



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

**Rindge Town Office**

**Date: October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

### **MEETING MINUTES**

**Present:** Chairman, Bob Hamilton, Vice Chair, Tom Coneys, Selectboard Member, Larry Cleveland, Town Administrator, Max Vandervliet, 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:** Tom said that the Town Common could be cleaned up again. There were no other announcements.

**Payroll:** Bob motioned to accept the payroll for 10.02.2025 & 10.09.2025. Seconded by Larry, it passed 2-0-0.

**Accounts Payable:** Bob motioned to accept the accounts payable for 10.02.2025 & 10.09.2025. Seconded by Larry, it passed 2-0-0. Bob stated that he had a small problem with the 10.09.2025 accounts payable, but it was addressed. The expense was transferred from the general fund to the correct trust fund.

**Minutes:** Tom motioned to approve the minutes from 09.24.2025. Seconded by Larry, it passed 3-0.

**Citizen's Forum:** Bob opened the forum at 6:06 p.m. by reading the rules of the forum and closed the forum at 6:45 p.m.

Roberta Oeser, Main Street, followed up on the meeting with Avitar. She suggested decreasing the value of the beach property for Cathedral Estates Properties and Rindge Acres to \$1.2 million from the assessed \$4.4 million. She explained that this is because there is no statistical data to support the assessed value, and there will be large abatement amounts. She offered to provide the board with the sales data to support her claim. Her second concern is the need for serious adjustments to properties on Lake Monomonac. She is okay with the \$650,000 base rate, but the way Avitar calculates an increase of two to three times the rate is arbitrary and subjective, with no statistical data. If there are no adjustments, the tax overlay for the MS-1 will add about \$400,000 to cover the abatements. Bob expressed that they want to look at the factors of the land of properties in Rindge, and if acreage is incorrectly assessed and over-evaluated based on the condition of the property or the neighbor's property rating. He asked Roberta to send the data to Max.

Kristin Giantonio, Pine Eden Road, stated that her property value tripled, despite a tax card that has had marginal and predictable increases over the past 20 years. The camp was previously valued at \$209,000 and went to \$621,000 with a base rate of \$350,000 for the waterfront. She has a fair market appraisal from May of 2025, which valued the property at \$325,000. The revaluation does not seem to consider that some properties are camps or seasonal homes that lack amenities, versus full-time homes. She would like to be able to keep or sell her property fairly, and right now, that is not possible. She expressed that she should be able to identify and verify every calculation that was used to assess her property in an accessible and transparent manner, and right now, she cannot.

Bob reassured the public that the increased assessment does not mean taxes will triple. Generally, the assessments went up 100% so the tax rate will decrease by about 50%. He said they need to get the revaluation finalized as soon as possible so tax bills can go out on time, and the Town can pay the bills before the end of the year. If they cannot pay the County their \$5.5 million bill, the Town will have to pay to apply for a tax anticipation note, then pay the County their bill with

interest and penalty fees, and then they will have to pay the interest for the short-term borrowing. He hopes they do not have to go through with the current assessments and that Avitar adjusts the valuations of properties that were incorrectly assessed. But if they do finalize the current numbers, residents can file an abatement after the December tax bill comes out and until March 1<sup>st</sup>. The assessing firm will review the abatements and send its recommendations to the Board. The Board will then review and decide on all submitted abatement applications by July 1<sup>st</sup>. If a property owner disagrees with the decision on their abatement, they can appeal it with the Board of Tax and Land Appeals (BTLA) by September 1<sup>st</sup>. Larry added that this problem is not exclusive to Rindge. This is happening in towns across the state that are being reevaluated. Per state law, a revaluation has to be conducted every 5 years. Kristin stated that her issue is more with the lack of transparency. Avitar should publish its calculations, and it should be available to all Rindge property owners. The Board stated that it is available on the Avitar website and is over 300 pages. Victoria said she will publish the report on the Town of Rindge website as well.

Pat Martin, Farrar Road, asked them to reconsider their decision to reject the request to put up a banner and signs on Town properties that celebrate the School of Excellence award that the Conant Middle High School received. From her recollection, there were championship banners that were hung in the past, but she could be wrong. Bob said that banners were not flown on town-owned properties in the past for winning championships. He encouraged residents to put the lawn signs on their own properties.

