



Board of Selectmen's Meeting

Rindge Town Office

Date: April 23rd, 2025

MEETING MINUTES

Present: Chairman, Bob Hamilton, Vice Chair, Tom Coneys, Selectboard Member, Larry Cleveland, Executive Secretary, Victoria Stenersen, Finance Director, Laurie May, and members of the public.

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

Selectmen's Announcements: Bob announced there is an Earth Day Festival on Saturday, April 26th, 2025, at the Cathedral of the Pines from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm, and the Women's Club will collect Trash Bags for Earth Day until noon to be entered into a raffle for four \$50 cash prizes. Bob also announced that the Finance Director, Laurie May, had given her resignation. He thanked her for her work and congratulated her on her new job. Laurie May said it has been a pleasure working for the town and thanked everyone. Tom stated that the ARPA report had been finished. Bob added that the Town did not have to file the paperwork for the County portion of \$87,000. Tom announced two more resignations, one in the Fire Department and one in the Public Works Department.

Selectmen's Appointments: Bob motioned to appoint Susan Kochinskas, Roberta Gordenstein, and Lisa Wiley as Alternates to the Ingalls Memorial Library Board of Trustees for one year. Larry seconded the motion, it passed 3-0.

Payroll: Bob motioned to accept the Payroll for 04.24.2025. Tom seconded the motion, it passed 3-0.

Accounts Payable: Bob motioned to accept the Accounts Payable for 04.24.2025. Larry seconded the motion, it passed 2-0-1.

Minutes: Bob motioned to accept the minutes from 04.09.2025. Larry seconded the motion, it passed 3-0.

Citizen's Forum: Bob opened the forum at 6:09 p.m. and closed the forum at 6:16 p.m.

Debbie Qualey, Meadow View Road, requested the Board to reconsider selling dump stickers and punch cards at the Transfer Station. Bob stated there was an issue with the money in the past. Debbie requested trash bags at the Meetinghouse because the bin did not have any and was filled with trash. She asked who was responsible for emptying the trash. Bob answered that it is the responsibility of the people who use the Meetinghouse to take out the trash, and will ask Mike to place trash bags conspicuously so they will be used.

Pat Martin, Farrar Road, announced that on Friday, April 25th, Franklin Pierce University is having an Earth Day Market and Fair from 12:00 pm to 4:00 pm in the Library Courtyard. Karla MacLeod, Old New Ipswich Road, announced that there is a display at the Ingalls Memorial Library to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the Rindge Fire Department.

Old Business:

Revised Franchise Agreement – Charter Communications: This item was tabled until the Town Council responds.

Final Approval of Purchase of Voting Machines: Laurie May stated that \$7,000 is set aside in the budget for the two voting machines under miscellaneous. Tom motioned to purchase the 2 machines from LHS Associates per the quote provided by the Town Clerk. Larry seconded the motion, it passed 3-0. The Board signed the quote.

Town Administrator Job Search and Temp Fill-In Update: Tom updated the Board on MRI's response, summarized in Attachment A below. Tom recommended that we use MRI because they are professionals in recruitment and have a large

network, and we have minimal administrative staff to find qualified candidates. MRI strongly recommended exit interviews, and Tom personally highly recommended to the Board that MRI conduct the exit interviews to identify why there has been high turnover.

Bob stated that he reached out to Rethink Local via email, and a phone call was scheduled for the next day, so there is no clear update at this time. Larry stated that Rethink Local is only one person and charged \$30,000 for 6 weeks as an interim Town Administrator and recruitment for the Town of Swanzey. He was only in the office, averaging 1.5 days a week, and delegated the tasks of the Town Administrator to the town office staff. A Selectboard member from Swanzey had told Larry that spending the money on Rethink Local was a waste of money because they could have posted the advertising in the local papers and job boards and selected a candidate themselves. Based on this information, Larry highly recommended not using Rethink Local.

Bob stated that we have done this process within the town before, and he found the advertisement for a Town Administrator from 2019 and the job description for the position. He recommended using the previous advertisement with edits and posting it to NHMA and the local newspapers. Bob suggested moving the Human Resources and Budget duties back to the Town Administrator so that it will remain full-time and make the Finance Director position part-time. He added that someone volunteered to temporarily fill in as the Town Administrator and would assist with the recruitment process. There was a brief discussion about this person filling in, the Board volunteering to be the Town Administrator temporarily, the recent resignations, and the high turnover in the Town Administrator position. A non-public session was scheduled for after the public portion of the meeting with the person who volunteered and formally applied to be the interim Town Administrator.

New Business:

Acceptance of Town Administrator Resignation: Bob motioned to formally accept Lori Rautiola's resignation as the Town Administrator for the Town of Rindge. Larry seconded the motion, and it passed 3-0.

Location to Mount Boston Post Cane in the BOS Conference Room: Bob stated that he would like to hang the cane in a place of prominence in the BOS Conference Room and present it to the most senior person in the Town of Rindge, as it has been done historically as a sign of respect. There was a discussion, and the Board agreed to hang the cane on the front wall, to the left of the door as you walk in.

