



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

**Rindge Recreation Center**

**Date: Wednesday, October 22<sup>nd</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 6:03 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance led by Bob.

**Selectmen's Announcements:** Tom announced that the meeting is being livestreamed to the Town of Rindge, NH, YouTube channel and can be viewed after the meeting as well. Bob thanked the Conservation Commission, Mike Cloutier, and the Highway crew for planting the Liberty Elm on the property of the Town Meetinghouse.

**Payroll:** Bob motioned to accept the payroll for 10.16.2025 & 10.23.2025. Seconded by Larry, it passed 2-0-0.

**Accounts Payable:** Bob motioned to approve the accounts payable for 10.16.2025 & 10.23.2025. Seconded by Larry, it passed 2-0-0.

**Minutes:** Tom motioned to accept the minutes from 10.08.2025. Seconded by Larry, it passed 3-0.

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

Bob asked the public to wait to discuss the assessment process until they get to the agenda item, status of assessment process, under new business. Due to this announcement, no one spoke at the citizens' forum.

#### **Old Business:**

Bids for Furnace at Highway Garage (RSA 41:14): There were three bids for the replacement of the furnace at the Highway garage: Pinney Plumbing and Heating bid \$13,450, Red's of Jaffrey LLC bid \$12,500, and Letourneau Heating and Cooling LLC bid \$14,700. Mike recommended going with Red's bid of \$12,500. He spoke with Pinney, and they will still service the furnace. Larry motioned to accept Mike's recommendation of using Red's of Jaffrey LLC to replace the furnace at the Highway Garage for \$12,500. Seconded by Tom, it passed 3-0.

Town Office Water Well Proposal (RSA 41:11): There were no figures and no resolution. Bob tabled this agenda item for the following meeting.

Building Department Software Contract Renewal (RSA 32:7): Max briefly summarized the discussion from the previous meeting. He stated he received a quote from Granicus Software for one year at the same price they quoted for the 1<sup>st</sup> year in the 3-year contract. Bob motioned to accept the 1-year contract with Granicus for \$5,024.47 for the Building Department Software. Seconded by Tom, it passed 3-0.

2024 Abatements for Map 6 Lot 99 Sub 3 and Map 31 Lot 9 Sub 2: This was completed at the previous meeting, so there was no discussion.

## **New Business:**

Status of Assessment Process (RSA 21-J): Bob read a statement that explained the process of the Revaluation (see Attachment A). Bob interjected after listing the five situations. He stated that on the Reassessment page on the NH Board of Tax and Land Appeals (BTLA) website, under the Jurisdiction Tab, they explain when a reassessment can be ordered and how to file a petition. He informed the public that it is difficult to get hold of the BTLA. He continued reading the statement. Larry interjected that the Board does not know the number of people Avitar contacted or the changes made, and they are just as in the dark as everyone present. Bob stated that they received a list of all the property owners who requested an appointment with Avitar, but that list does not state if or how remedies were made on those properties.

Bob finished the statement and added that the state of NH is not a home rule state. The Town or the Board cannot do whatever it wants unless they are granted specific authority by State Law. We cannot override our contracted firm just because we feel like it, but there are other avenues they can follow. Part 602, Section 03 of the NH Code of Administrative Rules Revised for the Department of Revenue Administration (DRA) explains contract satisfaction with assessing firms. The terms of a revaluation contract shall be considered satisfied when the final values are submitted and accepted by the municipal assessing officials, which is the Board of Selectmen. Bob opened it to the public for comments and questions. He requested that they not repeat a question once asked. Many of the residents' questions have been brought to Avitar's and the Boards' attention.

Simon Moseley, Pine Eden Road, on Pool Pond, requested the Board to post the definitions and corresponding multipliers to the website for what weedy is, what flat terrain is, what a cove is, etc., so all the items on the property cards can be understood. These were not listed in the preliminary report. Simon stated that according to the report, most of the lake valuations were based on the sales from the past two years, which were price-adjusted to April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025. Pool Pond's value was determined based on a single sale and did not include five other qualified sales from the period analyzed that would have provided a better cross-sectional value. If all six sales were used, Pool Pond's value would be in the hundred thousand value range and not valued at \$325,000. Simon then used the base waterfront value he calculated to determine the assessments for properties on the pond. In his opinion, the results bring the assessed value much closer to the market rate. He encouraged the Board and Town to review the waterfront base value of Pool Pond and then assess the properties correctly. This action would avoid the potential of 83 abatement claims and a potential of significant shortfall of taxes in the range of \$150,000 if the abatements are approved. He has sent the information to Chad at Avitar and copied the Town Administrator and Selectboard.

