



## **Board of Selectmen's Meeting**

**Rindge Town Office**

**Date: November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

### **MEETING MINUTES**

**Present:** Selectmen: Chairman Karl Pruter, Vicechair Bob Hamilton, and Tom Coneys. Also present were Town Administrator Lori Rautiola, Budget Advisory Committee Members: Phil Motta, Casey Burrage, Roberta Oeser, James Burger, and Tina Sbrega, and members of the public.

The public meeting opened at 5:34 pm. Karl motioned to enter a non-public session according to RSA 91-A:3 II (b) hiring. Tom seconded the motion, and it passed by a roll call vote, Karl, aye, Bob, aye, Tom, aye.

The public meeting reconvened at 6:05 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance led by Karl. Tom motioned to seal the minutes from the non-public session for 1 week. Karl seconded the motion, and it passed by a roll call vote, Karl, aye, Bob, aye, Tom, aye.

**Selectmen's Announcements:** Bob announced the school deliberative session will be on Wednesday, February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2025, Tom announced he went to the presentation at the school for the CTE project and they are proposing it will cost \$22 million and about \$7 million will get bonded. He stated that it will be on the school warrant this coming year.

**Consent Agenda:** Tom motioned to accept the Payroll & Accounts Payable for 11.21.2024. Karl seconded the motion, and it passed 3-0. The minutes from 11.06.2024 were tabled.

**Citizens Forum:** Karl opened the forum at 6:10 pm and closed the forum at 6:16 pm.

Roni Hamilton stated she requested a change to the minutes from 11.06.2024 to reflect her exact words from the meeting. Bob Hamilton had informed Roni at 4:00 pm on November 20<sup>th</sup> that it would need board approval in a public meeting. Roni reiterated her statement from November 6<sup>th</sup> that she was thankful to Karl and Bob that Mike Cloutier's contract was approved. Roberta Oeser requested the schedule for the Budget Hearings for the School District, and she assumed they are on Monday nights. Tom responded he was unsure but believed she was right. Roberta added the School District is giving back \$1.7 million in over-raised taxes, but they are giving back those taxes to Jaffrey and Rindge at 50% instead of 40% to Jaffrey and 60% to Rindge as the taxes were paid. Roberta continued that she was concerned they were requesting a bond for the CTE project as she had received many requests for a warrant article for the town to leave the school district. Pat Martin announced on Monday, November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024, that there will be a Harvest Dinner at Franklin Pierce University in Spagnuolo Hall from 6:00 to 7:30 pm. For non-students, RSVPs need to be emailed to [studentaffairs@franklinpierce.edu](mailto:studentaffairs@franklinpierce.edu) by Friday, November 22<sup>nd</sup>. The cost is \$20 to attend.

Bob asked Laurie to submit a formal request to the school district for reimbursement. Karl requested that Lori check with the DRA about the ethicality of what they are doing.

### **Old Business:**

#### ARPA Updates:

*Server for Town Office:* The original quote for servers was \$7,330. The new quote for a solid-state server was \$12,995. Karl stated he spoke with Tim Wessels who explained that solid-state servers have a life span of 8 years versus non-solid state have 5 years. It is marginally more expensive for solid-state servers per year. Purchasing the servers through ARPA brings the balance of ARPA funds to about \$3,500. Phil Motta explained solid-state servers use half the electricity than

the other servers do and they are slightly faster. There was a discussion on operating system updates. Karl motioned to accept the CADNET Services bid for the solid-state server and two desktop computers for \$16,173 through ARPA. Bob seconded the motion, and it passed 3-0.

Toilets for Town Office: Karl stated the fixtures being replaced at the Town Office would be two toilets and two sinks for about \$2,000. Karl motioned to approve the purchase of sinks and toilets for up to \$2,100 using ARPA funds. Tom seconded the motion, and it passed 3-0. Bob requested the exact balance of ARPA so they could potentially put the remaining funds toward purchasing updated weapons for the Police Department.

Camping Ordinance: There was a brief discussion about scheduling a public hearing and they requested Lori contact the town's attorney to confirm.

#### **New Business:**

Donation of Office Furniture: Lori stated Tina Sbrega has offered to donate chairs for the conference table in the Town Administrator's office and the value is well under \$5,000. Karl motioned to accept the donation from Tina Sbrega according to RSA 31:95 b. Bob seconded the motion, and it passed 3-0. Tina was thanked for her generosity.

MOU – Jaffrey Rindge Cooperative School District SAU#47: The board discussed the reduction from 9 key fobs for the Recreation Department to 6 key fobs. The discussion was tabled.

#### **JOINT SESSION – Board of Selectmen and Budget Advisory Committee**

Welfare: Mary Drew, Welfare Director, presented her budget requests. The food and medical assistance decreased to \$500 from \$600, fuel and electric assistance increased to \$2,300 from \$1,000, rent assistance increased to \$13,000 from \$1,000. There was a discussion about the cuts taken last year to use the Buzwell Hardy Funds. Roberta stated they should only use the fund if necessary. There was a discussion about projected expenses throughout the year and if increases are needed for next year. Laurie May stated the interest earned on the Buzwell Hardy Fund is \$235 a year and the total amount for principal is \$31,310.

