



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

### **Rindge Town Office**

**Date: September 10<sup>th</sup>, 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 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 27<sup>th</sup>, 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 8<sup>th</sup>, 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 4<sup>th</sup>, 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: (See Attachment B) 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, so the Department Heads do 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. 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 27<sup>th</sup>. 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. There was a discussion about the police department's legal right to enforce a speed limit of 25 mph, the current rate of ticketing in town, and the effectiveness of painting lines.

RSA 265:60 II (a) states residential roads in rural communities are limited to a speed limit of 35 mph. 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. Roads in Rindge with speed limits of 25 mph can be enforced if they existed before RSA 265:60 was enacted.

The current rate of ticketing is about 10% per traffic stop. Last month, 17 of the 220 traffic stops received tickets. Larry expressed that he would like to see this percentage closer to 50% for a few months. 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 reduce the speed to 35 mph. He asked Roberta to copy the Board of Selectmen when she informs the Police Department of their decision.

Chris Peahl, Hudson Way, stated that the road agent or the police chief had stated that the lines would help drivers to stay in their lane and on the road. Roberta Oeser, Main Street, responded to this comment that Main Street has painted lines, but on the turn out of the Transfer Station, drivers still end up on the wrong side of the road. 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. No decision was made on painting lines on Wellington Road.

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. Bob said they need to look into whether the sign that collects speed data would consist of a traffic study. Roberta answered that she believes it needs to be an official study

Financial Oversight Policy: (See Attachment C) Roberta stated that this policy stopped being used, but was in effect during her time as Selectman after 2013. Tom stated he believes they need an internal control procedure, not a financial oversight policy. He stated that the employee or department head who buys the item and has 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. Larry asked if every purchase under \$1,000 would go through the Board and if emergencies would qualify for a purchase order. To the first question, Tom responded that it was not what he said. To the second question, his response was no, they would not qualify. Larry questioned the need for a system that will cost money when there are no documented cases of fraud to his knowledge. Tom answered that they don't need a system; they could use a notebook with the ledger numbers listed.

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 stated he thinks they would not purchase a weedwhacker under a default budget if they had an internal control

procedure. Larry responded that the Department Heads are spending within the budget that the taxpayers voted on. Tom asked how many weed whackers Public Works has. 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 added 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 she is bringing the Financial Oversight Policy forward because funds had been removed from the Capital Reserve Funds without authorization from the Board. She added that revolving funds don't require further notice to the public other than authorization by the Board. She was disturbed that bills with higher amounts were not getting approved. Bob stated that they are working towards the goal of the board approving those funds and the Town Administrator reviewing them. Bob stated they will leave the Financial Oversight Policy as is and have the new Town Administrator work on the policies, the budget, and the reassessment process.

Proposed Budget Schedule: (See Attachment D) 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. Bob asked Dan Whitney, BAC Chair, if the schedule works for the Budget Advisory Committee (BAC). Dan answered yes, and they will revise as needed. He added that the majority of the BAC would agree with Tom. He would prefer that they decide on a number before the public discussions of November 5<sup>th</sup>, so that the proposed budget does not need to be reworked.

Tom stated he was looking for the correct number for the default budget that passed because the financial statements show a number that does not match. He added that he knows the previous Finance Director had the correct number 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. 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. 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 the time sheets for the Fire and Public Works Department.

Bob stated that Tom had access to the files for many months before the Board was made aware of it. Tom said yes, he had access until Roberta started as the Town Administrator. 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 the employees were at work. He did not question it until one week later, when he ran into an employee whose time sheet said they were at work, and they were not. The following week, he was prevented from seeing the time sheets. Bob said if he has a problem, he goes to the department head and asks them what is going on. Tom responded that he tries not to go to the department heads individually, as he thinks it is unfair. He added that he tried to discuss this at a public meeting when the department head was in the room, and they shut him down. 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. Larry responded that he provided compensation time sheets, and he saw them at the previous meeting. Larry expressed that he cannot believe there is anything nefarious going on with department heads who have worked for the Town for decades under multiple bosses. Tom said it has nothing to do with the employees; he is trying to conduct financial oversight and believes he is fair in asking.

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. Bob said Tom made copies of the employees' time sheets and took them home. Tom responded that he makes copies of Financial Statements, which are not personnel files. Larry asked Roberta if time sheets cannot leave the building, or if copies of them can be made. 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. Roberta responded that the Board of Selectmen is the manager, and 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. Tom responded that he has a request for the Selectboard to review financial data. Bob said he is not making a recommendation to give timesheets to the Selectmen. He later stated it would be reasonable if Tom requested them from the 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. Tom asked Larry what he thought. Larry said yes, if it is under supervision, because it is a personnel file. He added that if he does not find anything, he hopes he will apologize to the two department heads for the strife he has caused them. Tom responded that it is a financial document. He added that he has not questioned any of the department heads about the errors, but he has questioned this board and that we have a Town Administrator to do that. Larry responded that Tom is accusing a department head of paying an employee for work they are not doing. He has the documentation of the compensation time that they used. Tom stated he assumes they are denying his request and will go from there.

**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. He expressed concern with hiring a new CDL driver as it costs \$60 – 80k and advises waiting to hire until after the budget passes in March. He understands there is a need for plowing, but he thinks the plow routes can be divided.

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

Respectfully submitted,

*Victoria Stenersen*

Victoria Stenersen  
Executive Secretary

Attachment E – Initial Draft of the 09.10.2025 minutes as a condition of approval on 09.24.2025 by Tom Coneys