



**Board of Selectmen's Meeting**

**Rindge Town Office**

**Date: September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Present:** Selectmen: Karl Pruter, Chairman, and Bob Hamilton, Vice Chair, Town Administrator Lori Rautiola, and members of the public. Select board member Tom Coneys was absent from 6:00 pm to 6:19 pm.

The meeting opened at 6:00 pm. Karl led the Pledge of Allegiance. A moment of silence was held to remember 9/11.

**Selectmen's Announcements:** Karl announced any recording of a town meeting or subsequent posting of the recording is being done by private persons and not on behalf of the town. The town is keeping no record of such recordings. Bob thanked all the volunteers who worked at the election on September 10<sup>th</sup>. Bob announced the school deliberative session will be in early February 2025. Bob also announced the Women's Harvest Fair will be on September 28<sup>th</sup> at the Rindge Rec Center from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm and the POOR Meat Raffle will start again in October at the American Legion in Jaffrey. Karl announced that Veteran's Day is on November 11<sup>th</sup> and on November 10<sup>th</sup> the Turkeys for Vets distribution will take place. There has been great support from many businesses for the fundraising of the event. Karl then reminded everyone of the Town's Civility Policy.

**Consent Agenda:** Karl motioned to accept the Payroll & Accounts Payable for 09.05.2024 & 9.12.2024 and the Meeting Minutes from 08.28.2024. Bob seconded the motion, and it passed 2-0. Bob motioned to accept the resignation of the town's assessing clerk. Karl seconded the motion, and it passed 2-0.

**Selectmen's Appointments:**

**Town & Gown Member Appointment:** Lori stated James Burger has confirmed that he is willing to be a member. Bob stated he would bring forward his name to the Town & Gown Committee at the next meeting.

**Trustees of the Trust Funds Alternate Appointment:** Karl motioned to accept Claudia Stewart as a Trustee of Trust Funds Alternate. Bob seconded the motion, and it passed 2-0.

**Citizens Forum:** Karl opened the citizen's forum at 6:09 pm with the rules of the forum and closed the forum at 6:29 pm.

Judy Unger-Clark presented the chair with images of Sherwin Hill Road showing the project was complete.

Roberta Oeser asked how the selectmen will deal with the UCC's payment for the Meeting House painting and the septic system. Karl stated they would put this on the agenda to discuss in two weeks.

Kelen Geiger asked if the testing of the ventilation system had been done by a certified engineer, what machine was used, if the machine was calibrated, and the results of the paperwork. Karl answered the testing was not done by a certified engineer. The town is currently conducting simple testing to see if there is a serious problem (see minutes from 7.31.2024 & 8.28.2024 for details). Roni Hamilton stated for the record she has asked four times if there has been high absenteeism, sickness, breathing problems, and headaches in the last three years to warrant getting a ventilation system started. She asked if there have been no complaints then why are they doing this and wasting money? Karl answered when he is

informed of employees being sick it is confidential. He is not directly correlating any of the diseases and sicknesses that he is aware of to this issue, but an unhealthy environment could be a cause. Roberta Oeser asked if the board would allow public input on the proposals for the ventilation system. Karl answered yes.

Daniel Aho asked what had started them on the ventilation system. Karl answered there was a report in 2012 that indicated the Town Offices had inadequate ventilation and it was recommended not to tighten up the insulation due to the issue. Pat Martin added the audit conducted in 2010 and confirmed they were told not to tighten up the building until they addressed the poor ventilation as there are very high carbon dioxide levels in the building. Tom stated they are taking a very inexpensive but acceptable approach to evaluate the air quality. The records that have been generated show extremely high levels of CO<sub>2</sub>. Dan Aho asked if it appears a ventilation system is needed will that go on a town ballot for a public vote. Karl answered if the engineer indicates it needs to be a priority and is a serious issue they could acquire funding from other sources. Tom stated there is ARPA money available that needs to be spent by the end of the year, he is aware that there are unhealthy characteristics to this building and that it is a liability issue for the town. Bob stated that the ARPA money for ventilation systems had to be related to COVID. Karl stated it would be covered under clean air. Kelen Geiger asked the name of the machine being used. Dwight Schenck stated the monitor is called airthings, but he does not know the specific model.

