



Town of Rowe
Board of Selectmen
Minutes

Thursday, April 09, 2026 – 6:00 PM
Rowe Town Hall, Meeting Room #1

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

TOWN OFFICIALS: Tree Warden Connie Englert, Town Clerk/Planning Board Member Kevin Balawick, Town Administrator Brooke Shulda

NATIONAL GRID: Bob Ide, Aaron L'Esperance

IN-PERSON AUDIENCE: John Hillier

Call to Order: Chair Semanie called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM

Announcement of recording devices: No recording devices.

Appointments:

6:00 PM – National Grid – 1019W1 Project Presentation

Community Engagement Manager Bob Ide and 1019W1 Project Manager Aaron L'Esperance joined the meeting to present a project overview of the 1019W1 project located in Rowe. They explained that the feeder at the Bear Swamp Substation located on Tunnel Road in Rowe, which feeds electricity to 5 towns (Rowe, Heath, Charlemont, Hawley, and Monroe), does not meet the electric reliability standards and has been rated the worst-performing feeder. The goal of the project is to increase the electricity reliability in the towns of by dividing the existing feeder into two feeders by adding infrastructure: replacing existing 35-foot utility poles with 45-foot utility poles, install three-phase electrical equipment, install grid modernization equipment including FLISR (fault location, isolation, and service restoration), vegetation trimming and removals (where required), and construction within the Bear Swamp Substation. The three major areas affected by construction are Hazelton Rd, Petrie Rd, and Tunnel Road, with approximately 40 abutters.

Property owner John Hilier raised concerns about the county feel of Tunnel Road should the proposed trees be removed from the road and questioned whether a project of this nature is required to go through Town Meeting.

Tree Warden Connie Englert explained the process for tree removals within the Town's right-of-way (ROW): a public hearing must be held; if one has a concern or complaint, it must be submitted in writing; and the final determination is up to the Selectboard.

*Please note: Connie Englert, John Hilier, Bob Ide, and Aaron L'Esperance departed the meeting at *approximately 7:05 PM*.

6:30 PM – Town Clerk – FY27 Town Clerk Hours and Wage Proposal – Appointment started at *approximately 7:05 PM*.

Town Clerk Kevin Balawick attended the meeting to review with the board a proposed schedule, the annual hours of operation, and the hourly rate for the upcoming open Town Clerk position. Mr. Balawick explained the proposal he provided to the board and departed the meeting at *approximately 7:25 PM*.

New Business:

1. Town Clerk Job Description, Advertisement, and Hours of Operation

Job Description: Board members Baker and Silva reviewed the job description provided by the Town Administrator and approved it as written.

MOTION TO APPROVE AND SIGN: Selectman Baker motioned to approve and sign the Town Clerk job description as written. The motion, seconded by Selectman Silva, was approved. (vote: 2-0-0)

Job Advertisement: Board members Baker and Silva reviewed the job advertisement provided by the Town Administrator and approved it as written, and requested that it be posted in the May Goal Post, posted within the Town Hall, and on the Town Website.

MOTION TO APPROVE: Selectman Baker motioned to approve the job advertisement as written. The motion, seconded by Selectman Silva, was approved. (vote: 2-0-0)

Hours of Operation and Compensation: Board members Baker and Silva decided that a minimum of 10 hours per week is required to perform the duties of the Town Clerk position, that the schedule will be discussed with and determined by the Town Administrator, and that the position's compensation will remain a stipend but will fluctuate year-to-year based on the annual election cycle. The compensation was decided as follows:

Odd Years: 560 hours per year at \$24.90 per hour – annually \$13,944.00

Mid-Years: 644 hours per year at \$24.90 per hour – annually \$16,035.00

Presidential Years: 780 hours per year at \$24.90 per hour – annually \$19,422.00

MOTION TO SET HOURS AND STIPEND FOR TOWN CLERK POSITION: Selectman Baker moved increase the Town Clerk hours to 10 hours per week and to authorize the Town Administrator to discuss with the position holder and determine the weekly hours of operations and that the position remain a stipend that will fluctuate year to year based on the annual election cycle: odd years 560 hour per year at \$24.90 per hour (\$13,944 annually), mid-years 644 hours per year at \$24.90 per hour (\$16,035 annually), and presidential years 780 hours per year at \$24.90 per hour (\$19,422 annually), effective July 1, 2026. The motion, seconded by Selectman Silva, was approved. (vote: 2-0-0)

2. Preventing Discrimination and Harassment in the Workplace Training – Training overview discussion/
Review of Attendance and Non-Attendance lists – *NOT DISCUSSED*

3. Hazelton Road Bridge – Proposal for Surveying Services

Board members Baker and Silva reviewed the proposal for surveying services provided by Edward C. Muszynski, PLS, for the two temporary easements required for the Hazelton Road bridge replacement project. Both agreed to approve the proposal as provided and to have Chair Semanie sign the proposal at a later date.

