



**Town of Rowe**  
**Board of Selectmen**  
**Minutes**

Thursday, January 29, 2026 – 5:00 PM  
Rowe Town Hall, Meeting Room #1

---

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN:** Joanne Semanie, Bill Baker

**TOWN OFFICIALS:** Town Administrator Brooke Shulda, Police Chief Christopher Hyytinen @5:30

**APPOINTMENTS:** Connie Englert, Aaron Nelson – Mass Audubon

**ZOOM PARTICIPATION:** Madison Schofield – Greenfield Recorder, Laurie Pike – Park Commission

**IN-PERSON AUDIENCE:** Aaron Poulin – OSRC

**Call to Order:** Chair Semanie called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM

**Announcement of recording devices:** None.

**Noteworthy Announcements:** None.

**Appointments:**

5:00 PM – Connie Englert – RE: Tree Warden

Connie Englert attended the meeting to present her qualifications for the town tree warden position. During the meeting, Connie provided a comprehensive overview of the services she can offer the town in this role, emphasizing her relevant qualifications, experience, familiarity with the M.G.L. Ch. 87 laws, and ongoing education in forestry management, tree preservation, and public safety standards mandated by state law.

Chair Semanie and Selectman Baker were pleased with Connie's qualifications and agreed to appoint her as the town tree warden.

**MOTION TO APPOINT: Chair Semanie motioned to appoint Connie Englert as the Tree Warden. The motion, seconded by Selectman Baker, was approved. (vote: 2-0-0)**

5:10 PM – Aaron Nelson, Mass Audubon – RE: Tunnel Road Land Acquisition

Mass Audubon's Aaron Nelson and Open Space and Recreation Committee (OSRC) Member Aaron Poulin attended the meeting to review the Purchase and Sale Agreement and Catalyst Agreement with the Selectboard regarding the Tunnel Road Land purchase. Aaron N. briefly explained the transaction process, noting that the Town was awarded up to \$173,173 toward the total cost of \$305,000 for the 178 acres of land. He clarified that Mass Audubon will be responsible for covering the remaining purchase costs. At this stage, Mass Audubon will pay the \$10,000 deposit. To proceed with the sale, the Selectboard must sign both the Purchase and Sale Agreement and the Catalyst Agreement, enabling Mass Audubon to cover the \$10,000 deposit.

**MOTION TO APPROVE & SIGN: Chair Semanie motioned to approve and sign the Purchase and Sale Agreement between the SELLER: Richard Henry Truesdell, II and the BUYER: Town of Rowe for the Purchase of the approximate 178 acres of land located on Tunnel Road in Rowe, MA for a purchase price of \$305,000, and the Catalyst Agreement between Massachusetts Audubon Society, Inc. and the Town of Rowe for the purpose of governing the commitment of funds for**

its fee acquisition in the Truesdell property located off Tunnel Road in Rowe, MA, for conservation purposes, as written. The motion, seconded by Selectman Baker, was approved. (vote: 2-0-0)

**New Business:**

1. Tree Warden Appointment – Refer to 5:00 pm Appointment
2. Reserve Fund Transfer Request

The Town Administrator completed a Reserve Fund Transfer Request form for the Fire Chief Recruitment Professional Services Agreement. This agreement represents a shared cost between the Town of Rowe and the Town of Charlemont, as both municipalities share a fire chief and are in the process of establishing a fire district. The total cost of the recruitment is \$14,000, with each town contributing \$7,000. The Reserve Fund Transfer Request will be brought forth to the Finance Committee for approval.

**MOTION TO ACCEPT & SIGN: Chair Semanie motioned to accept and sign the Reserve Fund Transfer Request for the purpose of the Recruitment of a Fire Chief, as written. The motion, seconded by Selectman Baker, was approved. (vote: 2-0-0)**

3. ADA Title II Digital Accessibility Rule – Letter to FRCOG

The Town Administrator prepared a letter expressing interest and requesting support from FRCOG regarding the ADA Title II Digital Accessibility Rule, which required compliance by April 2027. FRCOG has stated that it will apply for a collaborative Community Compact IT Grant for interested member towns whose websites are not yet in compliance with the Accessibility Rule.

**MOTION TO APPROVE: Chair Semanie motioned to approve the ADA Title II Digital Accessibility Rule letter for assistance with ADA website compliance to the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, as written. The motion, seconded by Selectman Baker, was approved. (vote: 2-0-0)**

**FUTURE STM Items:**

1. Yankee Road – Accept Easement Parcel(s) – not discussed
2. FY26 Mid-Year 20% Health Insurance Increase – not discussed

**Old Business:**

1. Fire Chief Succession Plan – update.
2. Personnel Policy Manual – no update.
3. Town Clerk Job Description – update.

**Ongoing Projects:**

Yankee Road: The Town Admin briefly updated the Select Board on the project's status.