Simon Moseley, Pine Eden Road, said they did not receive their letter about the assessments until September 29<sup>th</sup>, so they could not get an appointment. He asked if there were future appointments available. Victoria answered that she spoke with Jenn Helsel, the assessing clerk. Jenn had said the assessor is not taking any more phone calls, but she is advocating for the residents who called the Town before the deadline and did not get an appointment. Simon added that from what he found on Avitar's website, there was no information on how they determine assessments for waterfront properties. He has compared the adjoining pieces of land, and some residents have the same valuation regardless of variation. He said it seems they are using an arbitrary number and asked for the justification of the increases to the base rate. He commented that if the properties on the lake are disproportionately elevated compared to other properties in town, the residents on the lake will pay disproportionately higher taxes because they have waterfront property. Bob recommended that he call Jenn and ask her again for a phone call from the assessors. He advised the residents that if they continue to have a problem, they should hire an independent company to determine the value of their home and property. Larry said they will be doing a revaluation in 5 years again, and if Avitar wants to be hired again, they need to be more accommodating for the residents.

Anne Whitney, School Street, invited the board to the presentation on Thursday, October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2025, for the NH School Fair Funding Project, which will discuss how NH's school funding formula works and the fact that the state's contribution is deemed unconstitutionally low. Most of the funding comes from local property taxes.

Kathy Kozlowski, Middle Winchendon Road, read a statement from the [NH Excellence in Education Website](#) about the award the Conant Middle-High School received. She expressed that it is unfortunate that they can't have a banner hung on Town property. She requested having the banner on the front of the Town Report with the statement. She asked how they decide what is put on the front page. Bob stated that it is drafted by the Secretary, who sends it to be reviewed by the Town Administrator, and the Board has final approval.

#### **Old Business:**

Bids for Furnace at Highway Garage: Max said that Mike did not acquire three bids before this meeting. This agenda item was tabled.

Town Office Water Well Proposal: Bob said that Mike said the water problems at the Meetinghouse and Town Offices may be due to the drought that is occurring. He is afraid to drill a new well and not come up with potable water after spending

\$50,000. He recommended holding off until the drought has eased. Speaking on the drought, Bob recommended to residents that they be judicious with their water so their well does not dry out. Pat Martin, Farrar Road, asked if they could ask someone at FPU to advise the town on deciding what to do with the water system. Bob answered that Mike has already had the water tested, and it goes through a filtration system, but there is still iron content in the water. Roberta Oeser, Main Street, suggested lifting the well pump or buying clean water to fill the well to find out if the issue is that the pump is too low or if there is a problem with the well itself. Bob recommended that Max speak with Mike to see what he thinks.

#### **New Business:**

Building Department Software Contract Renewal (RSA 32:7): There was a three-year proposal from Granicus. The first-year costs \$5,024.47, the second-year costs \$5,526.92, and the third-year costs \$6,079.61. Bob asked if they could make an agreement for one year. Max agreed that it would be more prudent and would give him time to research other software and compare price points and functionality. Tom motioned to renew the contract with Granicus for one year for the Building Department Software if it is possible. Seconded by Larry, passed 3-0.

Transfer Funds for Voting Machines (RSA 32:7-a): Larry motioned to transfer \$7,000.00 for the Voting Machines from the Town Office Retirement Line to the Elections Line. Seconded by Tom, passed 3-0. They transferred these funds because a portion of the year, the pension was not being expended from.

Planting of Liberty Elm for 250<sup>th</sup> (Conservation Commission) (RSA 31:95-e): David Drouin, Chair of the Conservation Commission, said the Liberty Elm Institute in Keene developed trees that are resistant to disease. The 45-foot trees have a bronze plaque and a framed certificate with a preamble for the Town Office. The first recommendation is to plant along School Street below the Meetinghouse, where there is a stump of an old maple tree that Mike believes he can take out. Mike would prefer not to plant a large tree on the common due to the high maintenance and wires, but it is a second option. David said that he thinks the location on School Street is an appropriate option. They would like to plant the tree before the first snowfall. The conservation commission has a tree fund that they started 10 to 15 years ago. They would cover the cost of everything, including the trucking to get the tree from Keene. They plan to anchor the bronze plaque to a rock near the tree. Tom motioned to allow the Conservation Commission to plant the Liberty Elm for the 250<sup>th</sup> birthday of the United States of America at the top of School Street near where the old maple tree stump is. Seconded by Larry, passed 3-0.

