

**PUBLIC WORKS SUBCOMMITTEE
of the
WATERTOWN TOWN COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
Monday, January 8, 2024**

A Special Meeting of the Public Works Subcommittee of the Watertown Town Council was conducted on Monday, January 8, 2024, 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 Chairperson, Robert Retallick.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Roll Call

Present: Robert Retallick, Robert Desena, Ken Demirs, Rachael Ryan, Gary Lafferty (arrived at 6:15PM)

Also Present: Jerry Lukowski, Director of Public Works; Paul Bunevich PE, Town Engineer; Bob Grandpre, Highway Superintendent; Danielle Greenier, MEO Clerk

4. Public Participation

Mr. Elio Longo of 83 Bella Vista Drive spoke about concrete culvert pipe running under driveway. Provided photos to attendees of his and neighboring driveways showing bump in driveway where culvert pipe runs underneath. Resident concerned over safety due to affect on snow and ice removal efforts. Mr. Longo stated that neighbor at 88 Bella Vista worked for town in October, 2020 and had driveway fixed at that time, provided photo of remedied driveway. Employee no longer works for town. Was advised by previous Director of Public Works, that pipe is in Town's right-of-way. Mr. Longo suggests should be town that fixes issue. Mr. Longo will send communications he has had to Mr. Lukowski to forward to the Public Works Subcommittee.

5. Minutes

A. Approval of September 11, 2023, Corrected Meeting Minutes

Robert Desena made a motion to accept the minutes of the September 11, 2023 Corrected Regular Meeting, seconded by Rachael Ryan. By voice vote, the motion passed, Ken Demirs abstained.

B. Approval of October 10 2023, Regular Meeting Minutes

Robert Desena made a motion to accept the minutes of the October 10, 2023 Regular Meeting, seconded by Rachael Ryan. By voice vote, the motion passed, Ken Demirs abstained.

C. Correspondence

None

D. Old Business

A. Hungerford Avenue Reconstruction

Drainage and base coat is in. Catch basins are raised to allow final coat of asphalt. Drainage is working well.

B. Pavement Management Program

Initial rating was 61, current rating is 63.25. Rating went up 2.5 points this paving season, did not lose any points. Would take \$45 million to get a score of 100. Goal is to get to 72, which is state average. Asking for \$2.5 million left in bonding to be released earlier than anticipated July 1 timeframe to avoid paving in colder months. \$4 million total used for paving, \$1.5 million was ARPA.

C. Woolson Street Bridge Project

Bridge is open to traffic, base coat is in. In spring, will complete sidewalks, final coat asphalt, driveway aprons. Three stop signs added to intersection to slow traffic. Will speak with Police Commission to possibly have stop signs become permanent.

D. Guernseytown Bid Project

Department gave the approval for contractor to continue working. Work is anticipated to be completed by next fall. Project is 100% state funded to fix sightline, especially for West Road. Drinking water pipes were installed. There will be a four-week shut down for hydrodynamic gross particle separator. Residents will be able to access homes, but no through traffic.

E. Main Street – Tighe & Bond

Designer for Main Street was chosen. Choices were Weston & Sampson and Tighe & Bond. Tighe & Bond was selected, company was a step above in experience and presentation.

F. Sidewalks/Trip Hazard Abatement

474 trip hazards were abated. One half inch was shaved off trip hazards. Every qualified hazard was addressed.

G. Steele Brook Greenway – Under Design

Greenway is under design. Town had a public hearing. Monthly meeting is tomorrow. First request for reimbursement of funds was submitted, second one needs to be submitted.

H. Community Connectivity Grant – Deferred

60-70 applications were received, 18 were awarded. Watertown was 19 or 20 on the list of applicants. Funding is expected to be released in about 9 months. Will not accept new applications, will use the ones already received. Preliminary design can begin with 35% town funds. One drawback to application submitted was that town did not have completed design.

E. New Business

Mr. Lukowski began by thanking the team for their hard work and announcing the transfer of Danielle Greenier from Public Works Administrative Assistant to the Highway Department as MEO Clerk.

A. Approval of 2024 Meeting Schedule

Robert Desena made a motion to accept the Public Work Subcommittee Regular Meeting Schedule for 2024. Seconded by Rachael Ryan, by voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

B. Budget Fiscal Year 2025

Slideshow of videos showing various brooks and drainage issues was presented. A PowerPoint presentation titled "Budget 2024/2025 DPW – Watertown was shown. More budget details will be presented at February 2024 meeting. Public Works has most service requests in new system. Concern that there will be a lot more service requests once public can put them in. Foremen, vac truck, and pot hole team need tablets to be able to close requests as work is complete.

In 1984, Public Works budget was 5.7% of the town budget and there were 32 full time employees in Highway. Currently, Highway has 21 full-time employees and Public Works is 3.7% of the budget. Highway Department is designed for winter, not for summer. Used to have two employees per truck, now one. Department needs more workers to work on the infrastructure. Highway employees do not take vacations in winter due to inadequate coverage. If Department does not get more employees, expectation management should be considered, can't get everything done.

Pavement management study showed town needs \$45 million to fix all roads. In 10 years, it would take \$3.8 million a year, for 5 years, it would take \$5.5 million a year. Public Works is asking for \$5 million bond every other year. Currently have \$4 million in "Haves," \$41 million in "Have Not's."

Highway Department used more tonnage than contractors this paving season. Highway used 7,950, contractors used 7,662 with a total of 15,612. Asphalt is around \$100 a ton.

Average rainfall for past 7 years was 49 inches, 2022 town received 46 inches, 2023 received 69 inches.

Watertown is known for drainage issues. Department has created five year plan. Total needed for work is \$45 million, suggests to begin with \$250,000 a year to fix worst and easiest first. Also looking to acquire state and federal grants.

C. Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

Booklet of projects was created by Public Works, presented at meeting.

D. BETA Sidewalk Study

Study of sidewalks in town was done, similar to road study in order to find the areas of sidewalk that need repairs. Town has 33 miles of sidewalks. 24 miles are

concrete, nine miles are asphalt. Would need \$6.3 million to fix all issues. Public Works will meet with contractor in a day or two to understand product.

9. Transfers and Appropriations

A. Neal Tree Service Invoices – Received Paperwork

Subcommittee requests copies of paperwork submitted, along with purchase orders, to make decision on what to pay.

10. Adjournment

Ken Demirs seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 7:42 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Robert Retallick, Chairperson

Jerry Lukowski, Director of Public Works