



Board of Selectmen's Meeting

Rindge Town Office

Date: September 10th, 2025

MEETING MINUTES

DRAFT

Present: Chairman, Bob Hamilton, Vice Chair, Tom Coneys, Selectboard Member, Larry Cleveland, Interim Town Administrator, Roberta Oeser, Executive Secretary, Victoria Stenersen, and members of the public.

The meeting opened at 6:01 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance led by Bob.

Selectmen's Announcements: Bob announced the Rindge Women's Club Harvest Fair is on Saturday, September 27th, at the Rindge Recreation Center from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm. He also announced that the Town of Rindge hired Max Vandervliet as the Town Administrator. He read the Press Release posted to the town website on September 8th, 2025 (See Attachment A).

Bob added that the town-wide reassessment is being finalized. Notification of preliminary assessment values will be mailed to property owners in Rindge, including details about how to view property cards and schedule an appointment with an Avitar assessing official. Residents can call the assessing office at 603-899-5181 ext. 113 for assistance if they do not have internet access. Bob stated that residents should not estimate the next tax bill with the 2024 tax rate, as it will produce an erroneous tax amount. The newly established values will be implemented on the December tax bill. The total value of the town has increased approximately 96.7% and the 2025 tax rate will drop proportionally. In 2024, the Town was assessed at \$767 million. The Town is valued at \$1.6 billion with the new assessment. To estimate whether your taxes will increase or decrease, follow the calculation posted on the town website or call for assistance.

He also announced that the first P.O.O.R. meat raffle of the season is on Saturday, October 4th, 2025, at 1:30 pm at the American Legion in Jaffrey. All proceeds go towards the Rindge Veterans Association and Rindge Community Projects. Roberta explained that P.O.O.R. is for Rindge; they have donated over \$300 thousand in funds raised back to the community, and they only offer scholarships to Rindge residents.

Payroll: Larry motioned to approve the payroll for 09.04.2025 & 09.11.2025. Seconded by Bob, it passed 2-0.

Accounts Payable: Bob motioned to approve the accounts payable for 09.04.2025 & 09.11.2025 with the correction for the coding of the roofing payment. Seconded by Larry, it passed 2-0-0. Tom questioned why the repair of the roof at the Transfer Station was coded under the Equipment Maintenance and Repair Service line. Roberta said she will check with Helene and have her do the journal entry transfer. Tom also asked why there was a \$600 expense for a weedwhacker for the Fire Department. Bob answered that the department heads have discretion to spend within their budget. Tom also asked if the roof replacement was going to come out of the Transfer Station Fund. Bob stated that it was going to come out of the Building Maintenance Capital Reserve Fund.

Minutes: Larry motioned to approve the minutes from 08.27.2025 with the edits. Seconded by Bob, it passed 3-0. Tom brought up the statement Bob read at the last meeting and asked about formalizing the fact that they are not conducting an investigation. Bob responded that the Board voted to read the statement in the minutes, and the meeting was

confidential between the attorney and clients, so he will not make any further comment.

Citizen's Forum: Bob opened the forum at 6:25 p.m. by reading the rules of the forum and closed the forum at 6:34 p.m.

Chris Peahl, Hudson Way, on behalf of the residents along Wellington Road, addressed the Roadway Committee recommendation. About 32 signatures were gathered to paint lines on the road and to reduce the speed limit to 25 miles per hour.

John Burnell, US Route 202, clarified that even though he does not speak during the Citizens Forum does not mean he is not interested in the Citizens Forum.

Roni Hamilton, East Monomonac Road, addressed the residents on Wellington Road, saying they need to be careful what they wish for. In about 2006, three summer residents complained and requested to have the double yellow line be painted on East Monomonac Road. After the lines were painted, speeding increased, and she is glad the lines have faded.

Judy Unger Clark, Fitzgerald Road, asked how they hired a Town Administrator if there was no job description. Bob answered that they have one, but they are revising it. Applicants were advised of the responsibilities that were included and going to be added to the current job description.