Sam Rice Bridge: The Town Administrator explained that she received a call from MassDOT regarding funding for the beam repair of the Zoar Road Bridge over Sam Rice Brook, with a request to take over the engineering and construction phases. Since this project has already been engineered and put out to bid, with an anticipated start date of July 1, 2026, and completion by October 1, 2026, the

Town Administrator responded by requesting options for funding that would not delay the progress of the repair. The Town has diligently worked to ensure this repair is completed in a timely manner to reopen the bridge to two-lane traffic and restore it to MassDOT standards. She will notify the Select Board once she receives further information from MassDOT.

Hazelton Road Culvert: no update.

Steel Brook Road Bridge: no update.

Cyrus Stage Bridge: no update.

Tunnel Road Bridge: no update.

Oil Tank Removal: no update.

National Grid – 10W19: no update.

**Warrants/Contracts:**

1. Review Warrants - FY26 Accounts Payable, Payroll, Deduction & NBSU Warrants #15 – Chair Semanie reviewed and signed warrants 26-15 for 1/30/2026.
2. Tunnel Road Land Acquisition – Trusdell Catalyst Fund Contribution – please refer to the 5:10 appointment, where a motion to approve and sign was brought forth.
3. Tunnel Road Land Acquisition – Trusdell Land Purchase and Sale Agreement – please refer to 5:10 appointment, where a motion to approve and sign was brought forth.
4. Municipal Resources, Inc. – Professional Services Agreement – RE: Fire Chief Hiring Process – New business #2, the Select Board voted to request a \$7,000 reserve fund transfer request from the Finance Committee for this professional services agreement. If the reserve fund transfer request is approved by the Finance Committee, the Select Board then sign this agreement. This agreement was approved by vote during the 1/21/2026 Select Board Meeting.
5. Rural Development Fund – Contract Amendment – RE: Yankee Road Reconstruction – The Town Administrator has submitted a request to amend the contract, seeking to extend the Rural Development fund deadline to June 30, 2027, for the Yankee Road Reconstruction Project. The request was approved, and an amended contract has been sent for approval, requiring the signature of the Select Board chair.

**MOTION TO APPROVE AND SIGN: Chair Semanie motioned to approve and sign the Rural Development amended contract for the Yankee Road Reconstruction Project, as written. The motion, seconded by Selectman Baker, was approved. (vote: 2-0-0)**

6. QDS Software Termination Agreement – This agreement is to terminate the existing subscription agreement and to set forth the terms and conditions of the termination of the subscription agreement.

**MOTION TO ACCEPT AND SIGN: Chair Semanie motioned to accept the termination agreement between Quality Data Services, Inc., and the Town of Rowe, as written. The motion, seconded by Selectman Baker, was approved. (vote: 2-0-0)**

**Mail:**

1. Franklin County Regional Housing & Redevelopment Authority (HRRLF) – The HRRLF sent its annual account report for the period January 01, 2025, through December 31, 2025.

**Minutes:**

1. January 15, 2026 – Meeting Minutes

**MOTION TO APPROVE & SIGN: Chair Semanie motioned to approve and sign the meeting minutes for January 15, 2026, as written. The motion, seconded by Selectman Baker, was approved. (vote: 2-0-0)**

**Future Meetings:**

1. Thursday, February 05, 2026 – 6:00 PM – Budget Hearing
2. Thursday, February 12, 2026 – 5:00 PM – Selectboard Meeting
3. Thursday, February 12, 2026 – 6:00 PM – Budget Hearing
4. Thursday, February 26, 2026 – 5:00 PM – Selectboard Meeting
5. Thursday, February 26, 2026 – 6:00 PM – Budget Hearing

**Unforeseen Business:**

**Citizen Comments:** None.

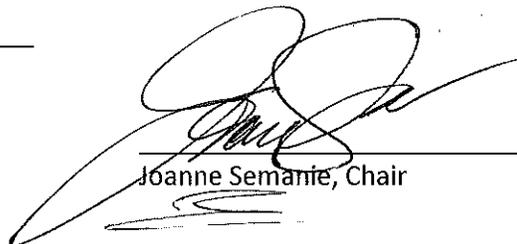
**Adjournment:** 5:45 PM

**MOTION TO ADJOURN: Chair Semanie motioned to adjourn the meeting at 5:45 PM. The motion, seconded by Selectman Baker, was approved. (vote: 2-0-0)**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Brooke E. Shulda, Town Administrator

Approval Date: 2/25/2026

Approved by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Joanne Semanie, Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
VACANT, Vice-Chair

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Bill Baker, Selectman

**BOS Documents:**

1. Agenda for January 29, 2026
2. Tree Warden Information
3. Reserve Fund Transfer Request
4. ADA Title II Digital Accessibility Rule – Letter to FRCOG
5. Tunnel Road Land Acquisition Documents
6. Municipal Resources, Inc. – Professional Services Agreement
7. Rural Development Fund – Contract Amendment
8. QDS Software Termination Agreement
9. January 15, 2026 – Meeting Minutes