



Peter B. Webster
Town Manager

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Selectmen

FROM: Peter B. Webster, Town Manager

DATE: April 7, 2011

SUBJECT: Information for the Selectboard

Winter/Spring of 2010/2011—Public Works Department Update

This mud season has already proven to be one of the very worst in the past two decades, from what I am hearing from long-time residents, Selectboard members and the Highway Department. I have a letter addressed to your Board signed by some 42 residents and abutters from the Willey Hill neighborhood requesting your consideration of paving a portion of Willey Hill that is particularly bad this season, almost impassable. I quote from page 30 of the 2006 MARCON Report that addresses paving vs. gravel and the considerations that should go into such decisions: ***"It is generally accepted that paved roadway surface is warranted where traffic volumes exceed 400 ADT. We are aware of several roadway segments that easily qualify under this criterion and urge the town to consider paving these.*** The segments are located on:

- Brookside Drive
- Goodrich Four Corners Road
- Hawk Pine
- Willey Hill
- Tucker Hill
- Turnpike Road

There is a section, approximately one half mile in length that includes part of Willey Hill and Hawk Pine Road that both Andy and I would recommend to be paved, and at a future meeting of your Board I will have all the details. I would suggest that the discussion be posted on the Norwich Digest and throughout the

neighborhood so you can hear from everyone in the neighborhood who has an opinion, then make your decision for the FY13 budget.

We should be taking delivery of the 'new' 2006 John Deere grader within the next two weeks so it can be utilized in this grading season. The excavator will be moved down to Springfield and sold on consignment as we have no further use for that piece of equipment, and the resulting sale proceeds would then go into the Highway Equipment Designated Fund.

We've hired a new employee for Public Works, Mike Koloski, who comes highly recommended as the former head grounds person at Quechee Lakes. He replaces one of our Town crew who had been out on Worker's Comp for over a year, and this should help that department's efforts going forward.

Board of Listers

I've been meeting regularly with the interim chair of the Listers to stay involved with their ongoing efforts to get up to speed on filing this year's Grand List. All three of the Listers, plus their clerk Jill, have been attending VLCT training sessions that will help with their learning curve. Their decision to hire Bill Krajesky for consulting assistance is also a step in the right direction, and I am much more confident of an accurate Grand List being filed this year, and an equitable Town-wide reappraisal being accomplished over the next two years.

Budget Update

I have been meeting with various Department Heads (Police, Fire and DPW) and Roberta to fine tune our year-end budget projections. Despite a difficult winter, we should end up with as much as \$129,000 being returned to the Undesignated Fund Balance, which would make it possible to once again experience no increase in our municipal tax rate and add to our Undesignated Fund Balance. All the Department Heads have been very conscious of their budgets and have made every effort to hold spending to a minimum. We are all cognizant of the difficult economic times that all of us taxpayers are experiencing, and each is doing his/her part to under spend their budget.

Other Issues of Interest

The Fire Department roofing project started yesterday, and should be completed within the next 4-5 days. This improvement of about a 30 R Value insulation should greatly reduce their heating expense in future years.

There is a meeting in Hartford tonight of the Municipal Network, organized by Vital Communities. We will be discussing how to best accomplish inter-municipal cooperation, shared expenses of capital equipment, maintenance of equipment, group purchasing, etc for future budgets to see if regionalization can achieve some efficiencies. This is open to everyone involved with municipal government, and Selectboard members are especially welcome.

The DPW Committee has now met two times, with Margo Doscher and Jim Gold sharing the chairmanship duties. They will be meeting almost every Tuesday evening starting at 6:30 pm, and these are always posted and public meetings. I look forward to their findings, as does Andy Hodgdon, and if we can run a more efficient DPW and determine exactly what level of services our residents expect, then that is a good goal.

I am meeting with Hartford officials and our emergency response people within the next week to discuss our dispatch contract and the level of service that we are receiving. Not everyone is happy with what we have experienced, and we will discuss possible remedies and/or options.

I shared lunch with the new City Manager of Lebanon, Greg Lewis, to welcome him to the Upper Valley, along with Julia Griffin from Hanover, Hunter Rieseberg of Hartford, and Steve Schneider from Enfield. We talked about regional concerns and issues, and I look forward to working with Greg and the other town managers on areas of common interest for our Upper Valley communities.

I met with Bruce Nyquist and Jon Kaplan from VTrans to look at the pedestrian signalization down by the Ledyard Bridge/River Road intersection, the I-91 Northbound on-ramp signal, and the bicycle lane at the Rt. 10A and Rt. 5 South intersection. Steve Flanders has suggested a possible improvement to the bike lane and members of the Transportation Committee have expressed concerns over the two pedestrian crossings. Unfortunately, none of the Transportation Committee members could join us, but I should have their report with recommended changes soon.