

SPECIAL ROXBURY SELECTBOARD MEETING
MINUTES OF MAY 26, 2025
6:02PM – 8:53PM
COMMUNITY HALL

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Rene Bouchard, Vice-Chair Jeremy Reed, Nate Donahue, Donna French and Road Commissioner Tim Martin

STAFF: None

PUBLIC: Steve Joslyn, Judy Lusk, Tom Frazier, Ed Carney, Bob Ketchel, Jim Rogler, Liva Coe, Rich Smith, Jane Pincus, Susan D'Amico, Elizabeth Carney, Claire Chomentowski, Ben Pincus, Carol Randall, John Wardle, Martha Mahan, Carol Edwards, Dotti Guiffre, Don Randall, Misse Axelrod, Carlos Montero, Arthur Smith, Donna Gerdes, Eric Wardle, Nancy Wardle, Annette Smith, Casimir Vaicaitis, Sharon Harzenski, Mike Dickinson, Amy Barrett and Glenn Howland

Called to order at 6:02pm

Public:

Steve Joslyn expressed concern about losing Loren and giving him and Andrew a 6 and 5 dollar raise respectively.

Judy Lusk clarified that Loren has not accepted a position in Braintree, and that he is interviewing in Braintree and Berlin. She stated that Loren would stay if he got a raise and got a third crew member. She spoke in favor of a 3rd crew member.

Tom Frazier spoke to Loren and thinks that the board needs to support Loren. He was concerned that Loren was being micro-managed.

Ed Carney spoke in support of Loren and Andrew and felt that they were underpaid.

Bob Ketchel is distressed that the board has not done more to keep Loren. Also, he thought that the sign on Warren Mountain was a mistake and thought it was a problem.

Jim Rogler spoke in favor of keeping Loren but acknowledged Loren has been unhappy in the past.

Liva Coe expressed gratitude for the work that the road crew does and thought it was worth trying to keep Loren on.

Rich Smith thought that mowing was important and supported the road crew.

Jane Pincus spoke in favor of Loren. She was appreciative of the work that the road crew does.

Susan D'Amico reminisced about her time as Road Commissioner and was appreciative of the work that the crew does and thankful for their work.

Elizabeth Carney looked at the 2021 Town plan and noted the necessity of maintenance of town roads, and compliance with clean water principles.

Claire Chomentowski spoke in favor of Loren and highlighted the broad support that Loren has.

Ben Pincus highlighted uncertainty with regard to significant storm events, Emerald Ash Borer and the risk to our roads and the value of the Town road crew. He noted that Loren was not a good advocate for himself and thought that the Town's people is his Union. He thought that Loren should be paid more.

Carol Randall thought that we were putting all our eggs in one basket and felt that there was too much fear mongering.

John Wardle noted that the roads were significantly worse in the 80's and was confident that mobility is more predictable today. He thought that Loren is the best Road Foreman in the State.

Martha Mahan suggested that we compare Roxbury and Northfield roads and attributed that to Loren.

Carol Edwards said Loren had told her that when we had a 3rd person it was tough to find work for him.

Dotti Guiffre thought that with Loren was a known entity and certainty.

Misse Axelrod shared gratitude for Loren and the board, but also cautioned about putting all of our eggs in one basket. She supported paying folks enough.

Don Randall thought that nobody was irreplaceable, people come and go and that this was a skill set that could be found. Also cautioned about trying to buy him to stay.

Ben Pincus spoke to the idea that Loren thought that the board was just trying to save money and did not feel comfortable asking for more money.

Tom Frazier spoke about the history of the Road Foreman was one of ascension in Roxbury. The loss of experience is invaluable and that we would not be able to replace.

Jim Rogler wondered what the tone of the meeting on Thursday was.

Nate Donahue mentioned that he had spoken to Loren on Thursday. And about a month ago he bumped into Loren and Loren mentioned that he was looking to go elsewhere. He pointed out that communication is clearly lacking.

Donna French noted that she has had no communication with Loren and has seen him hundreds of times but he has made zero contact.

Carlos Montero thought that the Selectboard was not functioning because the Selectboard was not informed and functioning as a unit.

Rene Bouchard noted how much time Selectboard members put into this role and there is a lot of communication between the Board.

Jeremy Reed spoke about the need for communication and the tone of the meeting was positive and was surprised that the resignation came in when it did.

Rene Bouchard spoke about the culvert on Warren Mountain Road and need to investigate the actual condition.

Arthur Smith raised the prospect that Loren is a Whistleblower and suggested that the Board is retaliating against him. He warned the Board against future litigation.

Nate Donahue spoke about his support for the safety of the vehicles.

Rene Bouchard spoke about the perceived lack of service from Allegiance and the Boards attempt to work through those issues by hiring Walter and the difficulty of getting keys to the Town Garage.

Dotti Guiffre noted that the Board has not solved the problem.

Susan D'Amico noted that Loren was concerned about the culvert and felt the Board did not have the same level of concern. She also cautioned about micro-managing.

Donna Gerdes thought that we had a new Road Commissioner that was asking questions to learn and was not micro-managing.

Rene Bouchard spoke about the cost of a 3rd crew member and the need to plan the work when you have only 2 crew members.

Judy Lusk spoke to Loren about the 3rd person and the benefits of getting a single guy without a family because they are more stable.

Arthur Smith suggested an HR process so that the Communication can improve. He suggested a grievance policy.

Martha Mahan said it seems clear that there is an issue and the Board needs to address Loren as a body and not individually.

Carol Randall thought that Loren owned some responsibility and should have come to the board.

Ben Pincus thought that we are all part of the problem and thanked Tim and Jeremy for the conversation. Ben thinks that communication needs to be improved.

Tom Frazier suggested that putting Loren in front of the Board would be considered confrontational, perhaps the use of a mediator.

Jeremy Reed said he agreed with the notion.

Eric Wardle suggested that Loren might just have a problem with Tim and that a new Road Commissioner might be a solution.

Ben Pincus suggested that Andrew could be trained to use the computer and be groomed to eventually become the Road Foreman.

Donna Gerdes suggested that you don't always like your leadership and you can either adapt or move on.

Employee Resignation and Job Search Posting:

Jeremy moved to go into executive session to discuss Item number 3 (Employee Resignation and Job Search Posting)/ Nate seconded. The Board went into Executive Session at 7:45 pm.

The Board came out of Executive Session at 8:46 PM.

Jeremy moved and Donna Seconded:

To invite Loren Bent to meet with the Selectboard accompanied by an advocate of his choosing, to discuss the possibility of him continuing to work for the Town in the capacity of Town Road Foreman. The purpose of the meeting will be to clarify and document Roles and Responsibilities for the Selectboard, Town Road Foreman, Town Road Commissioner. Any additional work conditions can be entertained in which Loren would like to discuss.

Passed 5-0-0

Tabor Earth Letter and Proposal:

The Board received a quote from Tabor Earth Extractors for road sand for \$15.50 delivered.

Nate moved to accept the quote. Tim seconded.

Passed 5-0-0

Meeting adjourned at 8:53 pm

Jeremy Reed, Acting Clerk

Approved on June 2, 2025