Old Business:

Town Administrator Job Description: Tom expressed concern that the new job description eliminates departmental responsibility, and the older versions had that responsibility. Larry stated that what Tom is proposing is a Town Manager, but what the Town has is a Town Administrator. Tom stated that when they hired the first town administrator, they accepted the proposed organization chart in the MRI report. Roberta read the warrant article from 1997 about the MRI study. The purpose of the contract is to implement some or all of the recommendations. It is up to the Board of Selectmen to decide what they implement from the report. She added that the legislative body does not have the authority to direct the Board of Selectmen on how to run the Town, unless they implement a Town Manager.

Tom expressed concern that they need to have the Town Administrator be the single point of contact for the Department Heads and have the Department Heads not go to the Board members to minimize fragmentation. Larry expressed concern about not being able to converse with department heads directly. Tom again stated that this job description does not give the Town Administrator any departmental authority. Bob answered that the job description states that the Town Administrator works under the direction of the Board of Selectmen, and they are the go-between for the Department Heads and the Board of Selectmen. Tom stated that when the Board makes a decision, the Town Administrator is not going to direct the Department Heads. Bob stated that the Board of Selectmen directs the Departments, not a Board of one. Tom expressed his frustration with what he believes is an unnecessary purchase of a weedwhacker for \$600 that no one approved. Larry asked if that \$600 put anyone over budget. Tom asked if it was a necessary expenditure. The department head who made this purchase was not in attendance to respond.

Larry motioned to approve the Rindge Town Administrator Job Description that is before them tonight. Tom stated he believes that Roberta wrote the job description. Bob answered that Roberta found 15 versions on the computer, and they are going to keep the last one approved and any amendments made to it, and delete the 13 previous versions. Tom reiterated that they were making a huge mistake. Roberta added that there are two binders of approved job descriptions, and the job description before the board is based on the one in the book. She added the statement to the job description "the Town Administrator provides administrative supervision of...all town departments." In all other department heads' job descriptions, it is stated that they are administratively supervised by the Town Administrator. Larry's motion was seconded by Bob; it passed 2-1-0.

New Business:

Special Events Permit for Women's Club Harvest Fair – 09.27.2025: Bob stated that the Fire, Police, Recreation, and Public Works Department has reviewed the application. Bob motioned to approve the special events permit for the Women's Club Harvest Fair on September 27th. Seconded by Tom, it passed 3-0. Bob invited everyone to go to the Harvest Fair. Pat Martin, Farrar Road, stated there is a basket raffle, which is terrific. Bob added that there are crafts and food, including excellent pies and cakes.

Abatement for Map 6 Lot 73-9 and Map 2 Lot 46-1-2: Larry motioned to approve the abatements for Map 6 Lot 73-9 and Map 2 Lot 46-1-2. Seconded by Tom, it passed 3-0.

Roadway Committee Recommendations for Wellington Road: Bob reviewed the two petitions provided earlier and stated his problem is that they do not list whether they live along Wellington Road or are Rindge residents. The Roadway Committee recommends that the speed limit on Wellington Road be reduced to 25 mph, posting three additional speed limit signs, and posting one thickly settled sign.

Bob stated that he discussed this with multiple people on the Roadway Committee, and the lively discussion during that meeting was about police enforcement of the current speed limit. The Police Chief is not in agreement that they can enforce the speed limit as it is posted now at 35 mph. Tom stated that there is a state statute that specifies speed limits on classified roads, and he is not sure if they can supersede it. Bob added that they can supersede it, but might not be able to enforce it. RSA 265:60 II (a) states residential roads in rural communities are limited to a speed limit of 35 mph. Bob believes that legally, they cannot enforce a speed limit of 25 mph.

