

# Approved

## Town of New Boston Road Committee Meeting December 9, 2020

<b><u>PRESENT:</u></b>	Karen Scott	Selectman
	Mark Suennen	Road Committee
	Mark Siemiesz	Road Committee
	Rodney Towne	Road Committee
	Denis Pinard	Road Committee
	George St. John	Road Committee
	Mark Debowski	Road Committee

**A. CALL TO ORDER:** A regular meeting of the Road Committee was called to order by Rodney Towne at 6:00PM.

**Item 1: Approval of Minutes of March 11, 2020 and October 28, 2020:** The Committee reviewed the minutes of March 11, 2020. Denis Pinard moved the minutes of March 11, 2020 be accepted as presented. Mark Siemiesz seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion carried. The Committee reviewed the minutes of October 28, 2020. Mark Debowski moved the minutes of October 28, 2020 be accepted as amended. Mark Siemiesz seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion carried.

**Item 2: Develop Maintenance Lists:** The Committee continued review of the potential maintenance schedule, priorities and tasks as follows:

- Rodney distributed a list he prepared from previous discussions for Committee review. The Committee reviewed it as follows:
  1. Mark Suennen noted resurfacing and mowing may be a task to be done in two seasons, summer and fall. Rodney noted mowing is only done in the fall by contractors. In the past half the town was done each year. He also noted summer may be too hot for resurfacing and it may be better to do in the fall. However, if the engineers in the Committee determine summer is also an appropriate time for resurfacing, that recommendation can be considered. Rodney noted a lot of pavement is done in summer but also gets rutted. The Committee agreed resurfacing should also be done in the summer. Denis noted fall may be too long to wait each year. Rodney noted resurfacing is delayed each year to determine the budget available for the task. Denis noted Byam Road is washing away, pavement is missing, and it needs to be done soon as it will be destroyed by spring. Rodney noted it was improperly built.
  2. Streetsweeping will be added as it is done in the spring. The Committee considered adding streetsweeping at NBCS as a task as the town plows that parking lot.
  3. The Committee decided to pass the revised list on to the Selectmen as their recommendations. Rodney will make the corrections and give it to Karen for this

purpose. The Road Committee is an advisory group to the Selectmen and Road Agent who consider the recommendations and determine what should be done.

- The Committee considered preparing recommendations for the Impact Fee and Ordinance program approved by voters in March 2019 to be used toward roads such as requiring fees when new houses are built. Mark Suennen noted in that case there could be issues if improvements are made just in front of that location causing a waffle pattern up and down the road. There are also restrictions requiring the money collected for a defined purpose related to that project be spent within six years. He noted Impact Fees were addressed at the December 8 Planning Board meeting when Selectman David Litwinovich noted interest in working with the legislature to change the allowance of where Impact Fees can be applied as this is limited at this time. Addressing Impact Fees is a 2021 goal for the Planning Board. No Impact Fees have been collected. Town voters passed a Warrant Article to amend an ordinance to allow Impact Fees in 2019. George noted the town assessed Impact Fees in the past but issues came up with the use and time limit.
- Mark Siemiesz noted some town roads are not very wide and become narrower when the pavement erodes. Rodney noted one issue is NH is very proud of its stone walls on the side of roads, but they sometimes need to be removed to make roads wide enough. Mark Siemiesz noted this task could be done with Impact Fees. Denis noted the Planning Board approves these types of changes as part of subdivisions. Rodney noted the Planning Board should consider road needs when approving subdivisions and the Selectmen/Road Committee/Highway Department can plan road improvements as needed.
- Rodney noted New Boston has a lot of dirt roads and this is expected to continue but they should be built in a manner where they can be maintained and plowed.
- Denis noted there is no set plan for any road in town, maintenance is determined by the budget which includes lines for paving, and other maintenance. He asked if the Committee should request funds be added to the budget for roads. Rodney noted he reviewed the draft 2021 Warrant and noticed it includes an Article to raise and appropriate \$85,000 for road improvements on Meetinghouse Hill Road. This is an annual Article, \$85,000 was designated for Hooper Hill Road in 2020. Mark Suennen noted the request has been \$85,000 per year for specific road projects on the CIP Schedule for the past six years. It is not spent every year but is non-lapsing for a limited amount of time. Denis noted unspent raised funds could be used to properly fix Byam Road. If there is not enough funds budgeted, a temporary fix would have to be done. He noted the town infrastructure/roads are the only way residents can go where they need to go and to leave these raised funds unspent is irresponsible. Rodney noted funds are sometimes planned to be held over a couple years for larger projects. However, there is currently no prioritized list of roads to use the annual \$85,000 for. Mark Suennen noted this Committee should prepare a plan to submit to possibly increase the amount requested in the CIP schedule to be reviewed in 2021.
- Each Committee member was asked to prepare a list of five roads that need the most work. These were reviewed as follows:
  1. Mark Suennen: center of Colburn Road, short section of Scobie Road, Middle Branch Road from Route 77 to Tucker Mill Road, South Hill Road from McCollum Road to Mont Vernon Road, Greenfield Road from Cochran Hill Road to Old Coach Road, Greenfield Road from Cochran Hill Road to Daylily Lane,