#### **Ambulance/Fire Department/Mutual Aid/Emergency Management:**

Ambulance: There was a meeting on Monday, November 18<sup>th</sup>, with a presentation from JRMA about their request for \$125,000 for ambulatory services. Chief Donovan explained that JRMA's increase was due to increasing wages to retain employees and providing 24/7 service. This is a substantial increase from last year's 43,000. The Chief explained his concern that Rindge is not receiving full coverage from JRMA. Rick suggested they should determine what to do if JRMA can't fully cover Rindge and suggested paying \$85,000 for the first six months of 2025 and re-evaluating. There was a discussion of how Rindge receives a smaller portion of service compared to calls to Jaffrey while both towns pay equally. There was further discussion about Rindge's liability exposure without a contract and what to do if JRMA collapses. The Chief stated they need to work with Jaffrey to discuss terms and enter into an agreement with JRMA. The board decided Bob would be the representative for the meetings between Jaffrey and Rindge.

Fire Department: Rick gave an overview of the wages and benefits. There was line-item separation for hourly employees, per diem, and call members. Wages – training/activity increased to \$51,500 from \$32,251 and Rick asked Laurie May to decrease that line to \$43,000. A succession planning transition line of \$30,000 was added as Rick is retiring by the end of 2025. There was a discussion of the changes and increases in the wage lines and reimbursement for calls. Laurie May stated the town has received \$5,620 through September of this year for restitution and in 2023 the town received \$11,752. Rick requested dues and subscriptions be changed to \$1,000 from \$1,285, contracted services be reduced to \$3,500 from \$7,500, general supplies be reduced to \$1,500 from \$1,800, and materials be reduced to \$750 from \$1,050. The protective clothing line increased to \$15,000 from \$12,000 because they legally need to replace their turnout gear over 5 years. The staff development line decreased to \$9,000 from \$11,000.

A recess was taken at 8:00 pm and they reconvened at 8:12 pm.

*Mutual Aid:* This budget increased by 3% and Rick told Chief Sangermano at Mutual Aid to update him when he gets an exact percentage. The current proposed total is \$76,203. Roberta clarified that the default budget for this line should reflect the proposed total as it is a contract and was voted on by the town. Lori stated she would have to find the warrant article to confirm.

*Emergency Management:* There was no discussion as it was a flat budget.

Executive/Town Office/Assessing/Legal/Technology/Treasurer/Insurance:

*Executive:* Wages-salary increased to \$93,808 from \$75,461 as determined earlier this year, Code Enforcement and Health Officer Stipend increased to \$24,000 from \$12,000 due to increasing the hours to 16 hours a week. There was a discussion about the increase in the stipend and changing to an hourly position. The stipend was reduced to \$18,000 and the hours changed to 6 days a month or an average of 12 hours a week. Staff development increased to \$1,500 from \$1,000 and Mileage increased to \$1,000 from \$500. There were brief discussions about both line items.

*Town Office:* There was a discussion about the staff development line increase to \$2,500 from \$2,000 and how it was spent in the past. Karl requested that Lori re-examine the numbers for both staff development lines and the mileage line under the executive budget. Karl also asked if the Code Enforcement Officer could start using the Recreation Truck to reduce the budget for mileage. The town report and voter's guide increased to \$6,478 from \$5,500 and there was a brief discussion. There was a discussion about the dues and subscriptions line increase to \$6,400 from \$6,350 for NHMA.

*Technology:* They reduced website maintenance to \$1 as a placeholder for 2026, the annual support/maintenance agreement for general government buildings increased by \$7,000 because they moved 92% of the computer software line there. Lori mentioned transferring or decreasing the recreation line because those expenses have been coded to their budget. They briefly discussed the welfare technology line and the cell phone line decreasing to \$9,240 from \$11,192. There was a discussion about cell phone stipends under the police department budget. The computer hardware line increased to \$11,000 from \$9,192 for computer replacement every 8 years.

*Assessing:* Hourly wages increased to \$24,095 from \$14,787 due to the increase to \$21 an hour from \$17 an hour. The board decided to decrease the line to \$19,161.

*Legal:* This expense increased to \$20,000 from \$15,000 due to the increase in the number of cases. The board discussed raising the amount to \$25,000.

*Insurance:* Workman's compensation increased to \$46,101 from \$41,910, unemployment compensation decreased to \$1,736 from \$2,014, and property and liability increased to \$76,681 from \$70,258. Lori stated these rates come from PRIMEX. Tina recommended they shop coverages as there will be no cap in 2026 so there will be a large increase.

*Treasurer:* There were no changes to this budget.

**Any Other Official Business:**

Roberta asked if there was any change to the town clerk's health insurance budget. Laurie May responded that the town clerk switched from receiving a stipend to being covered under health insurance. There was a discussion about health insurance overall.

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Victoria Stenersen*

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Executive Secretary