PiF Tech RICOH Copier Proposal: There was a brief discussion about the proposal. Tom motioned to accept the proposal from PiF Tech to enter into a lease for a new copier machine. Larry seconded the motion, it passed 3-0. Bob motioned to authorize himself to sign on behalf of the Town on the proposal. Tom seconded the motion, it passed 3-0.

LCHIP Grant – Authorize Bob Hamilton to Execute: Final signatures are needed on the grant, and Bob needs to be authorized to sign off on the LCHIP grant to complete the project. Larry motioned to authorize Bob Hamilton to execute the LCHIP grant for the Meetinghouse. Tom seconded the motion, it passed 3-0.

Health Insurance – Employee Complaints: Laurie May explained that the majority of the problems were with reporting who the Primary Care Provider is when the employee enrolls. A representative of Health Trust incorrectly told our employees that a PCP number was not required, which caused billing issues. To resolve the problem, employees need to call Health Trust, but they have been calling the number on the back of the card, which is the incorrect number. Larry requested that Health Trust have an informational meeting to present what pharmacies and doctors' offices are available and answer any questions our employees have. Tina Sbrega is willing to facilitate the meeting with Health Trust and stated that when the process started to find new insurance, the question was whether the town could control the costs while maintaining comparable benefits. The site of pharmacy service now needs to be shopped by the employees, and there is a learning curve, so the employees need to be educated. This agenda item was tabled for an update once the informational meeting occurs.

Any Other Official Business:

Camper Permits: The first camper permit is for Matt Remigy at 120 Red Gate Lane, Map 34 Lot 16, for May and June of 2025. The second is for Carol Donovan at 47 Coot Bay Drive, Map 19 Lot 9, from May to September of 2025 for no more than 60 days total. Bob stated that if the Board receives complaints from the abutters, the permit can be revoked at any time. Bob motioned to accept the camper permit applications from Matt Remigy and Carol Donovan. Larry seconded the motion, it passed 3-0. The Board agreed to have Bob sign off on the permits on behalf of the Board of Selectmen.

Revision of Abatement for Map 6 Lot 66: Bob stated the property owner has confirmed the revised abatement is the correct amount. Bob motioned to accept the revised abatement for Map 6 Lot 66. Larry seconded the motion, it passed 3-0.

Informational Items, Communications, & Updates:

Suggested Agenda Items – Notepad in Blue Folder: Bob announced that behind the blue folder in the front office, there is a blank notepad for the other two board members to suggest agenda items. If a suggestion is written on time, it will be placed on the agenda.

Tom asked for a decision on whether exit interviews will be conducted through MRI to be paid with his stipend. Larry stated that he thinks they should ask the employees first to see if they are willing to have an exit interview, and does not anticipate they will receive information from it. Tom stated that by using people who are separate from the Town, the employees departing may be more willing to identify the problems they see, compared to speaking with the Board members. Tom motioned to offer exit interviews using his stipend of \$2,000. Bob seconded the motion, but it failed by a vote of 1-2.

Larry communicated that to learn how the Town functions, he wants to job-shadow some of the employees. He will be volunteering for two 2-hour ride-alongs with two of our police officers for a total of four hours. Before Laurie May leaves, he will be spending the day with her on May 7th to understand and learn what she does for the Town.

At 7:24 p.m., Bob motioned to go into a non-public session per RSA 91-A:3 II (b) hiring. Larry seconded the motion. The motion passed by a roll call vote, Bob aye, Larry aye, Tom aye.

At 7:58 p.m., Tom motioned to leave the non-public session and return to the public session. Bob seconded the motion, it passed 3-0. The minutes from the non-public session were not sealed.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Victoria Stenersen

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Executive Secretary

Attachment A
MRI Conversation Notes provided by Tom Coneys

Spoke to Alan – principle – based on Rindge’s population and budget, he indicated the position realistically needs to be full-time.

All their qualified personnel are currently on assignment - typically costs approximately \$85/hour for an Interim Town Administrator.

For Recruitment, they currently have 8 active cases.

They recommend starting as soon as possible or a 60 +/- day process turns into 5-6 months

- Tough Market – demand and salaries driving it
- Would assist in recruitment
- Hourly basis, the total estimated cost is \$3 -\$4 thousand

They would write the advertisement, advertise, receive applications and review the applicants, conduct phone interviews, conduct background checks, and sort by priority of positives and negatives.

- The advertisement would be tri-state based on our location – Vermont, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire.
- Suggest to the board several picks for possible interviews, based on a preliminary review of applicants.
- Will interview with the board or without.
- They could make an offer for the board or in conjunction with the board.

Salary Ranges of Towns currently looking:

- Ashland, population of 1800-2000, not exceeding \$120k
- Milford - \$170k
- Grantham - \$135k
- New London, population of 4000 - \$147k

MRI has done numerous studies and assisted Rindge: 1996 – present, 7 total

They recommended exit interviews – would conduct for us, which would be a completely independent report back, as they do not know the individuals and are likely to get better answers.

Finance Director

- Even more challenging to supply qualified individuals, and it would cost more money
- Limited knowledgeable candidates
- For an interim – unsure that his financial staff knows of Rindge’s particular software, but might have one team member who can work with it. Has not heard from the potential contact yet.
- Also suggested immediate action on recruitment.