### **Old Business:**

#### ARPA Updates:

*Security Update:* Karl gave a recap of the discussion from the last meeting. Karl noted the quote had expired and requested a third one. The discussion was tabled

*ARPA:* Bob provided the board with the rules for the expenditure of ARPA funds and suggested speaking with Rick Donovan and Laurie May before approving anything ARPA related. Bob stated he is doubtful the streaming costs and equipment would be a legitimate expense through ARPA, adding he prefers to spend the remaining funds to repair the fire pump truck. Karl stated he was not privy to the pump truck issue, but he agrees it is critical for this town. Karl explained there are a lot of opportunities to cover problems through ARPA and ventilation is a clear-cut option though he is not sure it will make it before the deadline. Lori agreed with Bob that the pump truck is needed and added she has already confirmed with Laurie and Rick about the ventilation system. She stated the Board should prioritize the needs and base their decision on that.

Camping Ordinance: There was a brief discussion on holding a public hearing. It was decided a hearing should take place. There was a brief discussion of adding a third section regarding camping on private property to protect property owners. A decision was made to have the police investigate the effectiveness of adding this section.

### **New Business:**

Community Power Discussion/Updates: Bob explained the Committee's purpose was to make a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen if the town should opt into Community Power and put it to the voters. The final decision was split by a vote of 3-3. It was noted this may be on the ballot by a petition warrant article. Karl explained the key to this is whether there is an opt-in or opt-out option for residents. Pat Martin raised the question of educating the residents about the options if the town decides to opt-out. Karl stated at this time they are not prepared to answer. Ashley Saari stated they are required to hold a public hearing if it becomes a warrant article.

Tom explained the town's current electric rate, with Standard Power Company, is high and may have saved the Town money at one point but now the current rate has increased creating a loss. Bob agreed and suggested they research competitors for a new rate. Lori explained the current contract is up in October and needs permission from the Board to sign off on a document for Standard Power to pull rates from Eversource on the Town's behalf. Karl motioned to allow

Lori to obtain the information. Tom seconded the motion, and the motion passed 3-0.

Approval of Timber Tax Bill & Abatement of Doomage Tax: Karl motioned to accept the abatement of the doomage tax for tax map 11 lot 33. Bob seconded the motion, and the motion passed 3-0.

Elderly Exemptions (filed late): Karl motioned to accept the denial of the elderly exemption as recommended by the assessing office. Bob seconded the motion, and the motion passed 3-0.

Approval of Revised Abatement Recommendation – Map 6 Lot 66: Roberta Oeser stated she filed with the Board of Tax and Land Appeals (BTLA). Karl motioned to accept the revised abatement recommendation for map 6 lot 66. Tom seconded the motion, and the motion passed 3-0. There was a brief discussion on the process that took place for the revaluation of the property.

**Any Other Official Business:**

Special Events Permits: Bob motioned to approve the special events permits for the DTS Appreciation and Community Day. Karl seconded the motion, and the motion passed 3-0.

**Informational Items, Communications, & Updates:**

Tom gave an update on the school board. He stated the budget preparation schedule will be out sometime in October and there will be a sum of \$1,739,473 returned to the taxpayers in Rindge and Jaffrey. There was a brief discussion on the reasons for the return. Tom continued there is a project of designing and building an addition for the school and the estimated project cost is \$20 million. They plan to bring a warrant article forward in March to move forward on the project. Pat Martin stated that the public can attend the school board meetings remotely so they can be informed before the deliberative session. There was a brief discussion on the apportionment of the sum to be returned to the towns.

Tom also brought up his concerns with the material being used for the roads in the cemetery and whether it is contaminated or hazardous. Karl requested he speak with Mike Cloutier first before he discusses this in public.

At 7:53 pm Karl motioned to go into a non-public session under RSA 91-A:3, II (b) hiring Tom seconded the motion and it passed by roll call vote: Karl, aye, Tom, aye, Bob, aye.

The public meeting reconvened at 8:21 pm. Karl motioned to seal the minutes until September 25, 2024 and Bob seconded the motion. The motion passed by roll call vote: Karl, aye, Tom, aye, Bob, aye.

Respectfully submitted,

*Victoria Stenersen*

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Executive Secretary