

**PUBLIC WORKS SUBCOMMITTEE
of the
WATERTOWN TOWN COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
Monday, February 27, 2023**

A Special Meeting of the Public Works Subcommittee of the Watertown Town Council was conducted on Monday, February 27, 2023, at the Watertown Town Hall in the Town Council Chambers, 61 Echo Lake Road, Watertown, CT.

1. Call Meeting to Order

Meeting called to Order at 6:00 P.M. by Subcommittee Chairman Ken Demirs.

2. Roll Call

Present: Robert Desena, Ken Demirs, Rachael Ryan, Gary Lafferty

Also Present: Mark Raimo, Town Manager; Jerry Lukowski, Director of Public Works; Paul Bunevich, PE, Town Engineer; Joseph Millette, Assistant Town Engineer; Robert Grandpre, Highway Superintendent; Danielle Greenier, Administrative Assistant

Absent: Robert Retallick

3. Minutes

Robert Desena made a motion to accept the minutes of the December 12, 2022 Regular Meeting. Rachael Ryan seconded the motion, with the correction of the spelling of her first name. By voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

4. Public Participation

None

5. Correspondence

A. 30 Bussemey Drainage Issue

Mr. Lukowski stated drainage issue with Turkey Brook on private property. Issue is with retaining wall that collapsed in September of 2021, storm Ida. Department cleaned up, resident had expectation that would be repaired and is unhappy with response.

B. PFOS & PFAS

Mr. Lukowski explained chemicals are Perfluorooctanesulfonic and Perfluorooctanoic acid. Have multiple uses. 1000's of uses. Found in saran wrap, A triple F, firefighting foam. Issue is "forever chemical." Department contacted to check landfill to see if found there. Problem is across the country. May need to test water.

6. Old Business

A. Project Updates:

I. Hungerford Avenue Reconstruction

Mr. Grandpre, Mr. Millette and Mr. Bunevich spoke. Will get back to digging if stays warm. Call-before-you-dig renewed and due back next week. Test pits will be made to find water mains. Mr. Millette stated need to go out to bid with Falls Ave side before mill and pave.

B. Turkey Brook

Mr. Lukowski stated Highway to get back to finish clearing debris and vegetation. Many detention basins feed into Turkey Brook; about a third of the detention basins in town. There are 14 private detention basins. Worked with Planning and Zoning to notify residents of private basins to clean them.

Mr. Grandpre stated Turkey Brook cleaned out up to Senior Center. Waiting for permission from resident off Sunnyside to access property to continue from Senior Center to Sunnyside Avenue. Cleaning detention basins will help with drainage issues into Turkey Brook.

Mr. Lukowski will confirm with Planning and Zoning that letters went out to have residents clean private detention basins. Unknown if ever received letters previously, no timeframe placed on initial letter.

Mild weather did not allow additional detention basin work due to inadequate frost levels. Mr. Lukowski stated equipment would sink in muck, hard to work in.

C. Crestbrook Park Walkway

Mr. Grandpre stated walkway stabilized for winter, will need to return to plant grass. Rain washed away some millings, will touch up and place more millings and compact after winter. Solar lights are done. Recycled light posts from Police Department were used, new solar lights.

D. Pavement Management Analysis – BETA

Mr. Lukowski stated study showed \$45 million would be need to bring roads to 100%. Received \$5 million bond, \$1.5 million in ARPA funds. Total \$6.5 million. Current Road Surface Rating (RSR) is 61. State average is 72. RSR was completed using Lidar (light radar) technology. Goal is 72.

After \$6.5 million is spent, RSR will be 65. Will lose 1-3 points per year. To get to 72 in five years, cost would be \$5.5 million per year. To reach 71 in 10 years, \$3.8 million per year needed. Will know more after \$6.5 million spent.

Full depth - \$28.3 million; mill/overlay - \$12.3 million; chip seal - \$4.7 million. Full depth and mill/overlay are capital fixes – using bond money. Chip seal will use ARPA funds.

Will start with 50% (\$3.2 million) for full depth; 28% (\$1.8 million) for mill/overlay; 18% (\$1.2 million) for chip seal; 2% (\$150,000.00) for crack seal; 2% (\$150,000.00) for structures.

Full depth will be 4 miles of road; mill/overlay will be 6 miles of road; chip seal will be 8 miles of road; crack seal will be 9 miles of road. Total is 27.55 miles (20% of road network).

Due to debt ceiling, \$5 million bond cannot be used all at once. Will be broken down in three years (\$1 million in 2023; \$1.6 million in 2024; \$2.4 million in 2025).

Full depth and mill/overlay will go out to bid. Chip seal, will request bid waiver to use Fairfield Contract for Seymour Seal Coating. Crack seal and structures will use Department of Administrative Services (DAS) Contract – State Bids previously approved by Town Council.

Watertown is at end of effective serve life for road conditions and loss of public acceptance. Maintenance is approximately 1/10 the cost for crack seal, chip stone instead of full depth and mill/overlay. Cannot wait for roads to fail, 10 times the cost to fix.

