

Town of Hartford
Road Committee Meeting
12 August, 2024

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm. Members present were: Wesley Brown, Al Borzelli, David Theriault, Jennifer Garrigan, Steve Elsmann, and Dianne DiBlasio. Also in attendance were Kathleen Landry, Cathy Lowe, Morrill Nason, Jason Landry, Ken Violette, Cindy Violette, Chad CaseyNew development guy, late arrival of JJ and Brandon

Meeting commenced with the Town clerk's disclosure of possible FEMA grants and locations. Mr. Al Borzelli remarked that some of these locations have already been repaired by Town money, taken away from summer road funds designated for other locations. The priority to immediately repair damage from tropical rainstorm runoff created the need to repair what roads were impassible, instead of road improvements elsewhere. The FEMA grant money will have to be sorted back to the roads that were debited, because of this unexpected urgent repair on other roads.

Wesley Brown asserted the chairman's role directly after the opening discussion, and requested a vote to help expedite the meeting by "closing the meeting to the end" and it was unanimously voted in agreement by all 5.

Secretary Theriault proposed that the meetings of the 22 July 2024 Road Committee be accepted without an oracle rehash of what has already been published, and again the vote was unanimously agreed upon.

Chairmen Wesley continued to "Old business", and stated his desire to create a category of "Unfinished Old", and "Unfinished New" for clarity purposes. Wesley stated that the present system categories didn't allow complaint status to be determined from a Road Committee perspective, and requested that the Selectboard should somehow communicate acknowledgement on complaints that have been resolved. Time is wasted on giving attention to complaints that have been previously resolved without a system to confirm that closed status. Wesley further stated that he doesn't know if there is any "old business pending or not right now". Al Borzelli remarked that "even if we get complaints coming in right now, we can't go look at them until we get Pratt Hill done" we are kind of at a stalemate here, and then when we have money coming in from FEMA that was previously pending, Any FEMA road money that does come in, needs to be prioritized. Allocating money for low priority "small jobs" is not going to go out, we are going to determine as a committee, what roads are going to be fixed. We are not going to jump from one small job to another. We will drive around and brainstorm together about specifics to be repaired, but we will not be talking to landowners, we will come back and advise the Selectboard with an agenda. Al Borzelli and Steve Elsmann conversed about the subject, with Steve stating - "think we find out the things that the Community called upon, they're going to the SelectBoard to have fixed". Al concurred that some of them are major, that cost a lot of money. Small jobs are no problem, but it's up to the SelectBoard to decide that. Al Borzelli talking further to Steve Elsmann directed the conversation to culverts on

Gurney Hill. Road maintenance decisions are difficult at times, it's not all cut and dried. Steve Elsman stating "people doing the highway, getting big winters's coming on, so get stuff done too." Al stated that he doesn't have anything against about BIM going out and doing the cold patch, but I'd really like to see him dig some of those holes out before putting the cold patch in. Cathy Lowe stated " we already authorized BIM to put the cold patch out". Cathy also stated "today they did that wash out on Church Street" Wesley asked if that was specifically the one by the cemetery and Cathy said yes.

Wesley Brown moved onto "new business" and states that everyone knows that Alan McNeil does not want to do the estimates of cost to do jobs. Therefore, we will have to put it out to bid, but before it goes bid, there are some changes I want to make, some of you have seen the written document I drew up but I forgot to include that the rip rap requirements need to be crushed rock, and not round rock, in the four to six inch size length. Also the rip rap is recommended in the runoff corridors to the high water mark and a little bit beyond. Most importantly, every thirty or forty feet, on the downhill slopes you place a berm across the runoff to slow that flow down and create a place to catch sediment. When the contractors are working on construction, there has to be temporary erosion control with fencing around the site to capture any material from going into the stream, lake or anywhere else. Erosion control needs to be a priority. The Bear Lake association and many other townsfolk are very concerned about erosion control. Wesley also recalled that Alan McNeil mentioned a while back that Alan had contacted the State of Maine and they went down and surveyed to determine what was going on with regards to erosion, and the State of Maine concluded that the State and town roads were not contributing as much to the sediment runoff as the brooks themselves were from heavy rainstorm runoff events that swell the banks and pull soil into the stream from the edges of the banks. The road committee has no authority and cannot deal with this issue of private land streambank erosion. Wesley also stated that the DEP should be contacted in the future to assist in culvert sizing and doing the repair engineering design right to get the confinement of runoff silt and sand. The State also recommends getting rid of what is in the ditch, probably half way down the slope, and for culverts put in a significant berm just off the pavement and plant grass. The State claims this method is the best filter there is, and repeating this design all the way to the bottom is the best way to remove sediment before the runoff gets to be a big flow. Wesley stated that we want to make these improvements to road design, not just for vehicles, and equally as important to Lake quality.

