



Board of Selectmen's Meeting

Rindge Town Office

Date: August 13th, 2025

MEETING MINUTES

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 was opened by the chair at 5:30 p.m. Bob motioned to enter into non-public sessions per RSA 91-A:3 II (a), (b), and (l), seconded by Larry. Passed by a roll call vote, Bob – aye, Tom – aye, Larry – aye.

The meeting returned to the public at 6:08 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance led by Bob. Bob stated that they are in recess for the second non-public session. Bob motioned to seal the minutes from the first session indefinitely because it would adversely affect the reputation of any person. Seconded by Larry, it passed by a roll call vote 3-0; Bob – aye, Tom – aye, Larry – aye.

Payroll & Minutes: Bob motioned to approve the payroll for 08.07.2025 & 08.14.2025, and the minutes from 07.30.2025, 08.02.2025 & 08.04.2025. Seconded by Larry, it passed 2-1. Tom stated he voted no because he has been denied access to verify the accuracy of payroll.

Accounts Payable: Bob motioned to approve the Accounts Payable for 08.07.2025 & 08.14.2025. Seconded by Larry, it passed 2-1. Tom had an issue with an invoice for the repair of a Highway Truck that the Board needs to approve, as he believes it does not fall under the purposes of the fund.

Selectmen's Announcements: Bob announced that the Selectboard and Fire Department have hired Homer Davis to fill the vacant position, and he congratulated Homer.

Public Information Meeting: Per RSA 482:13 Lowering of the Water at the VanDye Pond to Reconstruct the Dam: Bob opened the public information meeting at 6:15 p.m. and closed it at 6:58 p.m.

Kathy Vandyke, Goddard Road, introduced Donald, who manages the water levels and dam on her property. Donald explained they need to fix the leaks in the concrete of the dam and need to lower the water level to put a cofferdam in to repair it. Bob clarified that this is to maintain the dam at the Vandyke Pond and confirmed that they have all the proper permitting. He stated that this portion of the meeting is to inform the public of the project and is the final step in the process before they can start. Kathy asked how soon they can start lowering the dam, as NH Fish and Game limits lowering the dam by 6 inches every 24 hours.

Bob asked for public comments or questions. Stephen Gray, Conifer Road, stated that on the permit from May 6th, 2025, it says that it is not necessary to pursue RSA 211:11 because a drawdown is not proposed on this project. Kathy answered that they have a permit to conduct the drawdown. Stephen expressed concern about the effects on Lake Monomonac as the pond feeds into the lake. Michael Romanow, Heron Point Road, requested a copy of the permit and compliance with the permit as issued. He explained that the past clear-cutting done by the property owners has negatively affected Lake Monomonac, and he is concerned about increased silt.

David Drouin, Conservation Commission Chair, advised that they view the copy of the permit that the town has if there is

a conflict between copies. Kathy stated she is making every effort to do this properly, and her son Jared has been working with the engineers closely. If anyone has any concerns, her son has told her that he is willing to address them via email. Larry asked about compliance with notifying Fish and Game. Kathy stated they have complied and have been corresponding with them. Bob read the permit number 2025 Deed 203444 dated June 24th, 2025, and added that if there is an issue with the permit, they can contact DES.

Judy Unger-Clark, Fitzgerald Road, questioned whether the clear-cutting that had illegally taken place on the property was addressed. David Drouin stated that a cease and desist letter was issued in 2019, and in June 2020, a replanting plan was ordered. Two plans were submitted, but neither was recommended for approval by the Board of Selectmen. They have requested a modified plan to fulfill the Town of Rindge Wetlands Ordinance, but this has not been done.

Scott Robertson, Robertson Road, asked how much the water is going to be drawn down and what the refilling process is. Donald stated that he would like to draw down three feet for safety, and to refill it, the process is 10% fill and 90% out. Kathy added that the dam safety engineers will come to inspect the project. There were concerns expressed about the lack of notification to the residents who are direct abutters. Donald further explained the drawdown process and controls that will be in place. Bob recommended holding off on the drawdown for one week so those who expressed concerns can contact DES and speak with Kathy for Jared's contact information.

New Business:

Consolidated Communications (CCI) Q&A regarding discontinuance of copper phone lines: Craig Clark introduced Jeff McGyver from Consolidated/Fidium. Jeff gave a presentation on the decommissioning effort. About 5 years ago, the town joined a public-private partnership with CCI. On April 19th, 2025, the FCC approved the application that CCI submitted for this project. The company is working towards retiring copper networks because they support and maintain both DSL and Fiber. Letters were sent out to customers with copper lines or DSL. Customers with just data for internet utilization had until August 19th to place an order for Fiber. If a customer has voice and data, they have until September 30th. He advised that if you receive an urgent phone call, hang up and call the direct line 1-(844)-434-3486 to confirm if the company is trying to contact you.

Linda Baldwin, Swan Point Road, expressed her frustration with customer service and technicians giving different answers. Her biggest concern is the ability to contact emergency services during an extended power outage. The technician had told her there are only eight minutes of talk time when there is no power, but other representatives told her differently. Her second concern is that what she was told to expect for the installation and what the technician did were different. And her final complaint is that her answering machine no longer works after the installation. She has called Fidium and spent a long time on the phone with them, but it has not been resolved. Jeff apologized for her experience and reassured her that he would find a solution.

Tom asked how many copper lines are still being used in Rindge. Jeff answered that there are 6 residents just using data, and 58 residents using voice and data. He added that the timeline for Town buildings to be switched is the end of quarter 4 of 2025. Donna Straitiff, Library Director, stated she was on an expansion contract with Consolidated, which they no longer support. She stated she is unsure if they can switch to fiber with the elevator and the fax machine. Jeff answered that they will make sure to work with her. Bob advised that before the technician leaves, they need to confirm that all the phones, answering machines, and computers operate properly. Craig stated that there have been many issues with misinformation given by their customer service representatives.

