



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

**Conference Room at Rindge Town Offices**

**Date: Wednesday, March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2026**

**Time: 5:30 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.

At 5:37 pm, Bob motioned to enter into a non-public session pursuant to RSA 91:A-3, II (a) personnel matters. Seconded by Larry, the motion passed by a roll call vote: Bob – aye, Tom – aye, Larry – aye. The vote was 3-0. The public session reconvened at 6:00 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance led by Bob. Bob announced that the non-public session minutes were not sealed and will be available within 72 hours.

#### **Selectmen's Appointments:**

Selectboard Chair and Vice-Chair Appointments: Bob stated that, as Tom had mentioned last year, it has mostly been traditional for the selectmen in his third year to be the chair. But Tom, for approximately a year, has not signed the accounts payable manifest and the payroll, or participated in the board motions to approve them. These included the School District and Ambulance service payments. In addition, Tom neglected his duty to serve as the "alternate ex officio" on the Planning Board this year, when in fact he was in the room but refused to participate. This was recorded in the planning board's minutes. Bob nominated Larry Cleveland as the chair if he was willing to accept. Larry accepted the nomination.

Tom requested to discuss this and nominated that they stick with tradition. He stated that he did not expect this to go this way and that he was clear why he had not been approving them. He refuted that he did approve the ambulance service payment, but he will not rubber-stamp payments and payroll that he cannot view. Until there are controls in place for labor timesheets and purchasing, he will not approve them. Bob stated that seven department heads oversee all of the bills. Tom stated that they do not want him to be the chair, but it is tradition. Bob stated that this has been done in the past. Tom expressed that he would like to be chair and feels he has earned it.

Bob stated that if there are no other nominations, he motioned to elect Larry as chairman of the Board. Seconded by Larry, it passed 2-1. Larry nominated Bob Hamilton as Vice-Chair. Bob accepted the nomination. Bob motioned to appoint himself as the Vice-Chair of the Board. Seconded by Larry, it passed 2-1.

Ex-Officio Appointments: There was a discussion among the board about the various appointments. The following appointments as ex officio were made: Larry was appointed as ex officio to the Capital Improvement Committee, the Budget Advisory Committee, and as an alternate ex officio to the Planning Board. Bob was appointed as ex officio to the Planning Board and Meetinghouse Oversight Committee. Tom was appointed as ex officio to the Recreation Committee, the TelTech Committee, and the Town and Gown Committee.

Bob stated that Karlene Walter, a member of the public, volunteered to be a representative of the Town on the School Board Budget Advisory Committee. She has attended as many of the school board meetings as she can, and if she cannot attend in person, she either watches the live stream or the recording after the fact. There was agreement among the

board to appoint Karlene as a representative of Rindge.

Appointment of Alternate Library Trustees (RSA 202-A:6): Bob motioned to accept the appointments of Roberta Gordenstein, Susan Kochinskas, and Debra Whitney as alternate Library Trustees for a 1-year term. Seconded by Larry, it passed 3-0.

**Selectmen's Announcements**: Bob announced the POOR Meat Raffle is on April 4<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 pm at the Jaffrey American Legion, sponsored by the Rindge Athletic Men's Social Club (RAMS) to benefit Rindge community projects. This is the last raffle of the season. Tom announced that Rob Knight has been working for the Rindge Highway Department for 20 years. He suggested recognizing him and giving Rob a gift card for his service to the Town. Public Works Director, Mike Cloutier expressed that he has been a loyal employee, and he will get him something in recognition of his service to the Town. Bob asked Mike to congratulate Robbie.

**Payroll**: Larry motioned to approve the payroll for 03.19.2026 & 03.26.2026. Seconded by Bob, it passed 2-0-0. Tom stated that he has not reviewed it.

**Accounts Payable**: Larry motioned to approve the accounts payable for 03.19.2026 & 03.26.2026. Seconded by Bob, it passed 2-0-0. Tom stated that he has not looked at the most current accounts payable. Bob and Larry asked for clarification on a \$2,000 charge for materials. Mike Cloutier responded that the charge was from St. Pierre for stone and gravel for the roads.