Tina Hansen, Pine Eden Road, asked why they can't enforce the speed limit because they give out tickets all over town. Larry stated that there are about 200 traffic stops a month, and they are giving out tickets for less than 10%. His opinion is that this is a problem, and tickets should be closer to 50% for a few months. With only a warning, they are more likely to keep speeding. When the speed limit is enforced with tickets, there is a real consequence to speeding, which may reduce speeding overall. Larry recommended that residents call the non-emergency police line to request targeted radar patrols on their road during the time frame they notice speeding.

Chris Peahl, Hudson Way, stated that there are roads already marked at 25 mph. He stated that Wellington Road is a shortcut between US Route 202 and NH-119, and there is a hairpin turn along the road. Both of these cause traffic issues. The Police Chief had stated at the Roadway Committee meeting that it is up to the police officer's discretion to give out a ticket up to 5 mph over the speed limit. They are requesting 25 mph, so there is a maximum of 30 mph. He added that the road is not policed even though they requested it. This is their way of trying to make sure they are safe on Wellington Road. The road agent or the police chief had stated that the lines would help drivers to stay in their lane and on the road.

Bob stated that directing the police department to start issuing tickets when it is appropriate needs to come from the Board of Selectmen, via the Town Administrator. There were only 17 tickets issued last month out of 220 traffic stops. Tom stated that the enforceability for the Police Department if someone challenged the 25 mph speed limit. He recommended posting it at 25 mph for visual effect. Larry stated this is a problem because if they have a 25 mph speed limit, which goes against the NH RSA, and a police officer issues a speeding ticket, that ticket will get thrown out in court.

Roberta Oeser, Main Street, said it is scary to walk along Main Street, which has more traffic than Wellington. From the common, it is posted at 30 mph, but drivers go 45 to 50 mph down Main Street. Main Street is lined, but on the turns, drivers still end up on the wrong side of the road. Bob stated they should direct the Police Department to start enforcing speed limits, starting with Wellington Road, to get the average speed closer to 35 mph. Bob again questioned enforcing a 25 mph speed limit. Victoria and Roberta stated that to legally enforce a speed limit below 35 mph, an engineering or traffic investigation would need to be conducted, and then the local authority can declare the limit, from RSA 265:63.

Roberta also commented that a speed limit can hold if it was set before that statute was enacted.

Susan Kochinskas, Conifer Road, stated that at the Roadway Committee meeting, the Police Chief mentioned that if there were double yellow lines, they could then enforce drivers crossing the line. She also reminded the Board that there are children at the Recreation Center.

Bob motioned for the Board to direct, through the Town Administrator, to the Police Chief and the Police Department to start paying more attention to Wellington Road for the next month and see if there is an enforcement difference, and if tickets are being given out for excessive speeding over the posted 35 mph. Seconded by Larry, it passed 3-0. Bob says this is to see if they can get the enforcement and see if they can reduce the speed. He added that he wishes they still had the sign that monitored the speed. Roberta stated that it was fixed, and they have it somewhere. Bob asked Roberta to copy the Board of Selectmen when she informs the Police Department of their decision. Bob said his goal is to get the speed down to 35 mph.

Larry asked the residents if they had informed the Police Chief at the Roadway Meeting in June of the times they noticed speeding. A resident responded that they did, and added that if they call the police station, they are added to the list on the whiteboard, and your area will be targeted. Larry added that patrolling isn't the key, but the police officer needs to be stationary with a radar gun. Bob said they need to look into whether the sign that collects data would consist of a traffic study. Roberta answered that she believes it needs to be an official study.

