



Telephone (603) 673-8855, ext. 213
Fax (603) 673-8136

TOWN OF BROOKLINE, NEW HAMPSHIRE

P.O. BOX 360 – 1 Main Street
BROOKLINE, NH 03033-0360

<http://www.brookline.nh.us>

Minutes Public Works Study Committee August 3, 2017

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

Minutes

The July 20th minutes were approved as amended.

Review of Peer Group

Tad reviewed two different exhibits he had prepared with information on towns that could be included in our analysis of town spending on roads. A total of 25 towns were identified that met the following criteria:

- Are located in southern NH (south of Concord)
- Have populations of 4,000 to 6,700 (an average of 5,069, similar to Brookline's 5,168)
- Have a similar number of miles of town road to Brookline

It was agreed that we add Hollis to the peer group. Tad will begin collecting the data for these towns for the next meeting. A few towns may need to be eliminated as the data is collected, if they are found to not have a comparable number of miles of town road. The objective is to have a final group of at least 20 towns in the peer group.

Changes in Road Agent Duties

Jerry identified areas where the road agent duties have increased in the last 5-10 years:

- Increase in mileage of town roads (about 10%)
- Use of salt, which rusts equipment quickly
- More sidewalks
 - Summer maintenance: 12 man-hours to mow all sidewalks and one day to trim brush annually
 - Winter maintenance: average of \$3,300 per mile for snowblowing
- More demands on plowing/sanding to keep roads safe; more vehicles on roads

Town Vehicle

It was agreed that should the Town hire a public works employee, we would need to provide them with a vehicle rather than reimburse for mileage. Jerry suggested a pick-up, which could assist in plowing and also get around in challenging weather.

Plowing and Sanding Equipment

Members discussed what trucks would be needed to sand/plow the town's roads. Jerry said that 4 large sanders/plows with wings would be needed. These cost \$180,000-\$190,000 new and fully equipped. Additionally 7-8 pick-ups/one-tons would be needed for the balance of plowing. Additionally, a backhoe would be needed for loading trucks with sand/salt and a loader would be needed to push back the snow after storms.

Alternative Approach

Tad outlined a potential approach for the near-term to address the concerns that have been raised:

- Hire an individual (other than Jerry) to manage the plowing and sanding function during the winter (e.g., monitoring conditions, calling in drivers when needed, communicating with the superintendent of schools, coordinating plowing and sanding resources, dealing with breakdowns). Test this approach this coming winter.
- Modify the current Road Agent duties to eliminate plowing and sanding, but keep all else as it is.
- Develop a plan that estimates costs and priorities for starting a Public Works Department (in terms of equipment). Use the cost estimates to recommend annual warrant articles to accumulate funds in a Capital Reserve Fund for the eventual purchases.
- Maintain the current road agent term as annually elected. Once Jerry stops, submit a warrant article to hire one full-time employee to serve as the head of a public works department.

Jerry confirmed that he does not think the Town has outgrown the Road Agent position.

Transfer Station

Jerry explained that he oversees the operations of the transfer station. The employees call in and coordinate the removal of the bins. Jerry attends the monthly meetings of the district, which is comprised of Brookline, Hollis, Amherst, and Mont Vernon.

Next Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for Thursday, August 31st at 6:30pm. It was agreed that the following items will be on the agenda:

- Modification to the current Road Agent Agreement to account for reduced roles
- Draft of a job description for the role of Winter Maintenance Supervisor
- Initial results of peer town spending analysis
- Information from any towns that have recently moved away from a road agent
- Initial work on costing/prioritization for a Capital Reserve Fund

Minutes submitted by Tad Putney.