



**Town of Rowe**  
Board of Selectmen  
Minutes

Thursday, February 12, 2026 – 5:00 PM  
Rowe Town Hall, Meeting Room #1

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

**TOWN OFFICIALS:** Police Chief Christopher Hyytinen, Library Feasibility Study Committee Member Kathy Atwood, Town Administrator Brooke Shulda

**IN-PERSON AUDIENCE:** Mike Laffond

**ZOOM PARTICIPATION:** Lori Ledger, Allanna Marrietta – Greenfield Recorder

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

**Announcement of recording devices:** None

**Appointments:**

5:00 PM – Police Chief Christopher Hyytinen

Chief Hyytinen joined the meeting to request and explain why a wage increase in the Police Department should be considered for this coming fiscal year. He expressed that he feels the positions within the department should be moved up in grade on the wage and salary chart, as the training requirements to maintain their positions have changed significantly due to the Municipal Police Training Committee (MPTC) requirements for Massachusetts officers. He is requesting that the Select Board consider moving the part-time police officer position in FY27 from Grade H Step 7 at \$27.13 to Grade J Step 0 at \$28.14, and requesting that the Police Chief position be considered to move from Grade L Step 6 at \$33.79 to Grade N Step 3 at \$34.80.

The Select Board stated that they did not disagree with this request but would like to compare the wages of officers and chiefs in surrounding Franklin County towns. They requested that Chief Hyytinen join the following Select Board meeting scheduled for February 12 for further discussion. The Select Board requested the Town Administrator to send them the latest Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) wage and salary assessment.

There was a brief discussion regarding the potential appointment of a fill-in officer. The Select Board requested additional information about the specific title of this position, noting that the terminology may have changed in recent years. It was also agreed to continue this discussion at the upcoming February 12 meeting.

**Citizen Comments:**

Mrs. Atwood stated that during a recent Library Feasibility Study Committee meeting, the members discussed the possibility of a committee member participating in other town board and committee meetings. The purpose of this engagement would be to effectively provide information and address any questions related to the library's feasibility study plans. Chair Semanie agreed that this would be a good approach to getting the information out, reaching more residents.

Ms. Atwood inquired about the Fire Chief position. She stated that residents had told her a new Fire Chief had already been hired to assume duties once the current Chief steps down. Chair Semanie assured her that this was not the case and explained that the Charlemont and Rowe Select Boards had agreed to engage Municipal Resources, Inc., to conduct a shared Fire Chief search assessment to ensure proper qualifications for the role before hiring.

Mike Laffond engaged in the topic, asking whether the future Fire District would be responsible for responding to calls at Berkshire East and how the costs of responding would affect the Fire District. Chair Semanie responded that the situation is currently under review and that Charlemont and Rowe plan to charge the entity or person for response services.

#### **New Business:**

1. Animal Control Officer Appointment – Ramon Sanchez

**MOTION TO APPOINT: Chair Semanie motioned to appoint Ramon Sanchez as the Animal Control Officer. The motion, seconded by Selectman Silva, was unanimously approved. (vote: 3-0-0)**

2. Vacation Request – Chair Semanie reviewed and signed the vacation request submitted by the Treasurer Collector.

3. Library Feasibility Study Committee Appointment – Abby Lively

**MOTION TO APPOINT: Chair Semanie motioned to appoint Abby Lively to the Library Feasibility Study Committee. The motion, seconded by Selectman Silva, was unanimously approved. (vote: 3-0-0)**

4. Historic Commission Appointment – Abby Lively

**MOTION TO APPOINT: Chair Semanie motioned to appoint Abby Lively to the Historic Commission. The motion, seconded by Selectman Baker, was unanimously approved. (vote: 3-0-0)**

5. Carl Nilman Scholarship Appointment – Carol Lively

**MOTION TO APPOINT: Chair Semanie motioned to appoint Carol Lively as the representative for the Carl H. Nilman Scholarship Committee on behalf of the Town of Rowe. The motion, seconded by Selectman Silva, was unanimously approved. (vote: 3-0-0)**

#### **FUTURE STM Items:** Not discussed during the meeting.

1. Yankee Road – Accept Easement Parcel(s)
2. FY26 Mid-Year 20% Health Insurance Increase

#### **Old Business:**

1. Fire Chief Succession Plan – The Town Administrator informed the Board that she completed a draft of the shared Fire Chief job description and shared Fire Chief services memorandum of understanding. She sent both documents to Sarah Reynolds, Charlemont's Town Administrator,

and to Fire Chief Dennis Annear for review. Chief Annear provided feedback requesting a couple of minor edits within the job description and a change to the term length of the MOU.