Jennifer Garrison spoke up and said "can I just add to that" I think in the last two years, especially Western Maine, roads have washed out including bridges and there are still roads in Rangeley that have not been repaired. Obviously they need to fund FEMA with more money because we're probably not alone in this issue, and probably contributed to some of it but certainly there is always room for improvement. Wesley agreed and stated that this road committee will continue to do all that can be done for conservation and preservation for the environment while maintaining road design and construction.

Diane Dibassio spoke about an evaluation of Pratt Hill years ago that probably holds a lot of detailed information that should be reviewed for improvements. The Maine DOT was involved, and they can be contacted to evaluate our present road conditions for free - and make recommendations to the Town of Hartford on construction and design for best practices.

Al Borzelli spoke up about Wesley doing a really good job on our plan of action, but he wanted to add Hartford needs to be very specific when it comes to bids, detailing exact specifications desired for construction. Cathy Lowe stated “but none of us here, are qualified to do these bid specifications”. Wesley stated “OK, but we’ve done them already. I was going through that ‘Code Bible’ for the Town, the section under roads and found it is quite detailed about all roads being built. I am assuming that verbally doesn’t mean just new construction, but even a rebuilt road. This code book even specifies the width and thickness of the base and also the tar. Wesley also stated that the code book specifications for ditching were vague, so Wesley recommended that when we go to put a bid out the contract parameters will be both the Town Code Book guidelines and the current Road Committee specifications that are above and beyond the Code Book for ditching requirements. Borzelli summarized that we have enough to give the Board of Selectman the information needed to request a bid package from contractors. Cathy Lowe stated that the Bid Committee will be one of the Selectboard members, the Road Commissioner, and the Road Committee Chairperson. Borzelli stated that he would like to have others like Wesley involved as advisory without Wesley having a vote. Jennifer stated “that her only concern with Wesley is three weeks ago you had a contractor up on Pratt Hill that you walked through the whole” and was interrupted by Al “that he wasn’t really a contractor”. Wesley finally stated that “all he was looking for is some guidance” and another opinion on things Wesley may have overlooked and this specialist did actually point out issues Wesley had not thought of and added information Wesley was not sure of. Borzelli focused the conversation on getting this information and progress moving forward and Diane asked “are we going to discuss itemized bid stuff tonight to pass to the Selectboard, or is this going to having the bid committee”? Wesley responded that we will get the final description of our recommendations very quickly because we need to clarify our committee ditching specifications” and Al over spoke stating that we can give this report to the Selectboard for the submission to the Bid Committee.” Wesley spoke up and said if the Bid Committee wanted to change things to do so, before submitting the BID Committee’s results back to the SelectBoard for approval before posting the project to public contractors. Borzelli stated the editorial changes are minor, and we will get it moving. After time restraint dialog, Wesley stated that there is a “catch 22” to this, about getting the road done and paving it. If we don’t pave it, which is the recommended process to let it set there. All that good gravel we put on is going to be plowed into the ditch because I don’t think BIM, our contractor, runs plow shoes but I’m not sure. On dirt roads you need plow shoes so the plow edge doesn’t scrape the dirt off the top layer of sub pavement. Borzelli next talked about how Green Acres road was resurfaced with gravel last year and paved over in the same year, so best practice guidelines aren’t always adhered to and maybe we could repeat what has been done in the past. Al said let’s just move on, please. Wesley spoke up and said we have the option to pave this year or not, and discussed the cons of pavement cracking when you have insufficient time for sub pavement to settle before laying the asphalt.

Dave Theriault spoke briefly about exact gravel specifications on the upper “steep” section of Pratt Hill and clarification to the bid committee recommendations. Borzelli stated that Wesley has all those specs. Dave also wanted to address the 4 foot and 7 foot culverts, nearly side by side physically, above the 95 Pratt Hill residence where the brook comes in. After discussion about previous State of Maine grant programs requiring matching Town funds, Dave informed the group that the “Municipal Stream Crossing” program is just two years old, and has none of the previous requirements the historical programs had beforehand. The Feds and State of Maine realized that

tropical rain events are overwhelming municipality budgets and this special department of the Maine DEP was formed to facilitate this global warming phenomenon. Borzelli asked that we move on because we are getting ahead of ourselves. Much discussion was given to the decision to replace just the 4 foot culvert and not the 7 footer involving the pros and cons.