Financial Oversight Policy: See attachment. Roberta stated that this policy stopped being used, but was in effect during her time as Selectman after 2013. This is not the policy that needs to be revisited every year. Tom said that the Selectboard has statutory oversight of finances in Rindge, so to have a policy that tells the board they have financial oversight is pointless. The objective is to have proper accounting of expenses, which he thinks they do with the auditor, and properly authorized expenses are more of a control policy than oversight. He continued that the Town does not have any internal controls, the way the policy is written. The department head needs an item, then buys it and codes it. He thinks it is anti-control. He gave the board a printout from an NHMA Finance Certification Program. He stated that the person buying the item and having custody of it should not record, document, authorize, or reconcile the purchase. They can instead fill out an order that outlines the item being purchased, the coding, and the reasons for purchase. They cannot purchase the item until it has been reviewed and approved. He added that this is basic financial control and believes they need an internal control procedure, not a financial oversight policy. Larry asked if this means that every purchase under \$1,000 would have to go through the Board. Tom answered that it is not what he said, but they need a purchasing procedure as an internal control because the MRI report from 1997 recommended it, and it can be simple. He added he thinks they would not have purchased a weedwhacker if they had that procedure under a default budget. Larry asked about an emergency where there is a blizzard, and a plow truck has a blown hydraulic system. Tom stated that it wouldn't qualify because that would be a micromanaged control system. He continued that for utilities, fuel, an automobile or a truck breaks down, it needs to be fixed. It is a purchase. He gave the example of the weedwhacker for the Fire Department or the roof repair for the Transfer Station as purchases that would require a purchase order. There is a procurement policy that requires quotes but no approvals. With his proposed control system, a department head would submit a request, and every three days, someone would review the request and approve it. Larry read a section of the Financial Oversight Policy, which states, "All department expenditures must be approved and properly coded by the Department Head. All expenses greater than \$1,000 shall be approved by the Town Administrator; unusual expenses over \$5,000 shall be approved by at least 2 members of the Board of Selectmen." Larry expressed that the word unusual seems too broad. Roberta proposed changing the word to uncustomary. Tom continued that if a control system was in place, if an expense was \$5000, it would still be on a purchase order. Larry stated that, to his knowledge, there are no documented cases of fraud, so why would they need a system that will cost money? Tom stated that they don't need a system; they could use a notebook with the

numbers listed. Tom stated that every time they approve the manifest, the items have already been paid for and are in the shop. He again questioned the purchase of the weedwhacker. Larry responded that the Department Heads are spending within the budget that the taxpayers voted on, and have not overspent. Tom answered that the taxpayers don't vote on wasted money. Larry said that is his opinion. Tom asked how many weed whackers Public Works has. On the receipt, it states it is a DeWalt 60-volt string trimmer with extra batteries for \$300. He added that a control system would give authorization to the Department Head with justification, and there may be a reasonable need for the purchase. Bob stated that he and Roberta spoke with the Town Auditors. They said a purchase order system would be great if they had the Town Administrator approve them immediately upon receipt. Roberta said they are bringing this policy forward because funds had been removed from the Capital Reserve Funds without authorization from the Board at all. She added that revolving funds don't require further notice to the public other than authorization by the Board. She said that she was disturbed that bills were not getting approved of higher amounts. She added that the Finance Director and Bookkeeper were astounded that the accounts needed approval to be withdrawn from. Bob stated that they are working towards the goal of the board approving those funds where the Town Admin reviews them.

Pat Martin, Farrar Road, stated that they cannot make the argument that the voters approved the budget because the proposed budget was defeated, and they are in default. Larry answered that the voters approved the default budget, which the Department Heads can spend from. If they don't overspend their budgets, that is what the people voted for. Pat added that she agrees with Tom that there should have been some thinking on the fact that they are on a default budget, and there are still a few months to go.

Dan Whitney, Butterfield Road, stated review of policies is very tedious, and he hopes that the new full-time town administrator is tasked with reviewing policies or sunseting them. He asked that when someone is speaking that others do not interrupt, moving forward through budget season. Bob stated they will leave the Financial Oversight Policy as is and have the new Town Administrator deal with the policies, the budget, and the reassessment process.

