

**PUBLIC WORKS SUBCOMMITTEE  
of the  
WATERTOWN TOWN COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
Monday, March 13, 2023**

A Regular Meeting of the Public Works Subcommittee of the Watertown Town Council was conducted on Monday, March 13, 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, Robert Retallick, Gary Lafferty

**Also Present:** Mark Raimo, Town Manager; Jerry Lukowski, Director of Public Works; Robert Grandpre, Highway Superintendent; Danielle Greenier, Administrative Assistant

**Absent:** Rachael Ryan

**3. Minutes**

Robert Desena made a motion to accept the corrected minutes of the December 12, 2022 Regular Meeting. Gary Lafferty seconded the motion, Robert Retallick abstained. By voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Robert Desena made a motion to accept the minutes of the February 27, 2023 Special Meeting. Gary Lafferty seconded the motion, Robert Retallick abstained. By voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

**4. Public Participation**

None

**5. Correspondence**

**A. "Thank you" letter from Watertown Police Department**

Mr. Lukowski spoke about letter thanking Public Works for assistance during missing person search received by Watertown Police Department. Party was walking streets during snow storm. Highway personnel alerted to watch out for individual. Cooperation appreciated by Police Department, person was found.

**6. Old Business**

**A. Hungerford Avenue Reconstruction**

Mr. Lukowski stated there are twenty catch basins to do with contractor to decrease demand on Highway, Highway to complete 5 catch basins. Working with Engineers to consider decreasing number of catch basins used, put in heavier catch basins at the lower portion of the road. Hungerford Ave is one of the steepest grades in town, looking at cost versus perfect plan, going somewhere in between. Highway did call-before-you-dig and laid out 5-6 catch basins. Water from Hungerford Ave catch basins currently drains to Turkey Brook. Correct crown of road will keep water flow into catch basins instead of going all the way down hill to control water flow.

**B. Pavement Management Program**

Mr. Lukowski stated the chip seal bid waiver was approved by Town Council. If put out to bid, would lose ability to begin in spring, need to wait until late summer or fall for road temperatures to be right, not too hot or too cold.

The cost would be \$45 million for an A rating with the pavement management program. Goal is state average of 72, current score is 61 and would become a 59 if nothing is done. Following year would be 56. Cost is \$5.5 million per year for score of 72 in five years, cost is \$3.8 million per year for score of 72 in \$3.8 million ten years. Lose 2-3% of road life per year. Numbers are estimates, will have better estimates after first five years. Unit costs in BETA study will be updated for accuracy with time. Focus is preservation of good roads during work on worst roads. Working only on worst roads would cause good roads to deteriorate.

50% of funds for full depth – \$3.2 million; 28% for mill/overlay - \$1.8 million; 18% chip seal - \$1.2 million; 2% each for crack seal & structures - \$150,000 each. The backlog for full depth is \$28.31 million; mill/overlay \$12.33million; chip seal \$4.75 million.

Full depth and mill/overlay to be funded with bid/bond money; chip seal will use ARPA funds with a bid waiver; state bid/DAS contract for rest using ARPA funds.

Mr. Lukowski stated current town rating at end of service life/loss of public acceptance. Plan is to get to 20% of road network in three years. Communication to residents will be on Facebook, newspaper, and the Town website. Signs will be placed on streets before work begins.

Chip stone work requires residents to stay under 15mph. Tar can get stuck in tires or brakes over 15mph, rocks come up under wheel wells. Signs will be used to warn drivers.

Mark Raimo, Town Manager spoke to remind of a placeholder on ARPA funds. There are currently quite a few projects. Will ask for appropriation \$1.5 million sidewalks, \$1.5 million for paving, \$1.5 million to purchase property on Main Street for parking, \$1 million for contingencies. Should equal approximate amount from preliminary study of the Road Safety Audit in Oakville which produced conceptual drawing of Downtown Oakville area for improvement of sidewalks. Would like designed and engineered to move ahead. Still in negotiations for property for parking on Main Street. Need to secure place for business to move to purchase property. Asking for appropriation of ARPA funds put as placeholders to move forward with projects and put shovels in the ground. Need to hold a Public Meeting to approve appropriations. Should be read for first or second meeting of April to Town Council. Need to get sidewalk engineered to know how much sidewalk can install. SLR will design sidewalks, also did the road safety audit. Conceptual drawing completed by SLR, done from Davis Street/Riverside Street area to Waterbury line, includes crossover at pin shop with murals. Preliminaries with Engineering; can get a good portion done. Start Waterbury line and work way in.

**C. Buckingham Street @ Echo Lake Road Trimming**

Seeing improvements each week. Continuing to work an hour or two a day cutting trees, raking, dropping top soil.

**D. Animal Control Parking Lot and Firing Range**

Police Department threw pizza party to thank Highway team. Police Chief talked to crew to thank them.

**E. Fiscal Year 2024 Budget**

Mr. Lukowski presented budget increases for the upcoming fiscal year. Only budget increases over \$2,000 were included. For Engineering, bigger part of increase is 2.25% increase for salaries from contract negotiation. Plotter added, share cost with Planning and Zoning. Have two that don't work. Tried to obtain one from East Hampton for free, but did not work when brought down to office. Other Departments, such as P&Z (Planning and Zoning), use the plotter as well.

Highway budget has remained unchanged for past 7 years highway at around \$2.25 million. Personnel cost increases with contractual increases, oil prices go up, and budget does not increase. Included is an added foreman, totaling three

foreman to create three working crews. Included a third mechanic (adding a second mechanic with current mechanic and supervisor). Mechanic crew to take care of all vehicles in town, minus Police Department, Board of Education, or Fire Department. Fire Department has specialized vehicles, and Highway garage does not have lift or appropriate facility to facilitate the needs of all, improper ceiling height for a lift. Currently use jack stand to lift vehicles, which is inefficient. Individual departments to pay parts for repairs.

