



[Rowe Special Town Meeting to address police details, audit costs and sustainability study](#)

By Madison Schofield, Staff Writer, The Greenfield Recorder Published: 10-15-2025

ROWE — Special Town Meeting voters will be asked to weigh in on appropriating \$15,000 to cover police details, \$62,370 to hire an auditor to balance the town's books for fiscal year 2025 and to cover the costs of unbalanced books for FY24, and \$9,950 to join a school sustainability study with the Mohawk Trail and Hawlemont Regional school districts.

The meeting will commence on Monday, Oct. 27, at 6 p.m. at Rowe Elementary School, 86 Pond Road. Voters will be asked to consider seven warrant articles.

Police details

With Article 6, the town is asking residents to appropriate \$15,000 to create a Police Detail Agency Fund. Similar to a revolving fund, the account would be used to expediently pay police officers for details they work while the town waits for the utility company, or whoever else requested the police detail, to pay the invoice.

Finance Committee Chair Dan Pallotta said the article is likely to spark debate among voters who think the utility companies should pay in advance of the details.

"I'm really not happy about doing this," he said, "but I get what they're trying to do here."

Pallotta explained it is already the Police Department's policy that details in Rowe need to be paid for in advance, but if officers work a detail in another town, payment gets complicated. For example, when officers work details in Charlemont, which does not require utility or construction companies to pay for details in advance, they have to wait for Charlemont to get paid by the company, and then Charlemont can pass along the funding to Rowe so it can pay its officers, resulting in delays.

Town Accountant Angela Garrity said that creating a Police Detail Agency Fund will allow the officers to be paid in a timely manner while the town waits for money from Charlemont, or any other town a Rowe officer may work a detail for.

She added if the Police Department "keeps on top of [its] billing, it shouldn't be a problem," and the town should not have to appropriate money to the fund each year.

School sustainability study

Article 5 asks voters to spend \$9,950 to conduct the initial analysis of Rowe Elementary's previous and current conditions, and model future conditions to potentially join the Mohawk Trail and Hawlemont Regional school districts' [sustainability study](#).

The Two Districts, Eight Towns Sustainability Steering Committee voted last spring to proceed with exploring an aspirational goal of creating a single-campus district where all students, from kindergarten through grade 12, would learn. The committee and education consultant BERK-12

are working to further study the specific details of what a consolidated district would look like, and more specifically, what it would cost.

Facing similar questions and concerns about rising costs and the sustainability of small rural schools, the Rowe School Committee wishes to join the Mohawk Trail and Hawlemont Regional school districts in their explorations.

“We’re feeling, as a School Committee, we should go ahead with the study,” Rowe School Committee Chair Susan Zavotka said previously.

If voters agree to spend the \$9,950, BERK-12 will conduct an initial study, and do public outreach and presentations, allowing the town to conduct a straw poll on whether it wants to proceed with joining the Mohawk Trail and Hawlemont districts in discussions on creating a new regional agreement and consolidating the schools.

Accounting

With Articles 3 and 4, residents will be asked to address the [results of an audit of the town’s finances for fiscal year 2024.](#)

One of the recommendations coming from the audit was that the town should hire an outside accountant to review and balance the books for FY25, allowing the accountant and treasurer to move forward with a clean slate for FY26. Article 3 asks voters to approve \$30,000 to hire this accountant.

If approved, Article 4 would appropriate the \$32,370 the audit found was unaccounted for and balance the books for FY24.

Pallotta said the town could include the \$32,370 on the recap sheet, which is a comprehensive document that details a municipality’s entire budget plan for the fiscal year and is required by the state as part of the process to set the tax rate, or put the expense forward to voters. Both options will have the same impact on the tax rate, but Pallotta said bringing the vote to Town Meeting ensures the town is “open and transparent” with voters.

Other articles include:

- Article 7: Updating the Historical Commission bylaw to define the commission’s roles and duties.
- Article 1: Purchasing \$25,000 worth of turnout gear for three Rowe Fire Department members.
- Article 2: Spending \$10,000 to treat a beetle infestation at the Browning Bench Tool Factory.

All articles were recommended by the Selectboard and Finance Committee. The full warrant will be posted at Town Hall, 321 Zoar Road.

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