Dump Sticker Reimbursement Request: Bob motioned to reimburse Ginger Rayl for the \$50 Dump Sticker and \$10 punch card she purchased in error on September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2025. Seconded by Larry, passed 3-0.

Transfer of Admin Rights of Fire Programs: Bob said he disagreed with Rick about transferring some administrative rights to Max because they will be hiring a new Fire Chief soon. He spoke with Rick, and he seemed to agree. Tom and Larry expressed that if there is no immediate need to transfer it over, they are okay with deferring. Tom recommended that the cell phones, Post Office, credit card, and Eversource should be transferred over to the administrative staff. Bob said he would like to wait on transferring, as they recently switched to T-Mobile from AT&T. This agenda item was tabled.

Appointment of Health Officer (RSA 128:1): Bob said this position currently goes along with the Zoning Enforcement Officer, but the Town needs a Health Officer. The position has the responsibility of inspecting restaurants, inspecting homes for families with foster children, or investigating complaints filed about septic system failure and trash on property. Bob stated that Homer Davis is willing to be the Health Officer. Larry asked about the training. Max answered that Homer is aware of it. Tom said there is a certification that involves about a dozen tests. His concern is doing the training during company time, but whatever they decide is fine. Larry added that he has started training for the position. Bob said it is not a long time to get certification, and he believes it is fine because it is only a stipend position. He then asked what the stipend is for the position. Victoria answered that for both the Zoning Enforcement Officer and Health Officer positions, there is \$6,000 left in the budget. She added that she does not know how that was divided. Roberta answered that it was

a \$2,000 stipend before Dave Duvernay took the position. After he took the position, the stipend was \$1,000. Bob motioned to hire Homer Davis as the Health Officer for \$1,000 a year, per RSA 128:1. Seconded by Larry, passed 3-0.

Raffle Permit Application for the D.A.R. Peterborough Chapter (RSA 287-A:7): The raffle permit application is to raise funds for Scholarships for graduating students of the Conant, ConVal, and Mascenic High Schools. They will be selling tickets at the Annual Jaffrey Parks and Recreation Craft Fair on December 13<sup>th</sup> at RMS. The drawing will take place on December 17<sup>th</sup> at the Jaffrey Civic Center. Tickets cost \$1 each of \$5 for 6 tickets, and the prize is a raffle basket. Bob motioned to accept the raffle permit application for the Daughters of the American Revolution Peterborough Chapter per RSA 287-A:7. Seconded by Tom, passed 3-0.

Deed for Redemption of Maps (Map 10 Lot 4-7A & Map 10 Lot 3-1-1) (RSA 80:89): Bob stated this is a conveyance of deed without covenants. To convey these to this person whose deed was taken for failure to pay taxes, he thinks they should demand to have checks in hand and cleared before signing. Both Tom and Larry agreed. Max said he spoke with Gary, and he said the checks will be in hand on Friday. The board will sign the deed as soon as the checks clear.

**Any Other Official Business:**

Abatements for Map 6 Lot 99-3 & Map 31 Lot 9-2: Bob motioned to allow Monique to move forward with the abatements for Map 6 Lot 99-3 and Map 31 Lot 9-2. Seconded by Larry, passed 3-0. As soon as the final paperwork is in the folder, they will sign it.

**Informational Items, Communications, & Updates:**

Larry updated the board on the Colonel Rand, private cemetery project with the Rindge Veterans Association. On October 19<sup>th</sup>, they plan to remove the remaining portion of the tree from the stones and salvage what they can. Peter Letorneau will donate his lull for a day to assist. Karla asked if they were taking pictures of the process. Larry said he would be happy to. He asked the public if they knew anyone who does cement work and is willing to donate their time to redo the cement cap on the waist-high stone wall.

David Drouin announced that the Conservation Commission has a bat presentation at the Community Center on Wellington Road at 6:30 pm this Monday.

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 7:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Victoria Stenersen*

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Executive Secretary