

# Small Roads Project Meeting Minutes – February 7, 2023

## 7pm in the Town Hall

- **Attendees:** Gregg Thibodeau, Mark Girard, Brenda Melius, Jennifer Bland, Ray LeClaire
- The team reviewed Select Board minutes from the Jan 28<sup>th</sup> Public Hearing [https://www.acworthnh.net/files/ugd/a327e9\\_46a37a7f4bef4cf680e12622e2ed56f3.pdf](https://www.acworthnh.net/files/ugd/a327e9_46a37a7f4bef4cf680e12622e2ed56f3.pdf)
  - Minutes were approved by the Select Board on 6 Feb.
- **Complete list of comments & feedback from public hearing**
  - Consensus was that we need to go through the provided written lists (from Breier, Bascom and Greene), the Board meeting minutes and the recording to ensure that we have a complete list of the questions and concerns raised at the public hearing.
  - This effort is likely to take several weeks
  - **Action:** GT to review the list provided by Paul Breier.
  - **Action:** GT to contact Select Board and Charlotte and ask that Charlotte go through the recording and pull out the key questions and concerns.
  - **Action:** JB will review the Bascom provided notes; GT posted the provided artifacts to the shared drive. <https://1drv.ms/u/s!AqRxoWfEqT8ThI9sahTpYjkiP0ekVA?e=DszHf7>
  - **Action:** JB will review the Greene provided notes.
  - **Action:** GT created a single list (Public Hearing Feedback) to capture all the items from the above reviews. <https://1drv.ms/x/s!AqRxoWfEqT8ThJAJNyI8f9nAavdugQ?e=wcNc7q>
- **Discuss next steps.**
  - **Maintenance, vehicle, and improvement costs**
    - The team to review the Richmond ME 1992 study and the USDA Forestry Guidelines for Road Maintenance Levels; provided by Greg Bascom.
    - **Action:** MG to take 2 or 3 of our roads and work with the existing highway crew costs and put together an assessment for those roads.
    - **Action:** GT to look for other possible more current studies.
    - One project team session will be dedicated to a review of the possible 5 inputs (1) Richmond ME (2) USDA, (3) Small Roads original, (4) Town road effort and (5) any other possible studies.
  - **Legality and Legal Liability**
    - **Action:** GT to ask the Select Board and Charlotte to obtain town attorney assessment of the legality of this effort and what legal liability the town might be subject too.
    - **Risk:** If the select board does not authorize the expense with the attorney, which is likely due to the reduced 2023 legal expense line item then this topic would significantly impact the teams recommendation. (high risk)
  - **Road Assessments**
    - Once a complete listing of all the feedback has been created each road will be reassessed.
    - It is likely that during the reassessment that follow-ups with landowners will be required and/or additional visits to the roads.
    - **Risk:** If there is significant snow cover it may impede observations during any additional site visit and delay completion of tasks. (med risk)
    - BM suggested that a review of the deeds on the roads should be completed.
    - GT suggested that we should follow-up with Russell Road and Echo Valley Road landowners (only 1 landowner in both these cases). The landowners may be open to making those roads private.

- **Recommendations to Board**
  - We will continue to capture and provide the Select Board with our recommendations.
  - **Recommendation:** Board consider an effort that will assess the risk/liability that we have as a town because (1) we do not have any stated standards (already noted as a recommendation) and (2) we are not able to maintain the roads to any minimal safety standard. e.g. proper sized culverts not installed, culverts not properly installed (inadequate slope and cover material, etc.), lacking headwalls & dissipaters, roads not crowned or ditched properly. This would be supported with the Upper Valley culvert assessment that is on the budget to start in 2023 but the assessment is just one piece of this recommendation.
  - Reiterated the recommendation for adopting standards and completing the culvert assessment effort.
  
- **Discuss team composition.**
  - The members present agreed to stay on the team to complete these new efforts.
  - **Action:** GT to follow-up with Frank Emig and Gary Baber.
  
- **Determine meeting schedule & communications.**
  - BM indicated that she will not be available during the first week of March.
  - Team agreed that we should wrap up our follow-up actions by the end of May.
  - Team also agreed that any final review or presentation to the Select Board should be made to the new Select Board, after the March timeframe.
  - Team agreed to go to a once-a-month schedule, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month. Next meeting is scheduled for 21 March, 7pm.
  - Meeting minutes will continue to be posted to the town web page.
  - GT to capture all tasks and actions in an updated plan for our March meeting.
  - **Risk:** If tasks take longer to complete the team may not be complete with all efforts by the end of May. (med risk)
  - **Risk:** Select board election in March may have an impact on this effort. (low risk)
  
  - **Next Meeting Agenda Items**
    - Review comments and feedback list status
    - Review legal follow-up
    - Review cost updates
    - Review updated plan

#### Members

Gregg Thibodeau  
 Jennifer Bland  
 Gary Baber  
 Mark Girard  
 Brenda Melius  
 Ray LeClaire  
 Frank Emig

#### Meeting Schedule

21 March 2023  
 18 April 2023  
 15 May 2023