Citizen's Forum: Bob opened the forum at 7:45 p.m. by reading the rules of the forum and closed the forum at 7:51 p.m.

Craig Clark, Fitzgerald Road, expressed his concern about the hiring of the new Town Administrator and the process. In 2002, they were looking at having a Town Administrator, Town Manager, or Administrative Assistant. They selected a Town Administrator as they met the qualifications that the town needs. He stated that they need to hire a candidate with

a background in town administration who meets the criteria.

David Drouin asked for an update on the temporary classroom at Heritage Christian. Roberta stated that she sent them an email informing them that the site plan did not include the modular unit. They responded that they are working on uninstalling it and selling it. David asked about a date. Roberta answered that they want to remove it before school starts, and they will not receive an occupancy permit until the modular classroom is removed.

Karl Pruter, Jowders Cover Road, stated that the 100th anniversary went well and thanked those who participated and volunteered. He recognized Rick for his efforts in organizing the event. Karl stated that there have been significant donations to pay for the fireworks show, including Pyrotech, which made a matching donation of \$3,500. The matching funds were contributed via private donations. Bob stated it was well put on, all the local Fire Departments were there, and 6 people from Franklin Pierce volunteered as well.

Old Business:

Response to Inquiry Regarding Complaints Against a Selectman: Bob asked how to move forward from here. The Town Counsel referred us to another firm, and they recommended an investigation to prevent litigation and address the complaints. Bob recommended moving forward with an independent investigation. Larry agreed, as there are serious complaints that employees have brought forward. Tom stated he was not elected to make individuals happy or protect any individual or department but was elected to run the town in a businesslike manner. He wants to continue to pay attention to what the town departments are doing and wants to verify documents in the operation of the town. He stated he has outstanding 91-A requests, and he has not received the requested information. Roberta responded that the last request was denied by the attorney based on a section of RSA 91-A because what he requested were personnel records. Bob stated that he would like to move forward and have an objective synopsis of the situation with their recommendations to move forward. Bob motioned to allow Upton-Hatfield to investigate the employee complaints. Seconded by Larry, passed 2-1.

New Business:

Approve Amendments to the Town Admin Job Description: This agenda item was tabled until the Board receives a dated job description.

Any Other Official Business:

Roberta stated that the Assessing Clerk has not received a response from the Avitar assessor for weeks. Multiple elderly exemptions need to be taken care of, and one LUCT has been missed. Roberta asked to go through the elderly exemptions and advise the board to either approve or deny the exemptions. Jenn agreed that this would work for her and added that she spoke with Avitar to see if someone would come in on August 21st, and Shelley is supposed to get back to her.

Pat Martin, Farrar Road, asked about the hours allocated when they are removing the budgeting and HR duties from the Finance Director and giving them to the Town Administrator. Bob responded that the Town Administrator will be full time and the Finance Director will be part-time.

Roberta stated that the financial oversight adopted by the Board of Selectmen has not been in use. She is going to type it up again and bring it to the Board to re-endorse. She read some of the policy details. Roberta added that someone also made an executive decision to stop retaining paper files for minutes, including supporting documentation, agendas, and sign-in sheets. She stated that the Executive Secretary will start to create binders of the minutes. The third update is that the Building Department software contract ends in October. Avitar has a building department software system that is compatible with Assessing, and she is waiting to hear back from them to see if everything can be migrated and the cost. Bob wants to make sure that the Building Department and Fire Department are okay with it. The current software used is SmartGov Enterprise System, and for the three-year contract renewal, it costs \$5,000 for year one, \$5,500 for year two,

and \$6,000 for year three. The current contract expires on October 31st. Tom stated that they are going to run into the same problem with our Financial Software, as BS&A is moving to the cloud. He advised researching a new software and added that there is a six to nine-month period to convert to a new software system.

Tom stated that the prosecutor's agreement has been sitting in the folder for months. Bob stated that his issue is with the payment clause in the contract because the 53rd week was added. Typically, for contracted workers, they divide the agreed-upon total into 53 weeks instead of the typical 52 weeks, so they get paid less per week but the same total amount for the year. Roberta stated that she spoke with Rachel about the addition of the 53rd week to the contract, and she had said that everyone got the 53rd week in their contract. Bob stated they need to check the 2021 contract and if they added on the 53rd week. Roberta stated she will check.

Informational Items, Communications, & Updates:

Bob stated that Franklin Pierce is going to paint their curbing because, during Commencement, attendees kept tripping over it. Early arrivals are returning to the college, including fall athletes and the student government, to prepare for Move-In Day. The rest of the students arrive on August 23rd and 24th. There is a moving schedule, so there is a smooth transition and minimal congestion. They will get a special events permit for the Football season, which starts on September 5th.

Larry stated that there was a Recreation Committee meeting on Monday. There have been issues with Tetrault Park. The first was four-wheelers driving through, creating ruts, so they are going to put up signs prohibiting the use of ATVs and install cameras. The steps going up to the slide are filled with pea stone, but enough of it has been kicked out so that it could cause injury. Larry spoke with Jay Pedarreaneau, owner of Rindge Stone and Gravel, and he was willing to donate and deliver a couple of yards of pea stone.

At 8:20 p.m., Bob closed the public portion and stated they were returning to the recessed non-public session after a short break. The public session reconvened at 8:46 p.m.

Bob motioned to seal the minutes from the second session because it would render the decision ineffective, and seal the minutes from the third session due to reputation. Seconded by Larry, it passed by a roll call vote of 3-0; Bob – aye, Tom – aye, Larry - aye.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 8:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Victoria Stenersen

Victoria Stenersen
Executive Secretary