**Minutes**: Larry motioned to approve the minutes from 01.07.2026. Seconded by Tom, it passed 3-0.

**Citizens' Forum**: Larry opened the forum at 6:22 pm and closed the forum at 6:34 pm.

Aurora Picknel, Meadowview Road, stated that there is a group that is going on a mission trip to Guatemala and requested donations for fundraising. The trip is with [Little Lambs International](#) to continue the building of an orphanage and to fund schools in Guatemala. Bob stated that if anyone would like to donate, please contact the Executive Secretary, Victoria Stenersen, and she will put you in contact with Aurora. Roberta Oeser, Main Street, stated that they can make a written request to the Pumpkin Organization of Rindge (POOR) for a charitable donation, as they donate to people and organizations in Rindge for charitable projects.

Judy Unger Clark, Fitzgerald Road, commented that what she witnessed tonight she finds disturbing. There was an interjection from a member of the public, which Larry quickly addressed. Judy read a portion of a Monadnock Ledger Transcript article from 2017 written by Bob Hamilton. "We have seen a constant turnover of employees in town. This is not entirely a problem of salary, but rather a detrimental working atmosphere in some of our departments." She expressed that what she witnessed from the Board tonight was an example of detrimental working conditions. She stated that when Police Chief Todd Muilenberg resigned, he said he was not receiving support from the Selectboard and other important Town Committees. She explained that what she witnessed were contentious behaviors and non-cooperative attitudes. They are setting the groundwork for this Board moving forward, and this was a horrible way to start. She has never been to a Selectboard meeting where the senior member does not take on the chair position if he or she wishes. She further explained that her understanding of the law is that if a majority of members meet and discuss business outside of a public meeting, it is an illegal meeting. She speculated whether this was a setup. She asked Bob what he had done to improve the working atmosphere of the board, and asked what he had done tonight to the atmosphere of cooperation with the Board and with the public. She questioned their appointment of an outside member to the School Board. She summarized that what was done tonight laid the groundwork for a very difficult working situation, and it is very upsetting. Larry thanked Judy for her comments.

Craig Clark, Fitzgerald Road, first stated that the TelTech Committee may not meet regularly anymore, which was discussed with Phil Motta. They decided that they will meet on an as-needed basis; it will be officially decided on at their next meeting. He then asked why there is not an AED in the Meetinghouse. There was one that had expired and was removed,

but a new one needs to be procured. He questioned the cost of an AED. Mike Cloutier stated that he will work with the Fire Chief to get an AED and decide where the funds come from. Craig explained that he gave the previous one to the Fire Department because it was beeping and giving an error message. Max said that they will bring this up at the Department Heads meeting tomorrow. Larry requested that Craig keep Tom informed about the meetings. Max also requested to be notified.

Dan Whitney, Butterfield Road, expressed that he did not enjoy the first fifteen minutes of the meeting. He stated that they can be better, we can all be better, and it will be a long year if they make it that way. Many of us are on all sides of different issues and want it to be better and help. He requested that they make it an atmosphere where it is possible, because it will be better for them and the Town. He knows no one is deliberately trying not to make it that way, but would like them to move forward.

#### **Old Business:**

Planning for the 250<sup>th</sup>: Victoria provided an update from the 250<sup>th</sup> Celebration Committee. The first meeting was on March 19<sup>th</sup> and the next meeting will be on Thursday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, at 10:00 am. The committee consists of Lynda Hunt, the President of the Rindge Chamber of Commerce, Karla MacLeod, from the Historical Society, Dan Bemis, the Recreation Director, Victoria Stenersen, the Executive Secretary, and Robert Terk, Library Trustee. Other members from the community attended and were invited, including representatives from the Rindge Veterans Association, the Rindge Women's Club, and the Daughters of the American Revolution. A summary of the meeting can be requested from the Town or is linked here: [03.19.2026 Meeting Summary 250<sup>th</sup> Celebration Committee](#).

