

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING – RESULTS

Town of Rowe
Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Saturday, June 20, 2020 at 10:00 AM
Rowe Elementary School

Moderator: Robert Clancy
Town Clerk: Paul McLatchy III
Board of Selectmen: Chair Charles Sokol, Vice-Chair Jennifer Morse, Selectman Edward Silva
Town Counsel: Jeffrey Blake, Esq. – KP Law

The Annual Town Meeting was held on Saturday, June 20, 2020 at the Rowe Elementary School, located at 86 Pond Road. Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, the meeting had been delayed from May 11th in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 53 of the Acts of 2020.

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 AM by Moderator Clancy. In attendance were approximately forty-four (44) voters and ten (10) guests. Moderator Clancy opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by a moment of silence for those who had passed since the 2019 Annual Town Meeting: Albert Garrity Sr., Doreen Petersen, Robin Reed, and John “Jack” Williams.

Moderator Clancy read out a brief greeting welcoming voters to the outdoor town meeting, thanked members of the town staff for their work during the pandemic, and informed voters of the rules of the meeting.

Assessors Chair Rick Williams spoke to the impact on FY21 taxes. If all articles were approved as presented, taxes will increase anywhere from 0.8% to 6.0%, depending on the amount of state aid received.

Moderator Clancy turned to the Board of Selectmen for comments. Chair Sokol informed the meeting that there would be changes in Articles 18 and 22, and that the Board intended to propose a consent agenda for the first nine articles. Moderator Clancy then read out the warrant greeting.

MOTION: A motion was made and seconded to consider Articles 1-9 collectively as a consent agenda.

***Motion to Consider and Approve Articles 1-9 Collectively as a Consent Agenda
Passed by Show of Hands, Unanimous***

ARTICLE 1: To act on reports of the Town officers and committees.

Passed as Part of Consent Agenda

ARTICLE 2: To see if the Town will vote to set the salary compensation for all elected officials of the town as provided by M.G.L. c. 41, section 108, to be made effective from July 1, 2020 as contained in the budget, or take any other action relative thereto.

Passed as Part of Consent Agenda

ARTICLE 3: To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Planning Board, pursuant to MGL Chapter 44, Section 53E½ and the Town of Rowe General Bylaws, to use a revolving fund with a limit of \$50,000.00 for fiscal year 2021 to accept receipts related to the Town’s Planning Board, for the purpose of accepting fees related to legal/consulting, in which any remaining funds may be rolled over into a similar revolving fund for fiscal year 2022, or take any action in relation thereto.

Passed as Part of Consent Agenda

ARTICLE 4: To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Health, pursuant to MGL Chapter 44, Section 53E½ and the Town of Rowe General Bylaws, to use a revolving fund with a limit of \$5,000.00 for fiscal year 2021 to accept receipts related to the Town’s Board of Health, for the operation of the Refuse Gardens, in which any remaining funds may be rolled over into a similar revolving fund for fiscal year 2022, or take any action in relation thereto.

Passed as Part of Consent Agenda

ARTICLE 5: To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Park Commission, pursuant to MGL Chapter 44, Section 53E½ and the Town of Rowe General Bylaws, to use a revolving fund with a limit of \$2,000.00 for fiscal year 2021 to accept receipts related to the Town’s Pelham Lake Park, for the operation of the Park Programs, in which any remaining funds may be rolled over into a similar revolving fund for fiscal year 2022, or take any action in relation thereto.

