Board of Selectmen's Meeting
Conference Room at Rindge Town Offices
Date: Wednesday, April 15th, 2026
Time: 4:00 pm

MEETING MINUTES

Present: Chairman Larry Cleveland, Vice Chair Bob Hamilton, Selectboard Member Tom Coneys, Town Administrator Max Vandervliet, Executive Secretary Victoria Stenersen, Assessing Clerk Jennifer Helsel, and members of the public.

At 4:01 pm, Larry opened the public meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance. Larry announced that this is a work meeting of the Board of Selectmen and is open to the public to observe, but they will not accept public comments or questions.

New Business:

Max stated that he met with Avitar, Jenn, and the Tax Collector, Andrea Lavache. His goal is to communicate the Town's process and what Avitar shared with him so they are aligned.

Review Hampton Court Case: A decision from the Board of Tax and Land Appeals (BTLA) found that another municipal assessing firm, MRI, had flawed methodology. Both the BTLA and the Department of Revenue Administration (DRA) very closely examine the methodology of the assessment process. MRI was the assessing firm that re-assessed the town of Jaffrey. The property valuations along Lake Contoocook are so different between the two towns because MRI may have underassessed in Jaffrey using flawed methodology.

Process for the Board of Selectmen: Avitar and the DRA are adamant that the Selectboard and Town Staff must remain consistent in their response to the public and strictly follow the process with no exceptions. After Avitar provides recommendations and the Board votes on them during public session, the process between the Selectboard and Town staff with the public is nearly over. Any relief or recourse that the property owner wants to pursue is with the BTLA or Superior Court after receiving the signed decision letter or July 1st, whichever is sooner. If the property owner does not receive a decision from the Town by July 1st, they can assume the application is denied. The taxpayer has the right to appeal to either the BTLA or Superior Court whether the abatement is granted, partially granted, or denied. The deadline is September 1st. If the BTLA or the Superior Court denies the appeal, the property owner can appeal to the Supreme Court.

Larry asked what the process is if Avitar makes an egregiously incorrect recommendation. Max responded that the Board needs to decide what would constitute reasoning to vote against their findings. Avitar has corrected all the inaccurate data, and he hopes to get recommendations by next week. Larry asked how quickly Avitar responds if the Board votes against their recommendation. Jenn responded that once they receive Avitar's recommendations, she will pull the abatement application, and they will check whether it is denied or approved and then sign the application. She requested that they make remarks on the application, especially if they go against Avitar's recommendation, because the BTLA and Courts utilize the application if the property owner appeals. Max read a quote he received: "A process exists to grant you relief if you feel the outcome is incorrect. You need to follow this process because the Town staff or Board of Selectmen cannot realistically do anything actionable moving forward."

The abatement recommendations will be received in batches. Avitar had grouped properties that shared similar unique

features or were within the same area. About sixty of the recommendations should be received for next week's meeting. After the Board reviews the applications and recommendations and decides, Jenn will send letters out for each of the abatements. The letters will include how to proceed with the BTLA if the property owner desires, reference court cases where applicable, and the basis for the decision. After Jenn sends the letter, if the abatement is partially or fully granted, Andrea gets the signed abatement form with the calculated amount. The Town took out an overlay, so there are funds available.

Avitar confirmed with Max that they will defend any decision the Board makes that is consistent with their recommendation at BTLA. For any decision the Board makes that is not in agreement with Avitar, the Town needs to find its own representation. The representation can be Town Council, a Selectboard member, or the Town Administrator. This can be discussed if or when they are not consistent with Avitar's findings. Max suggested increasing Jenn's hours for the next month due to the increased workload.

Bob pointed out that if the homeowner requests a $100,000 reduction in the value of their home, and Avitar comes back to reduce the value only by $50,000, which the Board approves, the homeowner can still appeal. Jenn agreed.

Tom asked how the MRI court case will affect the Town. Max responded that he reached out to the attorney, and there is nothing that Rindge can do themselves. Tom asked if the State intends to evaluate Avitar's process as well. Max answered that the DRA reviewed the process and found it to be acceptable. Bob stated that they will let the BTLA work with the other firm because if Jaffrey was undervalued, it affects Rindge due to the school district bill calculation. Jenn further explained that BTLA ordered Hampton to do another revaluation by 2028.

Bob asked where the abatement applications and recommendations will be kept. They decided to keep them in Jenn's office for safekeeping until they are ready to be reviewed and signed. They discussed mailing the letters out of Jaffrey instead of Rindge. Avitar will mail and email the recommendation letters so that the Town knows which letters will be arriving. They will mail multiple recommendations in a single envelope.

Tom stated that they need to accept the recommendations of the contracted assessor unless they have a very good basis to disagree. Larry agreed and added that he wants to do his due diligence and not rubber-stamp them all. He requested that the packet regarding the Hampton case be posted to the website. He also would like weekly check-ins from Avitar regarding their progress. Jenn added that multiple assessors at Avitar have been reviewing Rindge's abatement applications. Jenn asked if the Selectmen would like her to send a copy of the abatements when she is made aware of the upcoming recommendations. Max agreed. Tom requested that applications be sorted based on whether Avitar recommends denial, partial acceptance, or acceptance, with a cover sheet on top listing the properties in each pile. All abatement applications need to be signed by the Board, and the proper box needs to be selected whether the application was accepted or denied.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Victoria Stenersen

Victoria Stenersen
Executive Secretary