



Town of Rowe
Board of Selectmen
Minutes

Thursday, June 18, 2026 – 6:00 PM
Rowe Town Hall, Meeting Room #1

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

TOWN OFFICIALS: Town Clerk Kevin Balawick, Town Administrator Brooke Shulda

IN-PERSON AUDIENCE: Matt Stine, John Hilier

NATIONAL GRID: In Person - Robert Ide and Aaron L'Esperance, Via Zoom - Donald Targart and Peter Coleran

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

Announcement of recording devices: No recording devices.

6:00 PM – Pole Hearing RE: National Grid 1019W1 Project

- Hazelton Road – 7 Solely Owned Poles
- Hazelton Road – 5 Jointly Owned Poles
- Petrie Road – 1 Jointly Owned Pole
- South Tunnel Road – Jointly Owned Poles

National Grid's Lead Community Manager, Bob Ide, briefed the Board on the 1019W1 Infrastructure Improvement project proposed along Hazelton, Petrie, and Tunnel Road to the Bear Swamp substation, and the purpose of the project.

Chair Semanie opened to public commentary, limiting the comments to 5 minutes:

Property owner John Hilier attended the meeting to express his many concerns and ask questions related to the project proposals along his property on Tunnel Road.

Mr. Hilier stated that there are many stakes along his property and the town right-of-way (ROW) and requested whether these stakes indicate the outline of his property and whether National Grid is proposing to install poles and remove trees in these areas. He questioned Grid about whether they conducted a survey and whether the survey was completed properly by a civil engineer. Hilier stated he is concerned that, along his property, the trees proposed for removal are on his property, not within the town ROW, and that he has not given Grid permission to install poles or remove trees on his property.

Hilier formally **objected** to the installation of new poles on Tunnel Road and the entirety of the 1019W1 project, requested that the Selectboard deny the project, and recommended that the town conduct its own ROW survey of Tunnel Road.

Requests/Questions:

1. Receive a copy of the ROW survey conducted by Grid and whether the survey was conducted by a licensed engineer. National Grid agreed to provide a copy of the survey to the Board and Mr. Hilier and confirm whether it was conducted by a civil engineer.
2. Possible site visit with Hilier and Grid.
3. Is this a federally funded project?

Resident and property owner Matt Stine attended the meeting to inform the board that he has concerns related to the stub pole proposed to be installed on his property on Hazelton Road. He questioned Grid on why the pole location on the original design plan changed from across the road to on his property a week prior to the pole hearing.

Stine formally **objected** to the specific pole proposed to be installed on his property on Hazelton Road.

The Selectboard requested that Grid work with Stine and find an alternative pole location.

Stine also informed the board that National Grid collaborated with Gill Engineering on the upcoming bridge replacement project on Hazelton Road to ensure that both projects won't interfere with one another.

Chair Semanie **TABLED** further discussion and the decision on the 1019W1 pole petition until the 6/30 meeting.

*John Hilier, Matt Stine, and National Grid officials Bob Ide and Aaron L'Esperance departed the meeting at 6:45 PM.

New Business:

1. Annual and 3/5-Year Appointments

MOTION TO APPOINT: Chair Semanie motioned to appoint all the annual and staggered-year town employees and officials as listed by the Town Administrator. The motion, seconded by Selectman Silva, was unanimously approved. (vote: 3-0-0)

2. 3-Year Employee Appointments

MOTION TO APPOINT: Chair Semanie motioned to appoint Brooke Shulda as the Town Administrator, Margaret Pallotta as the Town Clerk, and Christopher Hyytinen as the Police Chief, all three positions for a three-year term starting July 1, 2026, with a term end of June 30, 2029. The motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Baker, was unanimously approved. (vote: 3-0-0)

3. Town Organization Chart

MOTION TO APPROVE: Chair Semanie motioned to approve the Town Organization Chart presented and as revised by the Town Administrator. The motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Baker, was unanimously approved. (vote: 3-0-0)

4. FRCOG – Shared Police Services

The Town Administrator informed the board that the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) has invited Rowe to participate in discussions regarding possible shared Police services between the towns of Charlemont, Colrain, Heath, and Rowe. The board doesn't feel that Rowe needs such shared services at this time but believes it's important to be part of the discussion. Chair Semanie and the Town Administrator plan to attend these discussions.