2. Personnel Policy Manual – no update.
3. Town Clerk Job Description – no update.

#### **Ongoing Projects:**

##### **Road/Bridges:**

Yankee Road: The Town Administrator provided a brief update on the environmental/conservation needs, clerk of the work, and engineer documents still needed. She noted that Great River Hydro may no longer allow Yankee Atomic employees or emergency responders to cross the Sherman Dam during construction. She let the Board know she will be in contact with GRH the following week to further discuss the status.

Sam Rice Bridge: no update.

Hazelton Road Culvert: no update.

Steel Brook Road Bridge: no update.

Cyrus Stage Road Bridge: no update.

Tunnel Road Bridge: no update.

##### **Other Projects:**

Oil Tank Removal: no update.

National Grid – 10W19: Project Open House scheduled for Tuesday, March 04, 2026, from 6 – 7:30 pm at the Rowe Elementary School. The Town Administrator indicated her intention to attend the meeting and emphasized the importance of having a Select Board member present.

#### **Warrants/Contracts:**

1. Review and Sign Warrants - FY26 AP Warrant #15A and, AP, Payroll, Deduction & NBSU Warrants #16 – Chair Semanie reviewed and signed the warrants.
2. Board of Assessors – Annual Tax Map Maintenance Contract for 2026

**MOTION TO APPROVE & SIGN: Chair Semanie motioned to approve and sign the Tax Map Maintenance Proposal between the Town of Rowe and Cartographic Associates, Inc, as written. The motion, seconded by Selectman Baker, was unanimously approved. (vote: 3-0-0)**

3. Award Contract – Zoar Road Bridge Repair – This document was not sent to the Town Administrator for approval and signing by the time of the meeting.

#### **Mail:**

1. Franklin Land Trust – briefly discussed whether to respond.

2. Mass Audubon – the Town Administrator informed the Select Board that this was a survey request.

**Minutes:**

1. January 21, 2026 – Meeting Minutes

**MOTION TO APPROVE & SIGN: Chair Semanie motioned to approve and sign the meeting minutes for January 21, 2026, as written. The motion, seconded by Selectman Baker, was unanimously approved. (vote: 3-0-0)**

**Future Meetings:**

1. Thursday, February 26, 2026 – 5:00 PM – Selectboard Meeting
2. Thursday, March 12, 2026 – 5:00 PM – Selectboard Meeting
3. Thursday, March 12, 2026 – 6:00 PM – BOS/FINCOM Budget Hearing
4. Thursday, March 26, 2026 – 5:00 PM – Selectboard Meeting
5. Thursday, March 26, 2026 - 6:00 PM – BOS/FINCOM FY27 Budget

**Unforeseen Business (within preceding 48 hours):** None.

**Adjournment:** 6:15 PM

**MOTION TO ADJOURN: Chair Semanie motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:15 PM. The motion, seconded by Selectman Baker, was unanimously approved. (vote: 3-0-0)**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Brooke E. Shulda, Town Administrator

Approval Date: April 02, 2026

Approved by:

  
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Joanne Semanie, Chair

VACANT, Vice-Chair

  
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Bill Baker, Selectman

**Documents:**

1. Agenda for February 12, 2026
2. Police Department Wage Documents
3. Animal Control Officer Appointment Documents
4. Vacation Request
5. Tax Map Maintenance Contract
6. Zoar Road Bridge Award Contract
7. Mail: Franklin Land Trust Letter
8. Mail: Mass Audubon
9. Updated BOS Meeting List
10. January 21, 2026 – Meeting Minutes