Board of Selectmen's Meeting
Conference Room at Rindge Town Offices
Date: Wednesday, March 11th, 2026
Time: 6:00 pm

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 chair opened the meeting at 6:01 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Selectmen's Announcements: Bob thanked all the election officials for their work yesterday. The election officials consisted of Town Moderator Kirk Stenersen, Deputy Moderator Kale Stenersen, Town Clerk Shana Eichner, the Supervisors of the Checklist, Executive Secretary Victoria Stenersen, the Selectmen, Deputy Town Clerk Jennifer Helsel, and twenty-plus volunteers. He thanked all the voters for showing up and thanked the highway department for setting up for the election.

Payroll: Bob motioned to approve the payroll for 03.05.2026 & 03.12.2026. Seconded by Larry, it passed 2-0-0.

Accounts Payable: Bob motioned to approve the accounts payable for 02.26.2026, 03.05.2026, & 03.12.2026. Seconded by Larry, it passed 2-0-0. Tom requested a copy of the 02.26.2026 accounts payable, as he has not viewed it. Max said he will get a paper copy for him when he sees the bookkeeper.

Minutes: No minutes for approval.

Citizens' Forum: Bob opened the forum at 6:05 pm and closed the forum at 6:08 pm

Debbie Qualey, Meadow View Road, asked for the final total results for the school budget. Bob answered that the school budget overall did not pass between the two towns. It passed in Jaffrey but did not in Rindge. Larry stated that the school budget went to default by about 70 votes.

Roni Hamilton, East Monomonac Road, commented that she is only asking this because of people she spoke with yesterday when she was out polling. Tom Coneys has not been approving the payroll and accounts payable. She asked if the $1.2 million monthly payment to the school and the ambulance payments are in the accounts payable. She stated that if that is true, then Tom does not vote for either of those payments. Max answered that this week was the ambulance payment and last week was the school payment that he hand-delivered. Larry commented that in the last check disbursement there were 3 payments to the ambulance totaling $31,250 for January, February, and March.

Old Business: None

New Business:

Contract Renewal for Welfare Director (RSA 165:31): Max explained that the current contract with Welfare Director, Mary Drew, ends on March 31st. She is requesting a new contract for the same amount of money at $13,825, which is allocated in the budget. The only change is that she would like to be paid monthly and not weekly. Bob motioned to approve the renewal of the Welfare Director's contract. Seconded by Larry, it passed 3-0.

Approval of Abatements (RSA 76:16): Max explained that these abatements were all data corrections. Larry motioned to approve the abatements for Map 27 Lot 4, Map 3 Lot 31 Sublot 1, and Map 9 Lot 7 Sublot 3-2. Seconded by Tom, it passed 3-0. The assessing clerk will prepare the paperwork for the Board to sign. Once signed, it will be submitted to the Tax Collector.

<u>Special Events Permit for FPU</u>: The first special events permit application is for a "wet" tailgate for the lacrosse game on April 11th, 2026, at 10:30 am, at Franklin Pierce University. The second special events application is for the commencement ceremony on May 9th. The Police Chief and the Fire Chief signed off on both. Bob motioned to approve the two special events permit applications for Franklin Pierce, a wet tailgate at an April lacrosse game and the commencement ceremony in May. Seconded by Tom, it passed 3-0.

<u>Update from Fire – Maintenance of Engine 1</u>: Max explained that Engine One went offline for about three weeks due to a failure with the DEF (Diesel Exhaust Fluid) system. There is a bill for about $15,000, which was a large, unexpected expense. This prompted Chief Faas to look into a preventative maintenance program, as suggested by Larry. He has two quotes moving forward. He will choose one of them so that they can extend the life of the engine. There was a discussion among the board members about DEF system failure. Larry expressed concern with Engine Two because it has similar mileage.

Max updated the board that he and Chief Faas were supposed to meet with the President of Franklin Pierce, Peter Eden, to discuss removing the fire engine from the FPU campus, but it was cancelled. After he had a phone conversation with Peter last week, it was made clear that they want the engine out, but the timeline continues to be extended. They are still trying to get a meeting with him, but he does not believe the outcome will change. Bob stated that they need to determine if they have a place to store the engine if the Chief wants to keep it. Max responded that the tentative plan is to move the least used vehicle out of the current firehouse, and move the engine in. Larry believes that it is the Reel Truck, and they will need to shift vehicles around to make it work. Bob asked Max to keep them updated on the discussions with the college.

Any Other Official Business:

Max brought up the discussion of the raises requested at the Department Head meeting. He requested guidance on what to communicate to the department heads tomorrow. Bob stated that they will need to know the exact amounts for the raises and the associated taxes to see if they can find the funds in the default budget. Larry stated that his understanding is that the original proposed budget of $5.67 million included wage increases. The default was about $5,654,000, which is $16,000 less. There was unanticipated revenue that bridged the gap; it brought them back to the original budget. Tom expressed that the default budget is misleading. There are about $160,000 in uncontrolled costs which have nothing to do with raises. Max responded that some of those costs were offset by restructuring employee positions and savings in health insurance. He added that the raises and associated costs will net out to the difference in the overall budgets. That difference is negated by the unanticipated revenue that was accepted at the previous meeting. Bob added that Max has found several areas where small amounts could be saved, which adds up to real money.

Roberta Oeser, Main Street, brought up Microsoft 365 Licensing. See page 2 of minutes from 02.11.2026 for details. Max responded that he has raised that issue with the Town's IT person, but Rindge is under contract, so they would have to wait for each subscription of the license to expire before they can add a permanent license to each machine. He has communicated with IT that they do not want to renew the subscriptions.

Max stated that he has been looking into our anti-virus software subscriptions because the Town is likely overpaying. Tom stated that he brought up the anti-virus software over a year ago, as it is built into the Town's system and we should not be paying for additional subscriptions.

Bob stated that it is a future agenda item to see if they should move forward with the raises on April 1st. He believes the savings have been found. Tom recommended a merit-based raise system. Max explained that there are time-sensitive raises. For example, the raise that the Recreation Director, Dan Bemis, negotiated before the Town Meeting starts the following Monday. Max asked if that should be moved forward with. Bob responded yes, if the funding is there. Tom stated that the raises last year were not approved by the voters because of the default budget. Larry stated he thinks the money is there; it is just a matter of shuffling funds around. He requested that they keep a much better record compared to last year. Bob stated that he would like to know with certainty that they have the funds to shuffle around. Max asked what Bob is specifically looking for. Bob stated he would like to know that they have the money within the default for any projected raise, including the taxes, retirement, and associated costs with the raises. If the funds are there, then it is fine with him. He stated that there will be another contract to negotiate later in the year as well.

Informational Items, Communications, & Updates: There were no informational items, communications, or updates.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 6:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Victoria Stenersen

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Executive Secretary