Sandra Winchester, Pine Eden Road, asked if they have a plan for the anticipated volume of abatements that may be submitted. Bob answered no, they do not currently have a plan. If all the abatements were approved, the Town would not have all the money to pay them back. He explained that what the Town does is anticipate the amount they have to pay back through a process called the overlay. They set aside a dollar amount for the abatements. That dollar amount would be taxed to the property owners next year. If the Town does not use all the overlay, it goes back into the General Fund. Bob added that their goal is to fix it now to reduce the potential overlay.

Douglas Patrick, LaChance Drive, asked if it would be helpful to send the data to the Board to help them understand the difference between the market value and the assessed value. Bob answered that they can send the information, and they will forward it to Avitar. But it is not helpful to the Board because their hands are tied until they go through the abatement process. Douglas asked about the code that Bob referred to for contract satisfaction and if it would lead to a new assessment. Bob responded that he would like to avoid reassessment because they do not know how long it would take. Tom added that Avitar is more likely to adjust the assessment when provided with the relevant data if they had a phone call with them. If it is not adjusted, they can then provide the data during the abatement or appeal process to support their case. Max asked Douglas if he had presented the data to Avitar. Douglas answered that he did not because of the timeliness of their response. Tom added that physical changes are easy to fix, but market comparisons are more difficult

to prove. Larry recommended they prepare the information for their abatement beforehand.

Anne Reed, Paradise Island Road, stated that she analyzed Avitar's calculations and found that there is an arbitrariness to the classification of properties, even in the same waterbody, same view, and for neighboring properties. She expressed dissatisfaction with the customer service of Avitar when they viewed their property, and the lack of satisfactory answers when she provided information or asked questions. Anne added that one of her problems she has is the subjectivity of the adjustments to the base rate and the inconsistency in their documentation. She asked if they could use the previous values and shelve the current assessment until all the inconsistencies and issues are resolved. Bob added that if we use last year's tax rate and have the reassessment redone, it will require the Town to meet with the DRA Commissioner this week for approval. He reminded those in attendance that for a new reassessment, it will cost over \$170,000 to do it again. Anne responded that the cost to the Town for abatements might be more. Bob asked the Board if it would be worthwhile to go to the DRA to request delaying the assessment for one year. Larry answered yes. Tom answered that he is not opposed to it. Anne asked if Avitar had been paid. Bob answered that they have paid about three-quarters of the contract.

Dana (Chip) Hastings, Eastbrook Drive, asked how they can help and who they can call. Bob answered that they can contact their state representatives or file a complaint with the BTLA. Bob motioned to have Max contact the Commissioner of the DRA. Seconded by Larry, it passed 3-0. Tom added that it does not hurt for the citizens to put a complaint into the DRA. Larry added that Warner, NH, is going through the same thing with Avitar, and they seem to have issues with the assessment of their trailer park as well. Bob stated the BTLA's number is 603-271-2578. Victoria added that the DRA phone number is 603-230-5000.

Caryanne Murphy, Pine Eden Road, asked what the recourse is for the Town if the Board told Avitar they are not satisfied. Bob answered that it poses more problems, and they are trying to go down different avenues to remediate the issue first. Tom added that Avitar should respond with a letter of the final adjustments to their property.

Catherine Leray, Park Drive, stated she lives in the mobile home park, and she believes the park was as unfairly assessed as the Lake. She has not researched the numbers, but her neighbor has a home that is falling apart, and it was assessed at over \$20,000. Additionally, they are being double-assessed on the land. She hopes that the town does something to address this. Bob responded that there was a meeting with Avitar on October 7<sup>th</sup>, and the problem was addressed, but they did not get a resolution.

Tina Sbrega, Sandback Circle, echoed Anne's comments about evaluation inconsistencies and added that she is doubtful about Avitar making corrections and adjustments. When looking at state regulations for valuing land on the waterfront, they should take into consideration the water quality, the depth of the lake, and the size of the lake. When she asked the assessor, she responded that Lake Monomonac was the biggest in Rindge. There was no discussion about the various water quality issues that directly affect the value. She also expressed dissatisfaction with the customer service of Avitar. She appreciates that the Board has talked about the abatement process, but for many taxpayers, their bill will increase by thousands of dollars. The taxpayers will have to try and find that money when the tax bill comes out and hope to get the money back through an abatement months later. She wanted to emphasize the fact that it places a significant financial burden on numerous townspeople. Bob responded that Avitar bases their valuation largely on the size or acreage of the lake. He added that they went through the assessment spreadsheet. He put pink lines for all properties that tripled in value or more and started to highlight in yellow those that doubled in value, but gave up after the third page due to the sheer number. Tom added he understands everyone's complaint, but they must keep in mind that 5 years ago, we had an assessing firm we also had problems with. They are comparing the new valuation to a valuation that was 10 to 20 percent below market value 5 years ago. He advised them to keep in mind that their property may have been undervalued to start. Simon Moseley stated he is not upset that his assessment went up 300%, but that he cannot sell his home at \$800,000.