Passed as Part of Consent Agenda

ARTICLE 6: To see if the Town will to vote to authorize, pursuant to General Laws Chapter 44 § 53 E ½ and the Town of Rowe General Bylaws, the following sums for Revolving Funds, or take any action in relation thereto:

Revolving Fund	Entity Authorized to Spend from Fund	Fees, Charges, or Receipts Credited to Fund	Program or Activity Expenses Payable from Fund	Restrictions or Conditions on Expenses Payable from Fund	Fiscal Years
Emergency Dispensing Site	Board of Health	Receipts Related to the Emergency Dispensing Site Operations	Dispensing medicines or medical supplies during an emergency	Limit of \$1,000.00	Fiscal Year 2021
Recycling Program	Board of Health	Receipts Related to the Recycling Program	Operation of solid waste and recycling programs, membership in and services of the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District, and the purchase of recycled content or environmentally preferable products	Limit of \$5,000.00	Fiscal Year 2021
Vaccine Services	Board of Health	Receipts from Insurance Billing	Vaccine Services	Limit of \$6,000.00	Fiscal Year 2021
School Programs	School Committee	Fees for School Programs	Offset Department Costs of School Programs	Limit of \$10,000.00	Fiscal Year 2021
Old Home Day	Old Home Day Committee	Receipts Generated by Old Home Day Activities and Programs	Expenses of Old Home Day	Limit of \$2,000.00	Fiscal Year 2021

Passed as Part of Consent Agenda

ARTICLE 7: To see if the Town will vote to amend Article III, § 13 of the town’s General Bylaws by adding the following wording, or take any action in relation thereto:

Revolving Fund	Entity Authorized to Spend from Fund	Fees, Charges, or Receipts Credited to Fund	Program or Activity Expenses Payable from Fund	Restrictions or Conditions on Expenses Payable from Fund	Fiscal Years
Refuse Garden	Board of Health	Receipts Related to the Refuse Garden Operations	Operation of the town Refuse Garden	Limit of \$5,000.00	Fiscal Year 2021 and Subsequent Years
Planning Board Legal/ Consulting	Planning Board	Receipts Related to Fees for Special Permits and Other Work of the Planning Board	Legal consultation and representation	Limit of \$50,000.00	Fiscal Year 2021 and Subsequent Years
Park Programs	Park Commission	Receipts Related to Park Programs	Operation of programs run by the Pelham Lake Park	Limit of \$2,000.00	Fiscal Year 2021 and Subsequent Years

Passed as Part of Consent Agenda

ARTICLE 8: To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Treasurer to enter into compensating balance agreements during the 2021 fiscal year pursuant to M.G.L. c. 44, section 53F, or take any action in relation thereto.

Passed as Part of Consent Agenda

ARTICLE 9: To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to apply for, accept, and expend federal and state grants as may be available, or take any action in relation thereto.

Passed as Part of Consent Agenda

ARTICLE 10: A motion was made and seconded to raise and appropriate the sum of \$7,190.00 for Interest on borrowing related to the Municipal Broadband network construction for the 2021 fiscal year.

Passed by Show of Hands, Unanimous

ARTICLE 11: A motion was made and seconded to raised and appropriate the following sums for the conduct of General Government, including the charges and expenses of the various town offices, and compensation for elected and appointed officials for the 2021 fiscal year:

Administration

General Administration	\$139,788.00
Municipal Audit	8,000.00
Executive Secretary	49,238.00
Administrative Assistant to the Boards	42,640.00
Town Hall Custodian Wages	18,948.00
Custodian Expenses	3,775.00
Moderator Stipend	439.00
Select Board Stipends	5,928.00
Legal	8,000.00
Tax Collector Stipend	8,528.00
Town Collector Operations	7,997.00

Treasurer Stipends and Wages	21,240.00
Treasurer Operations	10,000.00
Town Clerk Stipends	15,035.00
Town Clerk Expenses	6,425.00
Conservation Commission	1,600.00
Council on Aging	3,800.00
Goal Post Editor Wages	6,150.00
Goal Post Operations	4,500.00
Veteran's Services	2,646.00
FRCOG Services	23,948.00
Town Accountant	29,245.00
<u>Town Accounting Expenses</u>	<u>3,972.00</u>
Subtotal General Government	\$421,842.00

Assessor's Office

Assessors' Stipends and Wages	17,354.00
Assessors' Reval/Annual Updates	22,600.00
<u>Assessors' Operations</u>	<u>9,600.00</u>
Subtotal Assessors	\$49,554.00

Planning Board

<u>Planning Board Operations</u>	<u>2,000.00</u>
Subtotal Planning Board	\$2,000.00

**TOTAL GENERAL GOVERNMENT
FROM TAXATION**

\$ 473,396.00

Passed by Show of Hands, Unanimous

ARTICLE 12: A motion was made and seconded to raise and appropriate the sum of \$5,000 to the Planning Board Legal/Consulting Revolving Fund for FY2021.