sections of Beard Road particularly near the old orchard, Joe English Road past Meadow Road and all of Christie Road.

2. Denis and Mark Debowski: Byam Road, Wilson Hill Road from Bedford Road to Byam Road, Parker Road
  3. Mark Siemiesz: Bedford Road, Meetinghouse Hill Road
  4. Karen: Byam Road, Meetinghouse Hill Road, 2<sup>nd</sup> NH Turnpike. She noticed several roads have shoulders that have eroded causing the pavement to crack and fall in the edges. These are not emergencies at this point but the roads could get worse and wash away. Possibly shoulder maintenance could be added to the maintenance list.
  5. George: Hooper Hill Road, Cemetery Road, Meetinghouse Hill Road, 2<sup>nd</sup> NH Turnpike from town line to Sand Hill Road, Greenfield Road from Cochran Hill Road, Byam Road. He considered roads with the most through traffic and hills that could washout. He noted most tar roads are deteriorating and a solution is needed, whether temporary or more involved.
- Denis noted the town does a very good job planning future purchases of fire trucks and police vehicles and infrastructure items with annual funds approved by voters as planned on the CIP Schedule. He asked if this type of budget planning could be used for roads by starting another CRF or ask for a bond to make voters aware of the need.
  - Karen, George and Mark Suennen noted the 2021 budget request for road maintenance consists of the following:
    1. \$202,000 from the Highway Block Grant from the state
    2. \$350,000 paving (\$270,000 in 2020)
    3. \$85,000 Warrant Article for Meetinghouse Hill Road (\$85,000 for Hooper Hill Road in 2020)
    4. \$12,000 line striping
    5. \$33,000 gravel
    6. \$7,000 culverts and catch basins
    7. \$11,000 Calcium
    8. \$3,500 Cold Patch
    9. \$16,000 Guard Rails
  - Mark Debowski noted the above budgeted amount is inadequate to improve town roads or even to keep them maintained at the current level. He recommends the Committee prepare a comprehensive plan targeting types of roads and the condition the town would like them to be in, to progressively get the roads to that status and then continue to maintain them to that level. He sent an e-mail to the Committee to this effect. AT the October 28, 2020 meeting Mark offered to help assess up to ten miles of roads per week for free, volunteering his time to inventory road conditions, signs, guardrails, etc., their status and condition and traffic in the area. He would use the information to create a database for a prioritization system. He has not started yet but is still willing to do this large amount of work for the town but wants to know if the work needed would even be possible due to concerns with the amount budgeted annually as the needed work would cost much more. Rodney noted the assessment is needed to make the Selectmen aware of needs for town roads. The town has always tried to budget conservatively but this cannot continue in this area of the budget. Mark noted in the construction industry, to improve Byam Road with what is needed could cost over \$2 million (This is a back-of-the-napkin estimate for full reconstruction of the roadway based upon recent construction prices for