Bob Grandpre, Highway Superintendent, stated that records are kept for Highway Department trucks. Mileage is tracked for oil changes and service records are maintained to track which vehicles are incurring costly repairs.

Mr. Raimo stated Town has Excel spreadsheet program to document vehicles. Tracking was being done by hand, but changing to electronic for efficiency and accuracy. Will make decision making easier in future.

Mr. Lukowski continued Department is requesting an additional MEO to go with third foreman. Department requesting increase for rental equipment, for specialized equipment needed. In need of equipment to clean detention basins. Another increase is for asphalt, need to maintain other 80% of roads not being fixed with bonding or ARPA funds. Looking to lease-to-own two new trucks. Pay over five years. 10 wheel plow and 6 wheel plow. New trucks to replace Truck 11, which has 6200 hours and Truck 18, which has over 10,000 hours. Both have average use, but have gone through DEF and emissions problems with costly repairs. Not planning to keep as spares, would trade in. New vehicles would decrease vehicle maintenance cost. Trucks require a CDL to drive.

Department is asking to increase amount in construction equipment line, used for bigger equipment purchasing. Mr. Grandpre stated goal of fund to replace Gradall (\$1/2million to replace and is primary excavator). Build up to replace due to being expensive at approximately \$210,000.00 - \$330,000.00. Line item was cut first year, which is cause for the shown increase.

Mr. Lukowski spoke about the goal of Highway Department will be to get away from some construction, have workers perform more maintenance. Will contract out more of the construction, instead of Highway workers doing majority of it. To be decided for each job, each job is different.

Asking for increase in Vehicle Rehab of \$29,000.00 to rehabilitate best of the oldest trucks. Considering older International trucks, they have good chassis.

Updates to be done to hydraulics. Truck 15 is last truck without DEF. New spreader system would make truck more efficient, waste less salt. Salt is expensive. Would cost \$150,000.00 to rehab, would invest in over time.

Cost of electricity has increased. Department asking for additional money for cost of street lights. Would like to change all street lights to LED over time to save money. Asking for additional money for tree removal. Tree truck would be \$250,000.00. Contractor cuts down trees, Highway Department picks them up.

## **7. New Business**

### **A. Woolson Street Bridge Project**

Dayton Construction was the low bidder at \$1.9 million. Funds from the state will be at a 50/50 match. Will be about eight weeks until state funds received but want to start now, as to not delay construction. Town will get \$1.2 million back. Department is asking for Town Council to approve appropriation \$418,586.00 to award contract and pay \$20,000.00 for tree work while awaiting state funds. Cost for tree work is about \$17,000.00, allowed a little extra. A large crane to be used to lift over utility line; we haul them away. There will be a town meeting for approval of appropriation. Age of bridge unknown, unknown when built. Looking at third or fourth week of March for tree work to take place. Original project was talked about in 2014-2015 and was to begin in 2019. Guernseytown Rd project to begin behind it. Cost of \$20,000.00 includes crane cost of \$4,000.00-\$5,000.00 per day. There are many utilities in area – water, electric, gas. Will use local contractors, Good Old Boys, for trees.

### **B. New Tree Work – Ash Tree Program/Dead Tree Removal**

Mr. Lukowski stated department has had 89 trees across town removed, 80 additional trees to be removed. Using contractor, Good Old Boys. Highway brings wood to Transfer Station, and tub grinder is used to cut it up. Chips are reused (ie. for firing range). Wood could be used for firewood by residents, but issues with liability.

### **C. Master Project List**

Mr. Lukowski spoke of the following projects are to begin:

- Pavement Management
- Hungerford Avenue
- Woolson Street Bridge
- Guernseytown Rd Construction
- Americans with Disabilities Act Project

170 locations to receive concrete ramps.

- Steele Brook Greenway – French Street to Main Street  
Negotiated hours with Architect and Engineer Consultant to come up with final price.
- Main Street Improvements: three projects with DOT:  
lights/sidewalks/rotating flashing beacons, parking lot, Hemingway Park Road
- Department working on Community Connectivity Grant, due July 21, 2023. Money will be used to move wall back by St John's. Were originally going to use ARPA funds.
- Trees
- Naugatuck Valley Greenway
- Work Orders
- TAB  
Mr. Lukowski spoke about Technical Assistance from Brownfields (TAB) – UCONN Student (1 of 4-5 towns to be a part of it). Town will receive list of all Brownfields in town, which is key to getting funding in future.
- Emergency Management Table Top (DPW drill/exercise). Plan for storm management and documentation for getting FEMA money.
- Highway Garage locations  
Mr. Lukowski spoke for need of new Highway Garage
- Oak Drive  
Some sanitary sewer went in.
- Engineering Internship  
Looking for interns for Engineering and Water and Sewer to help with lead and copper rule.
- Outstanding invoices  
Department does not have a lot of outstanding invoices at this time.
- MS4 Submission  
Is advertised on website.
- Sprucewood Road Drainage Project  
To go out to bid in next couple days.
- Knight Street  
Looks like will receive \$20,000.00 - \$30,000.00 for culvert replacement through FEMA. Partial money is due to lack of documentation. Looking to improve process.
- Ice House culvert
- Detention basin cleaning  
Three to five year task.

- Town dams  
There are four dams in town.
- VW application for Electric Vehicle charging stations

#### **8. Transfers and Appropriations**

None

#### **9. Adjournment**

Robert Retallick made a motion to adjourn. Gary Lafferty seconded the motion. By voice vote, the motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:38 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Ken Demirs, Chairperson

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Jerry Lukowski, Director of Public Works