Passed by Show of Hands, Unanimous

ARTICLE 13: A motion was made and seconded to raise and appropriate the sum of \$20,000 to be used as a Reserve Fund pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40, Section 6 for the extraordinary or unforeseen expenditures for the 2021 fiscal year.

Passed by Show of Hands, Unanimous

ARTICLE 14: A motion was made and seconded to raise and appropriate the following sums for the operation and maintenance of Public Works and Facilities for the 2021 fiscal year:

Highway Department

DPW Salary and Wages	\$285,885.00
Roadside Mowing	15,000.00
DPW Operations	210,178.00
<u>Winter Roads</u>	<u>68,612.00</u>
Subtotal Highway Department	\$579,675.00

Other Public Works & Facilities

Street Lighting	\$5,000.00
Municipal Light Plant Operations	1,000.00
Municipal Light Plant Manager Stipend	6,800.00
<u>Dam Maintenance/Repair</u>	<u>1,200.00</u>
Subtotal Other Public Works & Facilities	\$14,000.00

Cemetery \$15,000.00

**TOTAL PUBLIC WORKS & FACILITIES
FROM TAXATION**

\$608,675.00

Passed by Show of Hands, Unanimous

ARTICLE 15: A motion was made and seconded to appropriate from available funds the sum of \$156,357.00 for the maintenance, repair, improvement and construction of town highways, or any other purpose allowed under Chapter 90, which amounts shall be reimbursed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts through funds made available by Chapter 90.

Passed by Show of Hands, Unanimous

ARTICLE 16: A motion was made and seconded to raise and appropriate the following sums for Public Safety for the 2021 fiscal year:

Police Department

Police Salaries	\$54,949.00
Police Operations	10,300.00
<u>Subtotal Police Department</u>	<u>\$65,249.00</u>

Fire Department

Fire Department Stipends	\$34,850.00
Fire Department Shift Work	19,000.00
Fire Department General Operations	41,690.00
<u>Subtotal Fire Department</u>	<u>\$95,540.00</u>

Emergency Management

Emergency Management Director	\$3,864.00
Emergency Management Operations	1,000.00
Generator Maintenance	3,500.00
<u>Subtotal Emergency Management</u>	<u>\$8,364.00</u>

Animal Control and Inspection

Animal Control Stipends	\$1,157.00
Animal Inspector	532.00
Regional Dog Kennel	350.00
<u>Subtotal Animal Control</u>	<u>\$2,039.00</u>

TOTAL PUBLIC SAFETY FROM TAXATION \$ 171,192.00

A motion was made and seconded to hold a separate vote for the \$19,000 line item for Fire Department Shift Work. Motion to hold a separate vote passed by show of hands, unanimous.

\$19,000 for Fire Department Shift Work Passed by Show of Hands, Not Unanimous.

Remainder of Article 16 Passed by Show of Hands, Not Unanimous.

ARTICLE 17: A motion was made and seconded to raise and appropriate the following sums for Public Health and Sanitation for the 2021 fiscal year:

Health Department Stipends and Wages	\$80,787.00
Board of Health Operations	\$68,300.00

TOTAL PUBLIC HEALTH AND SANITATION FROM TAXATION \$ 149,087.00

Passed by Show of Hands, Unanimous

ARTICLE 18: A motion was made and seconded to raise and appropriate the following sums for Public Schools for the 2021 fiscal year:

School Committee Stipend	\$4,564.00
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Rowe School Budget

Rowe School Pre K-6 Operating Budget	\$1,020,262.00
Rowe School Secondary 7-12	\$552,675.00

TOTAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS FROM TAXATION \$ 1,577,501.00

Passed by Show of Hands, Not Unanimous

ARTICLE 19: A motion was made and seconded to raise and appropriate the following sums for the Rowe Town Library for the 2021 fiscal year:

Library Salaries and Wages	\$42,902.00
Library Operations	\$28,323.00

TOTAL ROWE TOWN LIBRARY FROM TAXATION \$ **71,225.00**

Passed by Show of Hands, Unanimous

ARTICLE 20: A motion was made and seconded to raise and appropriate the following sums for the management and operation of Pelham Lake Park for the 2021 fiscal year:

Park Wages	\$95,185.00
Operation and Maintenance	\$19,700.00

TOTAL PARK FROM TAXATION \$ **114,885.00**

Passed by Show of Hands, Unanimous

ARTICLE 21: A motion was made and seconded to raise and appropriate the following sums for Culture and Recreation items for 2021 fiscal year:

Gracy House Operations	\$ 1,000.00
Beautification	\$ 500.00

TOTAL CULTURE AND RECREATION FROM TAXATION \$ **1,500.00**

Passed by Show of Hands, Unanimous

ARTICLE 22: A motion was made and seconded to raise and appropriate the following sums for Pensions and Insurance for the 2021 fiscal year:

Franklin County Retirement Assessment	\$140,839.00
Unemployment Insurance	20,000.00
Group Health/Dental/Life Insurance	634,000.00
FICA/Medicare Tax – Town Share	43,000.00

TOTAL PENSION & INSURANCE FROM TAXATION \$ **837,839.00**

Passed by Show of Hands, Unanimous

ARTICLE 23: A motion was made and seconded to appropriate from the Last Mile Grant Account from the Executive Office of the Housing and Economic Development the sum of \$200,000.00 for Principal on borrowing related to the Municipal Broadband network construction for the 2021 fiscal year.

Passed by Show of Hands, Unanimous

ARTICLE 24: A motion was made and seconded to appropriate from free cash the following sums:

SCHOOL – Fire Pump Controller	\$ 7,000.00
SCHOOL – Dishwasher Booster	\$ 3,050.00
BOARD OF ASSESSORS – Assessors Consulting and Legal Support	\$ 50,000.00

TOTAL FREE CASH PROJECTS \$ **60,050.00**

Passed by Show of Hands, Unanimous

ARTICLE 25: A motion was made and seconded to appropriate from the capital stabilization fund, the following sums for capital repairs and improvements:

DPW – Front End Loader	\$ 200,000.00
BOH – Paper Compactor	\$ 15,000.00

TOTAL CAPITAL STABILIZATION FUND **\$215,000.00**

Passed by Show of Hands, Unanimous

Note: Two-thirds vote is required to pass Articles removing sums from Stabilization funds.

ARTICLE 26: A motion was made and seconded to amend the Town of Rowe General Bylaws, Article III §4, by deleting the following wording from the last sentence:

“Omnibus article at the”

which will result in the following wording:

“The Finance Committee shall have the powers and duties delegated to it by said Section 16 and other applicable laws including the duty of submitting a budget for the annual Town Meeting and such recommendations shall be printed on the annual Town Meeting warrant.”

Passed by Show of Hands, Not Unanimous

ARTICLE 27: A motion was made and seconded to authorize and direct the Moderator to appoint a Stipend Study Committee of three (3) or five (5) voters to study stipends for elected town committees. For the purpose of this study, “committee” shall be defined as a public body consisting of three or more people elected for a defined term. No member of this committee shall hold an elected office, or be related (parents, children, siblings, spouse, and spouse's parents, children, and siblings) to an individual that serves on an elected committee. This committee will be responsible for compiling a report and making recommendations on matters related to stipends including, but not limited to, the following:

- The definition of a stipend for the purpose of paying committee members
- An objective method for determining whether a committee should receive a stipend or not.
- Which committees should or should not receive a stipend, and how to ensure that all committees are valued for their contribution to the town’s wellbeing.
- An objective method of determining how much a committee should receive and the reasons for the amount.
- If a committee should receive a stipend, how much should they receive
- Whether officers of a committee should receive more than other members, or receive a stipend if the committee as a whole is not recommended to receive one.
- Recommendations on how to address increases/changes to stipends in the future
- Recommendations for which person or body/bodies should be responsible for reviewing stipend-related matters in the future.