Proposed Budget Schedule: See attachment. Tom recommended that the Board agree on a percentage so the budget advisory committee, department heads, and the new town administrator have a target, and they can evaluate priorities amongst the departments to arrive at the number. He stated that adding 2.5% to the default budget gets to about the proposed 2025 budget. A 3% increase is \$165,00 more to the default, and a 2.5% is about \$140,000. Bob stated he does not disagree and then asked Dan Whitney, BAC Chair, if the schedule works for the Budget Advisory Committee. Dan answered yes, and they will revise as needed. He added that the majority of the BAC would agree with Tom to have the Board decide on a number. He would prefer that this happens before the public discussions of November 5th, so they do have proposed department budgets need to be reworked. Bob and Dan agreed that they want to come up with a budget that will pass.

Tom stated he was looking for the right number for the default budget that passed because the financial statements show a number that does not match. Roberta stated that she read a comment in the minutes that the budget number had to be changed, but she did not look because she assumed it was all set. Tom added that he knows the previous Finance Director had it correct when the Department Heads presented it to the board after the elections. Bob said that he will look at the warrant article that was passed by the citizens. Roberta said she will double-check as well. Bob requested that the board members agree on a number to be brought to the BAC at the next meeting. Tina Sbrega, Sandback Circle, as a BAC member, asked that the number they come up with be shared with the department heads so they can collectively shoot for that number. The board agreed to the proposed budget schedule as is.

Requests for Access to Time Sheets and Compensatory Time Records for a Selectman: Tom stated that his understanding is that he should be entitled to view the timesheets, and he has several weeks that he would like to see and the compensatory time for the year, according to policy. He added that Roberta stated there was no central demand, and he

requested it from whoever keeps track of it. Based on policy, it needs to be tracked. Bob asked if there was a specific reason, employee, or department he was looking at. Tom responded that he is not looking for a specific employee as that is targeting, he wants a department, and he is not targeting anybody. He stated that before he was denied seeing them by Roberta, he had already found time sheets that people were being paid when they were not at work. He wants to see the time sheets for the Fire Department and the Public Works Department. Bob asked if these were the departments where they said people were not working. Tom stated he witnessed it himself and was told by people down the street; he wants to verify what the time sheet says, whether they were working or not. Bob clarified that he is targeting two departments then. Tom responded that he is not targeting anybody and just wants to see the time sheets. There was a brief discussion of RSA 275:86 about employees' right to request personnel records and NH Administrative Code Lab 802.08, which defines a personnel file. Tom stated that if they want to deny him, they can go ahead. Bob stated that Tom had access to the files before the Board was made aware of it, and he made copies of employees' time sheets and took them home. Tom responded that he makes copies of Financial Statements, which are not personnel files. Bob continued that he had access for many months. Tom said yes, he had access until Roberta started. He had no problem until he went to a building, and there was no one there on a workday. He then asked for the time sheets, and all the time sheets said they were at work. He did not question it until one week later, when he ran into an employee whose time sheets said they were at work, and they were not. He continued that the following week, he was prevented from seeing the time sheets. He asked them if they do not want him to see the documents, that they tell him. Bob said he has never had an occasion to see time sheets, and if he has a problem, he goes to the department head and asks them what is going on. Tom stated that the previous town administrator's job description had direct authority over the department heads. He tries not to go to the department heads individually to question stuff like this because it provides a single line of communication and he wants to bring it up with the three of them. He thinks it is not fair to bring it up individually. He added that he tried to discuss the time sheets when the individual was in the room, and they shut him down. It could have been a very simple conversation. He added that Larry spoke with a department head, and he came back with documents, but he had not received the documentation regarding Larry's comments. Tom said he is not going to talk about it anymore, and he is simply asking to do what he requested to be communicated. Bob asked if it was specific to these two departments. Larry asked why he is not requesting time sheets from the Police Department, just the Public Works and Fire Department. Tom responded that he has not found an issue with the Police Department, and if he has an issue, he will ask for the time sheets. He stated he found a potential issue and under oversight, which is statutory. Larry stated they have a Fire Chief who has worked for the town for 26 years under multiple selectmen, and a DPW director who has been in the position for 20 years and worked for the town for 30 under multiple selectmen. He expressed that he cannot believe there is anything nefarious going on and have a career for that long under multiple bosses. Tom stated he is just saying someone wasn't working when the time sheet said they were. Larry responded that he provided compensation time sheets, and he saw them at the previous meeting. Tom responded that he is not going to talk to him and reiterated that he asked for them and if they want to refuse him to just tell him. He said it has nothing to do with the employees, he is trying to conduct financial oversight and believes he is fair in asking. Larry asked Roberta if time sheets cannot leave the building or have copies of them. Roberta said if they are considered personnel records, then the employee can make copies according to the Town's personnel policy. Tom responded that, according to the definition, it is a public record that the personnel person has access to. He stated that he is the manager and he can see anything he wants. Roberta responded that the Board of Selectmen is the manager, the Board votes. Bob stated that because he has had access to the records for over a year, made copies of them, and taken them home, he does not believe they should be leaving the building. He stated that if he does not have anything specific other than two general departments to look at, he is not going for it. Bob asked if Tom was making the motion. Tom responded that he is not making any motion; he has a request to the Selectboard to review financial data. He has been told that he should communicate the request to them so they can vote on it. Bob asked

