



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

Thursday, February 05, 2026 – 6:00 p.m.

Rowe Town Hall, Meeting Room #1 & Via Remote Participation

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

**FINANCE COMMITTEE:** Wayne Zavotka, Loretta Dionne, Jeff Bailey, Ed Silva, Dan Pallotta @ 6:22 pm

**TOWN OFFICIALS:** Treasurer Collector Jakob Voelker

**ZOOM PARTICIPATION:** Accountant Angela Garrity

**IN-PERSON AUDIENCE:** None

**Call to Order:** 6:03 pm.

**Announcement of recording devices:** None

**Noteworthy Announcements:** None

**Selectboard Meeting Minutes for the Joint Selectboard/Finance Committee FY27 Budget Hearing**

**Budget Hearings:**

1. Treasurer Collector hearing.

The Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee reviewed the FY2027 Treasurer Collector Budget. The Treasurer Collector has requested a \$750 increase in the operations budget line to reflect the increased costs in postage and ink/toner. The Treasurer Collector's salary decreased as the position's hours decreased from 40 to 32 following a personnel change in November of 2025.

Capital Improvement Request: The Treasurer Collector, in conjunction with the Accountant and Select Board, is requesting a Collector software change. The software will transition from Quality Data Services to Vadar. This change will eliminate repetitive data entry and allow the requested Vadar software to merge with the accountant's existing Vadar software. The Select Board and Finance Committee discussed funding options for the software transition and came up with two options. Option one requires a \$24,722 first year payment that would be funded by either a raise and appropriate, free cash, stabilization, or capital stabilization following a 5-year payment plan of \$4,572, in which the 5-year payment would be included in the treasurer collector budget, and Option two has a 6-year payment of \$7,930.33 that would be included into the treasurer collector budget. Both options come to a total of \$47,582. Both committees agreed to wait until the end of the budget process to decide which option to go with.

FY26 VOTED: \$87,971

FY27 REQUESTED: Not determined at this time.

Treasurer Collector briefly touched base on where he is with FY26 reconciliation, explaining he has just finished up reconciling through October and plans to have November and December reconciled within the next few weeks.

There was a brief discussion of health insurance increases and options.

## 2. Accountant

The Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee reviewed the FY2027 Accountant Budget. The accountant originally included the Treasurer Collector software in the budget. Since this will be funded through one of the two methods above, this expense will be deducted from the budget. Aside from the annual increase to the accountant's salary, the budget was requested to be level-funded.

FY26 VOTED: \$35,566

FY27 REQUESTED: \$31,956 (revised from original request)

At this time, the Accountant and Treasurer Collector departed the meeting.

## 3. Administration

The Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee reviewed the FY2027 Administration budget(s).

### **General Administration Budget Explanation:**

Town Administrator and Admin Assistant wages and salaries reflected the annual increase.

General Admin: Decreasing this budget line by \$4,000, as in the past two fiscal years, year-end balances have ranged from approximately \$ 4,800 - \$ 6,900. – Both boards agreed with the request to decrease this budget line to \$10,000.

Town Officer Expenses: Decreasing this budget line by \$500, as in the past two fiscal years, approximately \$1,700 has remained at year-end. – Both Boards agreed with the \$2,000 FY27 budget request.

IT Consultant: Currently, I do not have a confirmed amount from NorthEast IT for the FY27 budget. I should hear back from them on this amount by the second week of February. Please note that the highlighted figure in the spreadsheet is an estimated figure.– The Town Administrator will provide and update on the IT services budget at the following FY27 budget meeting

IT Hardware/Software: Decreasing this budget line by \$1,000, as in the past two fiscal years, approximately \$2,200 - \$3,800 has remained at year-end. Although the town is well equipped with IT equipment because of the recently received Community Compact IT Grant, I do feel it is important to maintain a decent level of funds in this area, as unexpected needs for IT equipment replacement could arise at any time throughout the fiscal year. – Both Boards questioned why funds should remain in this budget line. The Town Admin explained that there could be an unexpected need for minor software requirements, or equipment upgrades/replacements (for equipment that wasn't replaced during the CCITG upgrades the prior FY), and felt it is important to keep funds in this account should something of this nature arise in FY27.

Town-Wide Notification System: Requesting an increase of \$179 to this budget line, as the cost for continuing this valuable service has gone up. – Both Boards agreed that the request of \$1,200 for this budget line was appropriate.

Operations and Maintenance: Requesting an increase of \$4,000 this budget line, as the town hall's new HVAC mini-split system necessitates biannual maintenance each spring and fall to ensure optimal performance and extend its lifespan. There has also been a slight increase in the cost of the annual Fire Alarm and extinguisher inspections. – Both Boards agreed that the \$24,500 requested for FY27 was practical.

Fuel: Decreasing this budget by \$1,500, as in the past two fiscal years, year-end balances have ranged from approximately \$2,100 to \$3,500. Both Boards agreed that the \$6,500 request should be sufficient for Fy27.

Electricity: Requesting an increase to this budget line in the amount of \$1,000, due to the new HVAC mini-split system. Because the system is still very new, it is unclear by how much electricity costs will increase. Please note that the Admin Assistant is working closely with National Grid, which offers an incentive program for this system. It should also be noted that the new solar array on the Public Safety Building offsets the Town Hall electrical account throughout the spring and summer months. – Both Boards felt the \$9,000 requested in this budget line would need to be increased. The Finance Committee Chair will work with the Town Administrator on a request for a final figure.

Elevator Maintenance: Decreasing this budget line by \$500, as in the past two fiscal years, the remaining year-end balance ranged from approximately \$500 to \$3,200. It should be noted that in FY24, the elevator experienced a problem and was repaired. This repair contributed to the drawdown of funds in this budget line during that fiscal year. – Both Boards agreed with the \$3,000 request for FY27.