From the audience came IRA Goodwin that announced he and his wife purchased the development subdivision property just north of Camp Weekeela. Borzelli commented that the design and construction of the landowner roadway going from Rte. 219 to the Bear Pond shoreline was completed in a very good manner, that it was a good job. Mr. Goodwin did state that he had hired Mainland Development on a consulting basis. Mainland Development recommended that any ditching required should be wider and deeper than expected, because you want the velocity of the runoff as slow as possible. Also Mr. Goodwin stated that in extreme rain events, you do not want that runoff water to rise and overtop the roads. Discussion turned to rip rap before and also after the culvert. Mr. Goodwin also revealed that the road construction spec's were 18 inches of crushed gravel and it was compacted. The final 6 inch surface layer was crushed gravel no larger than 2 inch fractured stones, and also compacted as it was put down. Steve Elseman asked if Mr. Goodwin's contractors had given him any warranty for road construction and the answer was no. The meeting got unscripted with Al Borzelli conversing to Wesley while Mr. Goodwin was still speaking and the content of both simultaneous discussions was difficult to follow. Borzelli next hand motioned for Cathy Lowe to approach the committee table to join the discussion between himself and Wesley. The content on the committee table was centered around the 7 foot culvert history and path forward with no clear immediate resolution. Mr. Borzelli explained this is a rough draft that we are going to submit to the SelectBoard. Steve Elseman asked the question "what happens to the budget money if nothing gets done.?" And the reply was the Bid committee. Diane then wanted clarification that the Road committee proposal was being directed at the Bid Committee, or the SelectBoard ? Borzelli answered that this is the next step being presented to move forward. Discussion revolved around the volume details of product needed to complete the job and was concluded that the Bid Committee would dictate total materials. Pavement requirements vs. sub pavement requirements were discussed. Borzelli talked about speaking previously with bid contractors and explaining to them how we want to have our ditches done, how we want our tar to be broken up, our gravel to be put down and culverts to be fixed. That gives contractors an idea on how to bid the job. Cathy Lowe asked "Who's going to babysit them" with a little discussion before Steve Elsman asked "Wesley, do you feel that it's going to be awhile before that gets fixed to prevent any more erosion going into Little Bear?" Steve restated the barrier runoff screens and hay bails recommended to minimize contamination into runoff. Borzelli then stated that if we don't get it done this year, yes, we will put runoff barriers in place this fall, but our present goal is to accomplish the construction this year. More discussion persued on runoff issues and Cathy Lowe stated that some of the silt was also came from Bear Mtn.

Borzelli next pleaded that we get moving with this process, please. Give our recommendations to the Bid committee for review. Wesley stated that Town Code Book requirements were 22 feet on base width, 18 feet of pavement width. We'll make the proposal changes and submit to the SelectBoard.

Some discussion was focused on the brook above 95 Pratt Hill towards the beaver bogs and swampy area northerly and parallel to the Mahoney road that is part of the watershed sloping downhill from Church Street.

Diane DiBassio reiterated the point that one Road Committee member, and one Selectboard member can attend the Bid Committee formal meeting and fulfill the quorum requirements needed to vote – regardless of Alan McNeil’s attendance or not.

Borzelli asked Wesley if we could adjourn this meeting and Wesley said no, we need to discuss change. Wesley stated that he is resigning from the Chairman position of this Road committee. I am resigning in favor of Al Borzelli taking the position, and basically like switching positions. Diane stated it will have to be voted on, and Wesley agreed. Dave seconded the motion, and Wesley asked all in favor with a unanimous decision of the voting members. Wesley explained due to hearing impairments, conversation is difficult and it’s not fair to people that I cannot properly communicate with verbally.

The new Chairman Borzelli made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and Diane asked if we could set a date for the next meeting. Al said we can’t due to unscheduled Bid Committee times and SelectBoard direction. Dave stated that we could schedule one for next Monday and cancel it if the process isn’t complete. Al agreed, and the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by David P. Theriault, Secretary of the Road Committee.