Town of Rowe

Board of Selectmen
Minutes
Thursday, August 27, 2026 – 6:00 PM
Rowe Town Hall, Meeting Room #1

BOARD OF SELECTMEN: Joanne Semanie, Bill Baker, Ed Silva
TOWN OFFICIALS: Town Administrator Brooke Shulda
AUDIENCE: Ellen Miller

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

Announcement of recording devices: No recording devices.

Citizen Comments:
Ellen Miller joined the meeting to express concern about the maple tree across from her residence, which National Grid recently marked for removal as part of the 1019W1 Project. She stated that, prior to the June 25, 2026, Tree Hearing, she had spoken with National Grid and was assured the tree would not be removed. Chair Semanie assured Ms. Miller that she would contact National Grid about the matter and follow up with her afterward.

*Ms. Miller departed the meeting at 6:10 PM.

New Business:

1. Emergency Shelter Discussion/MOU use of Rowe Elementary School

Board members asked whether the school and the Town had a prior MOU and requested that the Town Administrator provide it for their review. They would also like to have an open discussion with the School Committee and School officials in the future on this topic.

The Board requested that the Town Administrator add "Viability of Rowe Elementary School" to the 9/10/2026 meeting agenda.

2. Community Outreach RE: Retiring/New Employees

Following a resident's request to inform residents of new or retiring employees, the Board requests that the Administrative Assistant submit these updates in the Goal Post in the Future.

3. Election Worker Appointments –

Election Warden – Kevin Balawick

MOTION TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE SPECIAL MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEE: Chair Semanie moved to consider and approve the exemption request from Kevin Balawick pursuant to the Conflict of Interest Law, G.L. c.268A, §20(d), relative to Mr. Balawick's financial interest in serving concurrently as the Assistant Town Clerk and as Election Warden, where both roles are within the same municipal department (Town Clerk). The motion, seconded by Selectman Baker, was unanimously approved. (vote: 3-0-0)

MOTION TO APPOINT: Chair Semanie moved to appoint Teresa Aguinaldo, Kevin Balawick, Jeff Bailey, Jane Kaufman, Paul McLatchy, Daniel Pallotta, BJ Roche, Matt Stine, Susan Tomlinson, Dan Wessman, and Ramon Sanchez as Election Tellers as recommended by the Town Clerk for a term of one year, effective immediately, with a term ending June 30, 2027. The motion, seconded by Selectman Silva, was unanimously approved. (vote: 3-0-0)

MOTION TO APPOINT: Chair Semanie moved to appoint Ramon Sanchez, Kevin Balawick, and Paul McLatchy as Election Wardens as recommended by the Town Clerk for a term of one year, effective immediately, with a term ending June 30, 2027. The motion, seconded by Selectman Baker, was unanimously approved. (vote: 3-0-0)

4. Vacation Requests

Chair Semanie reviewed and signed the vacation requests submitted.

5. Library Project – Diversified Change Order

The proposed change order was not ready for execution at the time of the meeting. The Select Board authorized the Town Administrator to sign all future change orders related to the Library Addition/Renovation project on its behalf.

MOTION TO AUTHORIZE: Chair Semanie moved to authorize the Town Administrator as the Select Board's authorized signatory for any future change orders for the Library Addition/Renovation project. The motion, seconded by Selectman Baker, was unanimously approved. (vote: 3-0-0)

6. National Grid – Request for Pole Hearing date

The County/Hazelton Rd. Pole Hearing date was scheduled for 10/22/2026, starting at 6:00 PM.

Old Business:

1. Charlemont/Rowe Fire District: no update.
2. Fire District Expansion: next meeting TBD.
3. Shared EMS Services: next meeting scheduled for Wednesday, 9/16, at 1 pm.
4. Shared Police Services: next meeting scheduled for Monday, 9/21, at 5:30 pm.
5. Personnel Policy Manual: in progress, no update.
6. Public Shade Tree Policy: in progress, no update.
7. Bylaw: Limitations regarding non-residents serving on Boards/Committees/Commissions

   The Board questioned whether this bylaw required going through the Planning Board.

STM Items:

1. Yankee Road Easements
2. Hazelton Road Easements
3. FY27 Berkshire County Retirement System Assessment Increase
4. FY26 unpaid invoices: Highway Dept., School, Town Clerk, Amazon
5. FY25 unpaid FICA: Town of Clarksburg
6. Town Clerk Timestamp
7. Postage Machine – the board recommended further investigation on whether or not this should be include in the upcoming STM.

Ongoing Projects:

Roads/Bridges:

Yankee Road: no update.
Hazelton Road Culvert: received appraisal reports.
Steel Brook Road Bridge: no update.
Sibley Road Bridge: no update.
Tunnel Road Bridge: no update.

Other Projects:

Oil Tank Removal: no discussion.
Town Hall Boiler Replacement: no discussion.
National Grid – 10W19: no update.
Streetlight Conversion: The Board requested to move forward with the warmest/softest/dimmest option.
Record Organization: The Board requested that the TA look into scanning options for the future.
Verizon Decommissioning of Centrex Lines: no update.
Hazard Mitigation Plan: Selectman Silva volunteered to represent the BOS.

Warrants/Contracts:

1. Review and Sign Warrants - FY27 AP Warrant #03A and AP, Payroll, Deduction & NBSU Warrants #04.

Chair Semanie reviewed and signed the warrants.

2. Hazelton Road Culvert – Small Bridge Grant – Contract Amendment

The Small Bridge Grant was amended to reflect the construction cost increase and engineering cost throughout the construction phase of the project. The amendment increased the funding from $1,000,000.00 to $1,260,207.31.

MOTION TO ACCEPT AND SIGN AMENDED CONTRACT: Chair Semanie moved to accept and sign the contract amendment for the Small Bridge Grant through MassDOT, as written. The motion, seconded by Selectman Silva, was unanimously approved. (vote: 3-0-0)

Mail:

1. None.

Minutes:

1. 07/30/2026 Meeting Minutes
2. 08/13/2026 Meeting Minutes

MOTION TO APPROVE AND SIGN: Chair Semanie moved to approve and sign the meeting minutes for July 30, 2026, and August 13, 2026, as written. The motion, seconded by Selectman Baker, was unanimously approved. (vote: 3-0-0)

Future Meetings:

1. Thursday, September 10, 2026 – 6:00 PM
2. Thursday, October 08, 2026 – 6:00 PM
3. Thursday, October 22, 2026 – 6:00 PM

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

Adjournment: 7:45 PM

MOTION TO ADJOURN: Chair Semanie moved 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: 11/05/2026

Approved by:

Ed Silva, Chair

Bill Baker, Vice-Chair

Vacant

Documents:

1. Agenda for August 27, 2026
2. Election Worker Appointment List
3. Vacation Requests
4. Diversified Change Order
5. Small Bridge Grant – Contract Amendment
6. Meeting Minutes – 7/30/2026
7. Meeting Minutes – 8/13/2026