Update on the Status of Fire Engine at FPU: Max stated that the Fire Engine has to be removed from the university by June 1st because they want to repurpose the building. The date is flexible if needed. Fire Chief Bob Faas is working on a solution to shift vehicles around. He will house the second fire engine at the Fire Department and move a less essential vehicle somewhere else, likely the reel truck. Max added that tomorrow is the first meeting of the ambulance services committee, and the board will be kept apprised of those meetings. Larry expressed disappointment with the decision made by the university, as we have had a good relationship with them in the past.

#### **New Business:**

Withdrawal of Funds from Highway Equipment CRF to Purchase a New Dump Truck (RSA 35:15): Mike Cloutier, DPW Director, explained that this truck has been problematic for 5 years. Last year, they tried to get the funds to replace it, but were unsuccessful. This year, they want to replace the 2015 International Truck with a 2026 Western Star. The new truck has the same design as the 2022 model. If the Board approves, it would be the fourth truck purchased from ATG out of Vermont. He is asking the board for approval of this purchase. Larry stated the quote from ATG is the lowest by far of the three bids.

Tom asked about getting an updated quote, as it is dated January 25<sup>th</sup>. Mike responded that he talked to the sales representative today, and he is honoring the quote. Tom asked if there is speed control on the spreader for the plow package so that there are no piles. Mike answered yes, but the piles are not the truck's fault and typically happen at intersections. Tom asked about a warranty. Mike responded that the cost for an extended warranty is about \$20,000, and he does not think it is financially responsible. Mike continued that the truck they currently have was not built to last, and this winter season, he has spent \$6,500 in repairs. In the last 5 years, they have spent about \$50,000, and the biggest issue is the downtime. Larry stated that the total cost of the truck is \$243,521, subtracting the trade-in of the truck at \$32,000 brings the amount due down to \$211,521. The \$185,000 that was voted on to be added to the Highway Equipment Capital Reserve Fund (CRF) will be used towards this purchase, and \$26,521 will also be taken from the Highway Equipment CRF. Larry explained that it was a 2-1 vote to approve the \$185,000. Bob asked when the truck would be available. Mike responded that it would likely be in October or November, but he needs to contact the salesperson. They have the truck

on the lot, but it still needs to be set up.

Roberta Oeser stated that they can take the total bill, \$211,521, from the CRF, because the funds voted in this year are considered in the CRF. She added that they need to make sure that the funds are available before they make the transfer.

Bob motioned to withdraw \$211,521 from the Highway Equipment Capital Reserve Fund for the purchase of a New 2026 Western Star Cab and Chassis and Plow package from ATG of Westminster. Larry seconded the motion; it passed 3-0.

Trustees of Trust Funds Bonding Matter: Craig Clark, Trustees of the Trust Funds Chair, stated that the Trustees are not currently bonded, but according to NH RSA, they should be. The purpose is to protect the Town from any money that would be absconded by fraudulent companies. The bonding requirement is for all trustees who may have custody of trust funds, including the Cemetery and Library Trustees ([RSA 41:6](#)). The bond is 15% of the total funds, which is about 600 to 700 thousand dollars. The Treasurer also needs to be bonded, and the person responsible for paying bills may need to be bonded. To his knowledge, this is not something that is currently being done or has been done in the recent past. He recommended that the Board and Max research this because he does not know the scope of the required municipal officials. He added that Max has papers regarding bonding. He continued that bonds must be in a form prescribed by the Commissioner of Revenue Administration, and Trustees are personally liable to any municipality for any loss for payments made from the Trusts before the bond was put in writing. So, bonding also protects the Trustees. He requested that they implement this as he believes it is a requirement per the NH RSAs. Roberta Oeser commented that Carol Donovan, a previous Tax Collector, was bonded. Larry thanked Craig for bringing this forward and asked Max to add it to the agenda for the following meeting. Craig stated he is likely unavailable for the next meeting. Tom asked if the Selectmen should be bonded. Craig stated he is not sure, but they don't have the authority to write the checks; they are just authorizing them. Bob recommended reaching out to NHMA for guidance on who should be bonded.