This committee shall submit a report to the members of all elected committees no later than January 31, 2021.

Passed by Show of Hands, Not Unanimous

ARTICLE 28: A motion was made and seconded to transfer from free cash the sum of \$156,845 to the Stabilization Fund.

Passed by Show of Hands, Unanimous

MOTION: A motion was made and seconded to consider Articles 29-31 collectively as a consent agenda.

*Motion to Consider and Approve Articles 29-31 Collectively as a Consent Agenda
Passed by Show of Hands, Unanimous*

ARTICLE 29: To see if the Town will vote to accept General Laws Chapter 59, Section 5, Clause 17F, which authorizes an annual increase in the amount of the exemption granted to senior citizens, surviving spouses and surviving minors under General Laws Chapter 59, Section 5, Clause 17D by up to 100% of the percentage increase in the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Statistics, Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the previous year as determined by the Commissioner of Revenue, and to fix that annual increase at 100% of CPI to be effective for exemptions granted for any fiscal year beginning on or after July 1, 2020, or take any action in relation thereto.

Passed as Part of Consent Agenda

ARTICLE 30: To see if the Town will vote to accept General Laws Chapter 59, Section 5, Clause 17E, which authorizes an annual increase in the asset (whole estate) limit for exemptions granted to senior citizens, surviving spouses and surviving minors under General Laws Chapter 59, Section 5, Clause 17D by the percentage increase in the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Statistics, Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the previous year as determined by the Commissioner of Revenue, to be effective for exemptions granted for any fiscal year beginning on or after July 1, 2020, or take any action in relation thereto.

Passed as Part of Consent Agenda

ARTICLE 31: To see if the Town will vote to accept General Laws Chapter 59, Section 5, Clause 41D, which authorizes an annual increase in the income (gross receipts) and asset (whole estate) limits for exemptions granted to senior citizens, under General Laws Chapter 59, Section 5, Clause 41C, by the percentage increase in the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Statistics, Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the previous year as determined by the Commissioner of Revenue, to be effective for exemptions granted for any fiscal year beginning on or after July 1, 2020, or take any action in relation thereto.

Passed as Part of Consent Agenda

ARTICLE 32: To transact any other business that may lawfully come before the meeting:

- Board of Health Chair Margaret Rice wished to congratulate Town Nurse Sheila Litchfield on her retirement on June 30th. She wished to have the town's gratitude entered into the town meeting record. A large round of applause was given for Ms. Litchfield.
- Board of Selectmen Vice-Chair Jennifer Morse wanted to congratulate her father Alfred Morse, who had retired from mowing the town cemeteries after 37 years. A round of applause was given for Mr. Morse.
- Town Clerk Paul McLatchy III reminded voters about the election next Saturday, June 27, and encouraged people to vote by mail where possible. The polls will be open from 10:00 to 2:00 at the town hall.
- Town Clerk Paul McLatchy III wished to thank Town Hall Custodian Danielle Larned for her hard work in landscaping at the town hall. A round of applause was given for Ms. Larned.
- Fire Chief Dennis Annear informed people that cloth masks were now available from the Fire Department.
- Frederick Williams wanted to commend the great sound system in use at the meeting.
- Transfer Station Attendant James Lively wanted to thank the townspeople for their part in reducing trash and increasing recycling. Recycling is up, and trash tonnage has decreased by almost half.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn and passed unanimously. The meeting was closed at 10:57 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Paul McLatchy III, Town Clerk
June 23, 2020

A True Copy, Attest: _____
Paul McLatchy III, Town Clerk