MOTION TO APPROVE: Selectman Baker moved to approve the Proposal for Surveying Services with Edward C. Muszynski, PLS, as written, and to have Chair Semanie sign the proposal at a later date. The motion, seconded by Selectman Silva, was approved. (vote: 2-0-0)

4. Board of Registrars Appointment – Added to Revised Agenda 4/08

MOTION TO APPOINT: Selectman Baker motioned to appoint Cindy Stetson to the Board of Registrars, effective immediately, with a term ending June 30, 2026. The motion, seconded by Selectman Silva, was approved. (vote: 2-0-0)

Old Business:

1. Fire Chief Succession Plan – no update.
2. Personnel Policy Manual – no update.

Ongoing Projects:

Roads/Bridges:

Yankee Road: no update.
Zoar Rd. Bridge over Sam Rice Brook: no update.
Hazelton Road Culvert: Please refer to New Business #3.
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 Presentation at 6:00 PM.

Warrants/Contracts:

1. Review and Sign Warrants - FY26 AP, Payroll, Deduction & NBSU Warrants #20.
2. Franklin Regional Council of Governments - FY27 Fire Alarm, Extinguisher, Sprinkler, and Pump Services Contract

MOTION TO PARTICIPATE AND SIGN: Selectman Baker moved to participate in and sign the FY27-FY29 Fire Alarm, Extinguisher, and Sprinkler Testing bid contract between the Franklin Regional Council of Governments and the Town of Rowe, as written. The motion, seconded by Selectman Silva, was approved. (vote: 2-0-0)

Mail: Not discussed.

1. Massachusetts Building Commissioners & Inspectors Association Inc.
2. Department of Public Utilities – Notice of Public Hearing
3. Apartheid-Free Western Massachusetts
4. Mass-Care

Minutes:

1. March 12, 2026 – Joint Select Board/FinCom Budget Hearing Minutes
2. April 02, 2026 – Select Board Meeting Minutes
3. April 02, 2026 – Joint Select Board/FinCom Budget Meeting Minutes

MOTION TO APPROVE AND SIGN: Selectman Baker moved to approve and sign the Joint Selectboard/Finance Committee meeting minutes for March 12, 2026, and April 2, 2026, and the Selectboard meeting minutes for April 2, 2026, as written. The motion, seconded by Selectman Silva, was approved. (vote: 2-0-0)

Future Meetings:

1. Thursday, April 16, 2026 – 6:00 PM – Joint Select Board/FinCom
2. Thursday, April 23, 2026 – 6:00 PM – Select Board – SUBJECT TO CHANGE
3. Thursday, May 07, 2026 – 6:00 PM – Select Board – SUBJECT TO CHANGE
4. Monday, May 11, 2026 – 6:30 PM – Annual Town Meeting

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

Adjournment: 8:35 PM

MOTION TO ADJOURN: Selectman Baker motioned to adjourn the meeting at 5:58 PM. The motion, seconded by Selectman Silva, was approved. (vote: 2-0-0)

Respectfully Submitted,
Brooke E. Shulda, Town Administrator

Approval Date: _____

Approved by:

Joanne Semanie, Chair

Bill Baker, Vice-Chair

Ed Silva, Selectman

Documents:

1. Agenda for April 09, 2026
2. FY27 Hours and Wage Proposal – Provided by Kevin Balawick
3. Town Clerk Job Description
4. Town Clerk Job Advertisement
5. Preventing Discrimination and Harassment in the Workplace Training: attendance/non-attendance list
6. Hazelton Road Bridge Easement Plan Services Proposal
7. FRCOG – FY27 Fire Services Contract
8. MAIL: Massachusetts Building Commissioners & Inspectors Association Inc.
9. MAIL: Department of Public Utilities – Notice of Public Hearing
10. MAIL: Apartheid-Free Western Massachusetts
11. MAIL: Mass-Care
12. March 12, 2026 – Meeting Minutes – Select Board/FinCom Budget Hearing
13. April 02, 2026 – Meeting Minutes – Select Board
14. April 02, 2026 – Meeting Minutes – Select Board/FinCom Budget Meeting