Map presentation of roads to be addressed first. Map inaccurate, will provide updated map at a later date. Roads picked by BETA Group to provide geographic spread of the worst roads in each of the four categories. Will advertise to public on website and notifications. Roads selected need to be broken up in three year timeframe.

Motion made by Robert Desena to use the Fairfield Contract for Chip Seal. Seconded by Gary Lafferty. By voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

7. New Business

A. Gorham Street Drainage

Mr. Grandpre stated due to lack of snow and frost, allowed to get to drainage issues on Gorham and Belden Streets. Gorham, paper road caused icing on road, required daily sanding. 12 inch perforated pipe and stone installed. Catch basin added at Gorham and Portland Street. Will return to fix two driveway aprons in spring with hot asphalt.

B. Belden Street Drainage

Sharp turn to left at about 200-250 feet. Water running across and causing icing at corner. Installed perforated pipe and a catch basin.

C. Buckingham Street @ Echo Lake Road Trimming

Mr. Grandpre stated brush and dead trees are being cleared at intersection of Buckingham Street and Echo Lake Road. Will make area more pleasing to look at coming into town. Working a little at a time between other jobs. Will pull out cow

fence and guide rails, cut trees. Spoils from Gorham Street to be used as fill. Will look like park, possibly add park benches and small parking area.

D. Animal Control Parking Lot and Firing Range

Mr. Grandpre stated that a new parking lot before building, to the left. Cut trees down, used old railroad ties as bollards. New gate installed at top of hill wide enough for plows to get through, can be locked to keep public out.

Firing range moved up into woods to the right, away from the Animal Control Building. New backstop created using existing materials from landfill along with wood chips, logs, and fill. Firing range was moved 150-200 yards from where it was and is used often, only by police officers.

E. Fiscal Year 2024 Budget

There are 136 line items in the Public Works budget. Several hidden line items with no budget. Mr. Lukowski stated possibly lessening the number of line items in the future.

Public Works Engineering/Admin Budget personnel increases due to union contract. No other major changes. GIS was cut in half, may be an issue due to speaking with firms to better GIS system.

Public Works Highway budget has been flat for past 5-10 years. Took cut every year due to raises and cut 2.5% - 3% from other budget items. 60 line items, many with similar names. Request for additional foreman, for a total of three to have three teams working with the total of 21 employees in Highway. Can have 4-7 person team depending on job. Would not hire additional full time employees, would restructure current workers. Additional mechanic requested, total of three mechanics. Will maintain all town vehicles, minus Police Department and Fire Department. Addition of MEO Clerk to be on the road, help with administrative burden. One of the lowest in region for overtime at \$50,000.00, increase to \$65,000.00. Rental equipment increase from \$10,000.00 to \$15,000.00 for equipment to increase efficiency. Two new trucks requested to replace T-11 (2007) and T-18 (2011). Emissions issues were found with these, always in shop for repairs. Will not hold onto old trucks, trade in to get money back. New vehicles would be lease-to-own. Vehicle payments in budget are lease payments. Tool allowance increased for additional tools for new mechanic and changes in technology. Asphalt for roads increased to patch/repair roads. Signs and rails increased for signs and guide rails in need of replacement and repair.

Public Works Snow budget sand and salt line increased from \$200,000.00 to \$240,000.00 due to an increase in salt to be used, less sand. Weather service went from \$2,000.00 to \$4,900.00. Not enough to cover billing in previous fiscal year's budget.

Public Works Solid Waste budget line item environmental remediation was cut from \$21,500.00 to \$11,500.00. Used to pay for maintenance and testing of residential wells near transfer station. Cut DEEP order line item, unknown what line item for. In future, Mr. Lukowski wants to get rid of old railroad ties and purchase compactor to replace current one that has to move with truck, possibly compost kitchen waste.

Street lighting increased 18% from \$169,125.00 to \$200,600.00 which is the standard increase purchasing department is using.

Tree removal increase from \$33,000.00 to \$50,000.00 for line item for regular tree removal/maintenance. Use contractors for most tree work, no aerial truck. Possibly have truck in future. Can ask Middlebury to use tree truck.

In need of indoor winter storage for vac truck. Looking for new Highway garage. Current garage built in 1950's when town was ½ road miles. Need indoor storage for 16 trucks during snow storms, is tight fit and no fire suppression system. Very limited yard space to move vehicles around. Do not have lift for vehicle maintenance and repairs. Not enough height to install one. Cannot wash vehicles in winter, no indoor wash bay.

8. Transfers and Appropriations

A. SLR Appropriation for RSA Traffic Study Remaining Billing; \$8,550.00

Motion made by Robert Desena to make the appropriation to SLR. Seconded by Gary Lafferty. By voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

B. Dayton Construction Appropriation for Woolson Street Bridge; \$400,000.00

Appropriation may be needed to fund the beginning of the Woolson Street Bridge project while awaiting funding from state. Would allow to award bid, cut the purchase order, and begin project. Will be reimbursed by state.

9. Adjournment

Rachael Ryan made a motion to adjourn. Gary Lafferty seconded the motion. By voice vote, the motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:49 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ken Demirs, Chairperson

Jerry Lukowski, Director of Public Works