5. Fire Department – Wage Increase Request

The Town Administrator received an email from Chief Annear requesting that the wages of 5 fire department employees be increased upon the issuance of the Ambulance License. TA stated she would request a timeline from Annear for the issuance of the license.

6. Road Safety - Letter from Resident

The Selectboard reviewed the letter submitted by a resident on Cyrus Stage Road regarding road safety for drivers and horses sharing the roadways. The resident requested that signs be placed throughout town reminding drivers that the roadway is shared with horses and to drive cautiously. Selectman Silva stated that he would work with the highway superintendent on signage postings.

7. Town Mosaic Request

Community members who joined together to create a mosaic requested the Selectboard's permission to install it on the exterior of Town Hall along the handicap ramp. The Selectboard agreed to the request and permitted the installation of the mosaic.

8. Job Description: HWY – Heavy Equipment Operator/Laborer

MOTION TO APPROVE AND SIGN: Chair Semanie motioned to approve and sign the highway department heavy equipment operator/laborer job description as written. The motion, seconded by Selectman Baker, was unanimously approved. (vote: 3-0-0)

Old Business:

1. Fire Chief Succession Plan: in progress - assessments will be held on June 22.
2. EMS Shared Services: update available.
3. Personnel Policy Manual: in progress, no update.
4. Public Shade Tree Policy: in progress, no update.

Ongoing Projects:

Roads/Bridges:

Yankee Road: no update.
Zoar Rd. Bridge over Sam Rice Brook: no update.
Hazelton Road Culvert: no update.
Steel Brook Road Bridge: no update.
Cyrus Stage Road Bridge: no update.
Sibley Road Bridge: no update.
Tunnel Road Bridge: no update.

Other Projects:

Oil Tank Removal: update available.
National Grid – 10W19: in progress – Tree Hearing scheduled for 6/25, BOS determination of Tree Hearing tentatively scheduled for 6/30. The hearing time was determined to be 6:00 PM.

Warrants/Contracts:

1. Review and Sign Warrants - FY26 AP, Payroll, Deduction & NBSU Warrants #25, and AP Warrant #24A.

Chair Semanie reviewed and signed the warrants.

Mail:

1. Brookfield Renewable – Public Safety Flow Release Warning System Outreach

Minutes:

None.

Future Meetings:

1. Tuesday, June 30, 2026 – 6:00 OM
2. Thursday, July 16, 2026 – 6:00 PM
3. Thursday, July 30, 2026 – 6:00 PM

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

Adjournment: 7:45 PM

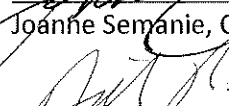
MOTION TO ADJOURN: Chair Semanie motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 PM. The motion, seconded by Selectman Baker, was unanimously approved. (vote: 3-0-0)

Respectfully Submitted,
Brooke E. Shulda, Town Administrator

Approval Date: 8/13/2026

Approved by:



Joanne Semanie, Chair

Bill Baker, Vice-Chair

Ed Silva, Selectman

Documents:

1. Agenda for June 18, 2026
2. Pole Petitions
3. Annual/3-5-Year/3-Year Employee Appointment List
4. Revised Town Organization Chart
5. FRCOG – Email RE: Share Police Services
6. Fire Dept. – Email RE: Wage Increase Request
7. Road Safety Letter
8. Town Mosaic Email Request
9. Job Descriptions: Heavy Equipment Operator/Laborer
10. MAIL: Brookfield Renewable