System suggesting that employers include a physical agility test prior to offering a physically demanding job.

5. Planning Board Appointment

During the January 13, 2026, Planning Board meeting, the board unanimously voted to recommend resident Hunter Gibson for appointment to fill the vacant planning board seat.

MOTION TO APPOINT: Chair Semarie motioned to appoint Hunter Gibson to fill the vacant seat on the Planning Board. The motion, seconded by Selectman Baker, was approved. (vote: 2-0-0)

FUTURE STM Items: Discussion TABLED

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

Old Business:

1. Fire Chief Succession Plan – Chair Semarie briefly touched base on the proposed hiring process through Municipal Resources Inc.
2. Personnel Policy Manual – no update.
3. Town Clerk Job Description – update. - TABLED

Ongoing Projects: - ALL UPDATES TABLED

Yankee Road: TA update.

Sam Rice Bridge: TA update.

Hazelton Road Culvert: TA update.

Steel Brook Road Bridge: TA update.

Cyrus Stage Bridge: no update.

Tunnel Road Bridge: no update.

Oil Tank Removal: no update.

National Grid – 10W19: TA update.

Warrants/Contracts:

1. Review Warrants - FY26 Accounts Payable, Payroll, Deduction & NBSU Warrants #14
2. MassWorks Contract RE: Yankee Road Funding

The Town's request to amend the MassWorks contract to extend funding for the Yankee Road Reconstruction Project was granted. The funds have been extended to 6/30/2027.

MOTION TO APPROVE & SIGN CONTRACT: Chair Semanie motioned to approve and sign the MassWorks contract as written. The motion, seconded by Selectman Baker, was approved. (vote: 2-0-0)

Mail:

1. US Bankruptcy Court Notice

The Select Board reviewed the US Bankruptcy notice and deemed that no action was necessary.

Minutes:

1. December 18, 2025 – Meeting Minutes - TABLED

Future Meetings:

1. Thursday, January 21, 2026 – 6:00 PM – Budget Hearing
2. Thursday, January 29, 2026 – 5:00 PM – Selectboard Meeting
3. Thursday, January 21, 2026 – 6:00 PM – Budget Hearing
4. Thursday, February 05, 2026 – 6:00 PM – Budget Hearing
5. Thursday, February 12, 2026 – 5:00 PM – Selectboard Meeting
6. Thursday, February 12, 2026 – 6:00 PM – Budget Hearing

Unforeseen Business:

Citizen Comments: None.

Adjournment: 6:00 PM

MOTION TO ADJOURN: Chair Semanie motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:00 PM. The motion, seconded by Selectman Baker, was approved. (vote: 2-0-0)

Respectfully Submitted,
Brooke E. Shulda, Town Administrator

Approval Date: 2/05/2026

Approved by:



Joanne Semarie, Chair

VACANT, Vice-Chair



Bill Baker, Selectman

Documents:

1. Agenda for January 15, 2026
2. FY27 Capital Stabilization Override
3. Franklin Regional Retirement System Letter
4. DEP Sustainable Purchasing Policy
5. MassWorks Contract
6. Mail: US Bankruptcy Court Notice
7. December 18, 2025 – Meeting Minutes