Special Events Permit Approval: Larry motioned to approve the special events permit for the Rindge Memorial Day Parade on May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2026, sponsored by the Rindge Veterans Association and the Rindge Chamber of Commerce. Seconded by Bob, it passed 3-0.

Set-up for the parade starts at 1:00 p.m., and the parade will be from 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. The following roads will be blocked off to through traffic for the duration of the event: Main Street, Payson Hill Road, School Street (after RMS), Todd Hill Road, and Goddard Road. Larry spoke with Lynda Hunt and made sure that they would have manned barricades at all the road closures due to the issues that arose last year. He also requested moving the barricade closer to the Library because they had cars coming through on Lord Brook Road. Craig explained that they are aware of the failures in road closures last year, and they are working with Fire Chief Bob Faas. Bob requested a list of volunteers for the people manning the road barricades.

Change in Work Week Structure for Full-Time Firefighter/EMTs: Max explained that the current structure for full-time is a 43-hour work week for the Fire Department, and all other Departments have 40-hour work weeks. From his research, it was switched to this structure in the late 90's to the early 2000's, and he could not find a reason why this was implemented. He would like to return to a 40-hour work week for the full-time fire department for uniformity to avoid labor complaints and disputes. Fire Chief Bob Faas agrees and thought it was a good idea to shift the two firefighters/EMTs to a 40-hour work week. Those two positions will not accrue additional overtime to get them back to 43 hours. The 3 hours that are encompassed in their training hours will be incorporated into the 40 hours. Bob asked if it was a town policy. Max answered that it was not, and there was nothing in the Fire Department policies either. The board agreed to the shift back to the 40-hour work week and asked Max to communicate that with Bob.

**Any Other Official Business:**

Friends of Rindge Initiative: Larry stated that Anne Reed and Richard Synnot formed a non-profit organization called Friends of Rindge Initiative. The purpose of the organization is to find grant money for the Rindge Recreation Department.

It is not connected to the Town of Rindge, but they are looking for a letter from the Board supporting it. They are requesting up to \$50,000 from T-Mobile to add a toddler slide and swing set to Tetrault Park because it currently lacks age-appropriate equipment for toddlers and young children. It is their first shovel-ready project and needs to be completed within 12 months of receiving the grant. The deadline for submission is Friday, March 27th. They are looking for support, not approval. Max has a letter drafted on Town letterhead.

Larry stated that when serving on the Recreation Committee last year, one of his concerns was where funds come from for maintenance of Tetrault Park because the Townspeople did not vote on the structure that was put in place. The Friends of Rindge agreed that they would maintain this in perpetuity and would sign an MOU if need be. Larry stated that he is in support of it and is willing to send a letter. Bob agreed that he is for it and requested a simple MOU regarding maintenance. Larry agreed to request it. Tom stated that it builds community, so he thinks they should support the effort. Tom motioned to sign a letter in support. Larry seconded the motion; it passed 3-0.

Ambulance Committee: Max asked for a timeline for a plan or decision from the ambulance committee because their first meeting is tomorrow. Larry stated that he would like to see a plan in place by July, if possible, so they are prepared. Max stated that the plan is to provide a report to the board during meetings when decision points are made or information is uncovered. Larry asked for clarification that it would be a contingency plan moving forward. For example, JRMA going out of business, or if the Board decides not to go with them at the end of the year. Max explained that it would lay out multiple options for the Town, from what they will decide for next year to a multi-year plan. Bob stated that they want to have plans A through C, to be prepared. The committee consists of Fire Chief Bob Faas, Deputy Fire Chief Andy Leger, Deputy EMS Chief Brittney Fahey, Rindge Resident Deb Douglas, Budget Advisory Committee member Dan Whitney, and Town Administrator Max Vandervliet.

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Victoria Stenersen*

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Executive Secretary