Bonding and Insurance: Requesting an increase to this budget line in the amount of \$4,000. – Finance Committee requested that the Town Administrator provide more information on this increase at the next budget meeting.

FY26 VOTED: \$279,661

FY27 REQUESTED: \$284,236 (likely to change)

#### **Custodial/Maintenance Budget:**

The custodian, maintenance manager, and snow removal positions reflected the annual increase in wages. The operation amounts have been requested to remain level-funded. Both Boards agreed with the request.

FY26 VOTED: \$52,439

FY27 REQUESTED: \$52,856

#### **Legal Expenses:**

The Town Administrator requested to level-fund the legal expenses. – Both Boards agreed with the request.

FY26 VOTED: \$25,000

FY27 REQUESTED: \$25,000

**Municipal Audit:**

The Town Administrator, in conjunction with the Accountant and Treasurer Collector, originally requested \$3,000 to conduct a cash audit for Fy26. It was later decided that it made more sense to hold off on any kind of audit, as the following fiscal year is due for a full audit. Both Boards agreed.

FY26 VOTED: \$20,000

FY26 STM VOTE: \$35,000 – expended approximately \$12,500

FY27 REQUESTED: \$0

**Veteran Services:**

The Town is part of the Upper Pioneer Valley Veterans' District. This year, the Town's assessment has increased by \$710.

FY26 VOTED: \$5,312

FY27 REQUESTED: \$6,023

**Goal Post Editor:**

The Goal Post Editor's wages reflect the annual wage increase. Goal Post operations are requested to remain level-funded for FY27.

FY26 VOTED: \$9,723

FY27 REQUESTED: \$9,812

**Beautification:**

The Beautification has requested a level-funded budget for FY27.

FY26 VOTED: \$1,500

FY27 REQUESTED: \$1,500

**Franklin Regional Council of Government (FRCOG) Services:**

The Town Administrator did not have the FRCOG finalized budget assessment figures by the time of the hearing. She will provide the final figures during the following meeting.

FY26 VOTED: \$32,777

FY27 REQUESTED: Unknown at this time

**Retirement/Unemployment/Health Insurance/FICA/Medicare:**

Retirement: Includes Franklin County Regional Retirement System assessment and the Berkshire County Regional Retirement figure for FY27. Please note that over the past 3 fiscal years, the BSRR assessment was not reflected in this budget line.

FY26 VOTED: \$231,217

FY27 REQUESTED: \$239,986

Unemployment Insurance: This budget line is requested to remain level-funded.

FY26 VOTED: \$20,000

FY27 REQUESTED: \$20,000

Group Health/Dental/Life Insurance: With significant increases in health insurance for FY26, this budget line has increased by \$420,000 for FY27. This figure includes the FY26 20% mid-year increase.

FY26 VOTED: \$800,000

FY26 MID-YEAR INCREASE: Approximately \$160,000

FY27 REQUESTED: \$1,220,000 (16% increase)

Capital Improvement Requests:

Town Hall Boiler Replacement: The Town Administrator has submitted a request for \$40,000 to replace the boiler in the Town Hall. She explained that the current boiler was installed in 1988 and is now 38 years old. In recent years, there have been several issues with the boiler, and a few companies have recommended that the town consider replacing it. She provided the Select Board and Finance Committee with a quote from JamRog HVAC but mentioned that she plans to seek at least two additional quotes to obtain a clearer understanding of the potential costs and to determine the appropriate amount to request funds.

Bridge Expenses: The Town Administrator is requesting \$22,300 for bridge-related expenses. She explained that these expenses include survey, appraisal, appraisal review, and legal services for Hazelton Road Culvert, as well as a potential temporary police detail for the Sam Rice Brook repair.

Town Hall Required Fire Equipment Updates: The Town Administrator requested \$2,480 for required fire equipment upgrades at Town Hall. The Finance Committee and Select Board believe these funds should come from the Town Hall maintenance budget line.

**Future Meetings:**

1. Thursday, February 12, 2026 – 6:00 PM – Budget Hearing
2. Thursday, February 26, 2026 – 6:00 PM – Budget Hearing
3. Thursday, April 16, 2026 – 6:00 PM – Vote FY27 Final Budget

**Adjournment:** 7:11 PM

**MOTION TO ADJOURN: Chair Semanie motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:11 PM. The motion, seconded by Selectman Baker, was approved. (vote: 2-0-0)**

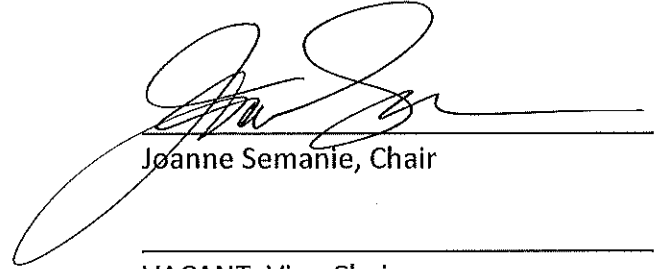
Respectfully Submitted,

Brooke E. Shulda, Town Administrator

Approval Date: February 25, 2026

Signed Date: April 2, 2026

Approved by:

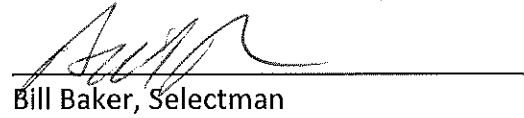


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Joanne Semanie, Chair

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VACANT, Vice-Chair



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Bill Baker, Selectman

**Documents:**

1. Agenda for February 05, 2026
2. Department Budgets