Roberta Oeser, Main Street, said that she has been researching the assessments for Monadnock Park, which is an issue,

and for Rindge Acres, where there is no statistical data at all. She added that she cannot find anything in the statutes that will allow them to hold the assessment from last year. She asked that they push the DRA to allow us to do so because Town could go bankrupt with abatements. A \$500,000 overlay is not even half of the amount needed, so it will be pulled from our unassigned fund balance and wipe it out, and we cannot allow that to happen.

Dan Whitney, Butterfield Road, stated he is glad to hear of all the effort the Board is going through to fix this. He asked the Board if Avitar was invited. He continued that Avitar should have shown up to listen to the concerns, even if they cannot solve all of them. Larry responded that in the contract with Avitar, they allowed the Town to have a representative present at two meetings with the public. Avitar told the Town that they have been here twice, but none of the board members can recall the first meeting with them. Bob added that when Avitar was invited to the meeting, they responded that they fulfilled the contract for the meetings already.

Carolyn Spector, Andel Avenue, stated that the assessments on Andel Avenue are not as egregious, but there was a \$100,000 upcharge because the property cards state there is a homeowner's association. But there is not going to be a homeowner's association until all homes are built, which will not be for another 4 years. She added that there will be abatements from the properties on Andel Avenue.

Matt Hannon, Miller Avenue, asked what the process is to appeal to the state to take Avitar off the approved list. Max responded that the DRA does not oversee Avitar's specific assessment formula, and Avitar is just licensed to do business in the state. Larry added that there is no set formula from the state, which creates a problem with Jaffrey versus Rindge. Jaffrey's assessment always seems to be lower than ours, which offsets the school tax rate and hurts us when it comes to the school taxes. He will be speaking with Rindge's state representatives about a possible bill to create a set formula for the state of NH to make it fair.

Nancy Rivers, Maple Drive, expressed that they are not attracting young people to the Town or state at all as there is a housing crisis. Her property's value increased more than two and a half times, even though mobile homes decrease in value. Bob recommended they go to WMUR's website, which has an article about young people fleeing the state, linked [here](#). Candy Phillips, Jowders Cove Road, asked who the people who came to their home 18 months ago were. Victoria answered that it was our previous assessors who went to their house. Candy asked if they used the previous data from the tax office. Bob answered yes.

Kristin Giantonio, Pine Eden Road, explained that there seems to be no rhyme or reason to how Avitar treats seasonal versus full-time properties. Her lakefront property is seasonal with a 500-square-foot house that sits on 0.3 acres and 75 feet of waterfront. The water is not drinkable due to radon, the septic needs to be replaced, and there is no driveway. Avitar assessed her property at \$632,700. Her neighbors who have fully renovated, full-time homes were assessed in the mid \$700,000s. Kristin asked how she can sell her property and get the assessed value when the better investment is to purchase the neighbor's property. Her professional appraisal completed in May of 2025 was \$325,000. This was an increase to her tax card, and she expected that appreciation in perspective of how she can sell it. It was a shock when she received the preliminary assessment letter from Avitar. She recommended that those with seasonal homes get their properties appraised to give to Avitar.

Gregg Harris, Fourth Street, has a summer camp on 0.11 acres with a 637-square-foot cabin, on a class 6 road that is barely passable. This property was assessed at over \$1 million. He received estimates from real estate agents that ranged from \$375,000 to \$450,000. The assessment is not even close to reality.

Susan Kochinkas, Conifer Road, asked if they said that they will approve the final numbers so they can move forward. Bob answered that they did not say they would do that. Susan then asked what they would do when they received the final numbers. Bob answered that they will try to have them adjust the numbers if they are not proper. Susan added that it sounds like they must accept the numbers, get a tax rate, and send out the taxes. Anne commented that they should

keep last year's assessment. Bob answered that they are not guaranteed they can do that.

Paul Cuttier, Fitzgerald Road, asked if they do not hold power as a community, and the Select Board does not hold power as leaders of the community, then what legal rights do they have as a Town to make sure this subcontractor gets held for what they are liable for? They should not have to pay more for something they did not do wrong. Tom asked how many people are from a waterfront property. Most of the room raised their hand. Bob stated that there will be no resolution tonight, but they will try to see if they can delay the process.