roads in New Hampshire and may be quite different from the actual cost of improvements recommended for Byam Road after an assessment is completed) if done by a contractor, and could be less if done by the town Road Crew. He noted some town roads were built without crowns and that causes a lot of road issues. Rodney noted to convert Beard Road to pavement could cost \$4 million to \$5 million and this could be the cost of bonds to convert each dirt road to pavement, of which New Boston has 50 miles of dirt roads. Rodney noted road infrastructure maintenance is a national problem. George agreed the assessment is needed to educate the town of road needs and the actual cost to try to make this change. A ten year plan should be established, if recommendations are done on time it could cost less than if a road need is delayed causing further deterioration that would cost more to repair. Mark Debowski agreed roads cost more to repair the longer they are let go. The average road life of a major road is twenty years, therefore it is expected that Byam Road is now failing. Denis recommended Mark Debowski begin assessing roads that the town determines could be repaired first according to a repair schedule such as the list of roads the Committee discussed tonight. Mark Debowski noted a list of ten roads seems appropriate to start. He could evaluate these ten roads and report back to the Committee. Mark Siemiesz noted these should be paved roads to protect the town's current investment. The Committee prioritized the above list of roads that Mark Debowski agreed to assess with photos, recommendations and cost estimate options to present to the Committee by spring to review as follows:

1. Byam Road
2. Wilson Hill Road
3. Meetinghouse Hill Road
4. 2<sup>nd</sup> NH Turnpike from town line to Sand Hill Road
5. Hooper Hill Road
6. Cemetery Road
7. Greenfield Road from Cochran Hill Road
8. Old Coach Road at Greenfield Road
9. Paved section of Meadow Road
10. Back of Joe English Road from McCurdy Road to Meadow Road
11. Parker Road from Howe Bridge to Riverdale Road

The Committee plans to then review the information from Mark Debowski to make recommendations to the Selectmen for 2021 road improvements.

- Mark Debowski noted he contacted the Southern NH Regional Planning Commission and learned of resources they provide, some at a fee. He noted one of these that would cost approximately \$10,000 where the Commission travels town roads and considers traffic counts to assess the roads and provide recommendations. However, the report is limited as the cause of road needs is not assessed.
- The Committee noted the issues brought to the Selectmen in December about local trucking in the area of Byam and Wilson Hill Roads are ongoing.
- Karen and George agreed the voters need good explanations of the road needs to approve budgets.
- The Committee reviewed the process NH DOT uses on state roads through town consisting of shimming and putting 1.5" of pavement over it, that typically lasts seven years.
- Denis noted former Road Agent Dick Perusse seemed to concentrate on grading roads and this was done very well and improved those roads. However this has not continued

now that he is not the Road Agent. It needed to be done before Thanksgiving. George noted traffic has increased on these roads causing some of the deterioration compared to prior years. He noted Dick did a good job keeping these roads in good condition and keeping the dust down by grading, rolling and putting calcium down. He also noted it was not done this fall as it should have been. The Road Crew tried to fill pot holes on dirt roads but the road had already begun to freeze in spots so this maintenance may be undone as vehicles travel these roads. Rodney noted the grader was also out this fall but the roads may not have been rolled.

#### **Next Steps:**

The Committee plans to consider the following at its next meeting:

- The acceptable condition town roads should be in according to type, such as gravel road, heavily used two lane road and subdivision roads. Mark Debowski will bring in criteria for types of roads for Committee review at the next meeting.
- Should the town Road Crew work on major road projects/construction/box culverts or should these should be done by contractors. It is cost effective for the Road Crew to do these projects but staffing is limited. If they concentrate on a single large project, the other needed road maintenance cannot be done during that time period. The Committee agrees road maintenance should be a priority for the Road Crew.

#### **Other:**

- Road Agent Position: Karen reported Allen Brown is now appointed as full time permanent Road Agent. The Committee plans to invite him to their meetings as he should be an integral part of this planning. Karen will add him to the e-mail list and invite him to the next meeting.
- Rodney brought an older version of the book “A Hard Road To Travel” he mentioned at the October 28 meeting as it is very helpful guide from the Local Government Center for information about the basics of NH road law. Karen borrowed it. There is a more recent version available in the Selectmen’s office. He recommended each Committee member purchase a copy for reference. Karen will include this in the e-mail announcing the next meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Rodney Towne moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:18 PM. Mark Siemiesz seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion carried.

*Prepared by Maralyn Segien*

**Next Scheduled Meeting: Town Hall Conference Room on January 13, 2021 (6:00 PM)  
7 Meetinghouse Hill Road- New Boston, NH 03070  
Phone: (603) 487-5504-[www.newbostonnh.gov](http://www.newbostonnh.gov)**