

TOWN HALL MONTHLY: October

We can finally say that all of the projects from the 2021 flood have reached the point of reimbursement-pending from FEMA. One of the last projects proposes using funds originally designated for Nye Road on Derry Hill Road. This will require voter approval and will be on the March Town Meeting warrant. Payment to the Town of the State's 5% reimbursement, voted by the State legislature in 2022, continues to be bogged down in State rules making.

Of the eleven projects from the 2023 flood, the Town has been reimbursed for six. Of the remaining five, one is just waiting our own review and the other four require work by our contracted engineer.

In road business, earlier this year at Selectmen meetings and the Joint Boards meeting there were questions about how to protect our Class 6 roads. During September Selectmen revisited our Road Regulations, adopted in 2014, and the Road Improvement Application. The Application is required from Class 6 Road property owners and from non-resident entities such as loggers and snow mobile clubs before they can alter the surface of any Class 6 Road. The 2014 Regulations allow Selectmen to post weight limits and require bonds as may be needed. The Board plans to consider adding a requirement that applicants provide "before" photos so that the Town will have a reference, if needed, to support site restoration if the work done exceeds what is permitted. Charlotte has posted the original Regulations on the website. If you see them and have any questions or suggestions, please let us know. In addition, periodically over the past year, the Board has addressed recommendations made by the Small Roads Committee in 2023 that effect roads in general. One of the last of those recommendations was to build a data base which would show work done on each Town road over time. At the September 3 Selectmen's meeting the Highway Department reported that they now track hours and costs for each road. And finally, there was discussion during the September 16 Selectmen's meeting about Scenic Roads and road aesthetics in general. It was noted that safety and meeting standards which qualify for FEMA reimbursements if ever needed are guiding principles. It was also noted that work meeting those standards can be visually in keeping with the surrounding landscape that we all love and our Highway Department has shown that it strives to find that balance.

Many of the small lakes in New Hampshire have water quality issues and the State is taking steps in that regard. The Department of Environmental Services Fact Sheet explains: "Beginning September 1, 2024, RSA 485 A:39 will require septic systems within the protected shoreland to be evaluated by a state-licensed septic system evaluator and, in some cases, a state-permitted septic system designer before any transfer of the waterfront property can take place. Failing septic systems identified through this process will need to be replaced." The complete Fact Sheet can be found on our website.

In September the Planning Board met with the Highway Department and Glenn Elsesser to begin prioritizing road projects and equipment needs for the 2025 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Draft schedules will be reviewed at the October 28 meeting. Separately, Board members are working on narratives for various sections of the Master Plan update.

All Town boards' meetings are posted at the Town office, the post office, the Village Store and on the website. This is the time of year when we begin preparing for Town Meeting and the next year's budget. Everyone is welcome.

See you soon, Kathi