TJ Flouharty, LaChance Drive, stated that all he wants to hear is that the Board and the Town Administrator are going to fight for the residents and do the best they can to make sure they are treated fairly, and if they can go back to last year's assessed figure. Max answered that he has seen the three board members work relentlessly on this issue, and it is bothering them. From his viewpoint, they are fighting for the residents of the Town. Bob added that they are fighting for themselves as well. He appreciates everything they have mentioned tonight, and they do not take it lightly. They will get in touch with the Commissioner to see if they can use last year's tax rate and move forward with a reassessment, or come to an agreement with Avitar to make proper adjustments. They recently met with Avitar and told them the problems they were aware of at the time. They still have not gotten the final figures, so they may have adjusted the values to the residents' satisfaction. Larry added that the issue is that NH is not a home rule state, and they must follow the state laws. There is no guarantee that the DRA will agree to using last year's values. The Town needs to get the tax bills out because they have a \$5.5 million county tax bill due. Tom stated he feels everyone's pain and recommended residents follow the process when the numbers get finalized and provide data to support their case.

A recess was taken at 7:40 pm, and the public meeting resumed at 7:54 pm with a call to order by Bob.

Approval of Sand Bid (RSA 41:14): Bid number 25-1, the bids were opened on Tuesday, October 14<sup>th</sup>, at 10:00 am. C&C Trucking bid \$19.50 per cubic yard, and Onyx Corporation bid \$38.75 per cubic yard. Mike recommended that the board award the bid to C&C Trucking at \$19.50 per cubic yard. Tom motioned to award the bid for sand to C&C Trucking at \$19.50 per cubic yard. Seconded by Larry, it passed 3-0.

Approval of Franklin Pierce Football Game (RSA 41:14): A special events permit was filed for the Franklin Pierce football game after it occurred on Friday, October 17<sup>th</sup>, because it was scheduled last minute. The university did work cooperatively with the Town. Bob motioned to retroactively allow FPU to have their football game on October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2025. Seconded by Larry, it passed 3-0. A special events permit was filed by the Rindge Memorial School for the Annual Harvest Parade at about 1:00 pm on Friday, October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2025. All departments have reviewed it and approved it. Bob motioned to allow RMS to have their Harvest Parade. Seconded by Tom, it passed 3-0.

Notice of Intent to Cut for Map 2 Lot 41 Sublot 2A (RSA 79:10): This intent to cut was reviewed by the Conservation Commission. Tom motioned to approve the intent to cut for Map 2 Lot 41-2A. Seconded by Larry, it passed 3-0.

Recommended Settlement on a PURD Subdivision (RSA 79-A:7): Max explained that this is about the Andel Avenue Planned Unit Residential Development (PURD), and there are two actions to take on it. The first is batching the four lots that qualify for a Land Use Change Tax (LUCT) settlement; the total tax paid to the town is \$45,000. The second is payment of the recording fees for the lots that qualify for the Current Use release forms, which the developer agreed to pay. Of the \$45,000, \$21,800 has been paid, and \$23,200 remains due. Tom asked how they would pay. Roberta answered that ATA Construction will write a check. Jennifer Helsel, Assessing Clerk, answered that she will create one LUCT for that amount and include all the lots. Once the Board signs off on it, she will send it to the Tax Collector, Andrea Lavache, to issue a tax bill, and the developer will write a check. Tom motioned to approve the settlement on the Andel Avenue PURD subdivision developed by ATA Construction, for Map 3 Lot 72-10, 72-11, 72-17, & 72-18, at the agreement amount of \$45,000 and the recording fees for \$124.68. Seconded by Larry, it passed 3-0.

Approval of LUCT for PURD Subdivision (RSA 79-A:7): Bob motioned to approve the LUCT for the PURD subdivision on Map

46 Lot 1-1-15 & 1-1-16. Seconded by Tom, it passed 3-0. Larry asked if removing the 11.8 acres from current use would change the value. Roberta answered no; the entire value is based on the development of the PURD.

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

Larry announced that they got a significant amount of work done at the Rand Cemetery. They removed the tree, and there is one sliver of wood that is on the wife's stone, but the stone is intact. The next step is to go in with hand saws and get the rest of it out, and then figure out what to do with the stump. He thanked Pete Letourneau for the use of his lull, Jeff Goodrow for his chainsaw skills, and the help from other volunteers. There was cooperation from the neighbors, Josh Olson said they can hook up to their spigot for water and use his electricity, and Tom Horne let them use his property to get the equipment in there. Bob asked when they wanted it to be done by. Larry answered that they are trying to complete it by the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Surrounding the plot is a waist-high stone wall that needs to be put back together, but the big project was getting the tree out of there. Bob announced that there was another cemetery improvement for the Smallpox cemetery. He thanked Kyle Paolino and the Boy Scouts for their work.

Max updated the board on the fire chief position. The committee is interviewing candidates on November 10<sup>th</sup>. Rindge received four resumes; one was immediately disqualified, one was on the fence, and two were qualified. The whole committee has reserved the entirety of November 10<sup>th</sup> to interview either two or three candidates in person and has staggered them to allow discussion among the committee. They will have an update after that point. They want to move fairly quickly to bring the candidate before the board so the current fire chief and the new fire chief will overlap.

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Victoria Stenersen*

Victoria Stenersen

Executive Secretary