if he could vote for it. Tom answered no, he cannot, and said they should deny him and see where it goes. Bob said that he trusts his department heads to oversee the time sheets of their personnel. Tom said he generally does until they are not there when the time sheets say they were. Bob said he is not making a recommendation to give timesheets to Selectmen. Tom said he will ask the voters.

Sharon Rasku, Hutchinson Road, recommended a mobile punch machine for tracking hours so they stop arguing. Larry asked if she recommends having the emergency responders of the Fire Department punch in a time clock before they can leave on an emergency call. Sharon said that the machine can be moved and does not need to be nailed to the wall. She said they can look it up. Tom asked if he should give Roberta the dates that he wants to see time sheets for. Bob responded that it would be reasonable if he requested them from department heads. Tom responded that they are in the Town Offices so the Town Administrator has access to them. He would also like the compensation time calculations, which he asked Roberta for in his two requests. Larry said yes, if it is under supervision, because it is a personnel file. Tom responded that it is a financial document. Bob is saying he is not picking on Recreation. Tom said then that means Bob is a no. Bob responded that Tom is making an interpretation of what he said. Tom stated he wrote down no recommendation, then asked Larry what about you. Larry reiterated what he said earlier and added that if he does not find anything, he hopes he is man enough to look at the department heads who have worked for 26 and 30 years in the Town straight in the face, and apologize for the strife he has caused them for the past year and a half. Tom stated that he has not questioned any of the department heads on the errors, but he has questioned this board and that we have a Town Administrator to do that. Larry responded that he just said that he came in and saw nobody working, but that people were punched in. He said he has the documentation of the compensation time that they used, so he is accusing someone of paying an employee for something they are not doing. Tom stated that he is going to assume this is a no, and he will go from there because he is concerned about what they are trying to hide. Bob said that they are not hiding anything, and he has had a year to access the time sheets.

Informational Items, Communications, & Updates:

Karla announced that the new voting machines are in and they had preliminary training. Bob stated that he had taken the online training and asked Karla if LHS had given the Town Moderator, Kirk Stenersen, and his assistant, Kale Stenersen, the login information to the machines. Karla said yes and added that there will be a second training in February.

At 8:01 p.m., Bob motioned to enter into a non-public session per RSA 91:A-3 II (a) after the public leaves, seconded by Larry. It passed by a roll call vote: Bob – aye, Larry – aye, Tom – aye.

Returned to public session at 8:22 p.m.

Tom stated that they will have a financial challenge with a 2.5% increase in the budget. Concern with hiring a new CDL driver as it costs 60 – 80k and advises waiting to hire until after the budget passes in March. Understands there is a need for plowing, but he thinks the plow routes can be divided. Bob added that Rachel lost two officers.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Victoria Stenersen

Victoria Stenersen
Executive Secretary