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## TOWN OF BROOKLINE, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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### *Minutes* *Public Works Study Committee* *July 20, 2017*

Meeting attendees included: Eric Pauer, Jerry Farwell, John Carr, Eddie Arnold, Tad Putney and Ryan Pauer.

#### **Election of Chair and Secretary**

Eric Pauer was elected Chair and Tad Putney was elected Secretary.

#### **Review of Committee Charter**

Committee members reviewed the charter. No needed changes were identified at this time.

#### **2007 Committee Report Review**

Committee members reviewed the content of the Public Works Study Committee Report from 2007. There was discussion about the peer town public works spending data and it was agreed that the data should be updated. It was noted there are some limitations in the data such as it not capturing capital expenses or benefit costs for public works employees. Tad will pursue the collection of data. Confirmation of the specific towns to include in the analysis is needed first.

#### **Current Road Agent Role**

There was an extended discussion regarding the current roles of the Road Agent and how he provides his services to the Town. Specific areas discussed included resurfacing of town roads, ditching and winter maintenance. Jerry explained that plowing and sanding requires 10-12 vehicles per storm (4-5 are subcontractors in either pick-ups or 1-tons with plows and 8 trucks that are owned by CL Farwell). These eight include: three dump trucks with plows/sanders, two 1-tons (one that has a sander for more flexible response in the middle of the night), and three pick-ups with plows. He also has a loader with a plow that can be used. Jerry explained that there are five plowing routes. They generally begin around the town center and move outward. Each route can be completed in about 4 hours. Jerry is also in contact with the superintendent of schools as needed to make decisions on delaying or cancelling school.

Eric asked about the amount of time Jerry spends on town matters. Jerry said approximately 10 hours a week for the eight non-winter months and the amount is significantly higher (and more variable) during the winter months. Jerry said he feels there is enough to keep one person busy full-time doing traditional public works duties.

**Elected Versus Appointed Position**

There was discussion that the current one-year term of the road agent position likely limits candidates. One option is to extend the term to three years. Another option is to do away with the Road Agent position and replace it with a full-time employee. Jerry noted that an elected position (i.e., Road Agent) must be a town resident, so moving to an appointed rather than elected position would expand the pool of candidates. There was general sentiment that making an appointed position makes the most sense, but members were still open to the possibility of maintaining an elected Road Agent position.

**Qualifications for Road Agent/Public Works Director**

Jerry was asked if it should be required that the individual have a BS in civil engineering such as he does. He said “no” and that significant practical experience would be more critical.

**Other Roles**

Jerry explained that he also serves as Sexton and is one of the Town’s representatives to the four-town Souhegan Regional Landfill District. Jerry said that he would like to continue to serve as Sexton.

**Alternatives**

Jerry said that the 24/7 burden of plowing is the biggest burden. Tad asked if hiring a person to serve in the role of managing the plowing/sanding function is an option, while keeping much of everything else as it exists today. Jerry said that is an option worth pursuing. Eric said that he thinks the Town is getting to the point where one or two public works employees are needed, would provide value, and be kept busy.

**Next Meeting**

The next meeting was scheduled for Thursday, August 3<sup>rd</sup> at 6:30pm.

Minutes submitted by Tad Putney.