

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE MEETING
October 8, 2013, Tuesday

Present: Ed Harrington, Chairman
Kenneth DiFazio, Vice Chairman
Arthur Mathews, Councilor
Frank Burke, Councilor
Michael Smart, Councilor

Also Present: Robert F. O'Connor, Interim Director, DPW

Recording Secretary: Mary Barker

Chairman Harrington called the meeting to order at 6:45. This item was referred two weeks ago regarding street protocols and processes. Bob O'Connor, Interim Public Works Director, was invited to the table.

Pavement Management Systems

Chairman Harrington asked Mr. O'Connor to review the process of oversight for pothole repair. Mr. O'Connor responded that the department typically follows a standard DPW procedure. A truck is sent out daily to repair, accompanied by a list that includes potholes, depressions, trenches, sidewalks, gutters and aprons- anything that developed deficiencies through age and traffic load. There are two types of potholes: a peel with lamination of one layer from another which doesn't go through to the base material. This is essentially glued with asphalt emulsion. The edges are pasted with it, it's tamped and sanded so it's not picked up. The second type of pothole goes through to the base material and it doesn't require emulsion since the hole will hold the fill material.

Chairman Harrington asked for a review of the process from the time a phone complaint from a constituent is made to the town. Mr. O'Connor responded that when a call comes in to the DPW or to the Mayor's hotline after hours, a work order is created and given to the crew chiefs who actually assign the work. Once the work is completed, it is signed off and the work order returned to the DPW office to be logged as complete. The crew chiefs will drive by and ensure that the repair is complete and correct. The usual turnaround time is 24 hours or less. It is attended to because if it is ignored; a defect could become a liability to the town.

Chairman Harrington asked for the process to respond to a water main break. Mr. O'Connor responded that it depends on the time of day the call comes in. A water main break is considered an emergency. During the day there are workers who can be sent out within minutes. After hours there are on-call personnel to handle the calls that are monitored through an answering service that dispatches overtime.

Chairman Harrington asked if pipe replacements are considered within the same category as water main breaks or as routine maintenance and the protocols. Mr. O'Connor responded that pipe replacements are planned projects that are funded in advance, and are

usually performed by private contractors, who are required to have their own emergency response personnel throughout the duration of the contract. The DPW will still send out an employee immediately; in order to secure the site until the private contractor arrives.

Chairman Harrington asked about the pavement management study. Mr. O'Connor responded that it is a tool the DPW has available for assessing road conditions townwide, but is not the deciding factor on which roads get paved. The town typically does not have road paving money in its daily operating budget but it does have patch repair funding. The major road repaving is completed with Chapter 90 state funding. Those funds are available for resurfacing by all cities and towns for resurfacing accepted roadways. Private or unaccepted ways are not eligible for the funding. The pavement management system evaluated all public accepted roadways in town and assigned each a numerical value based on square footage, defects, cracks, trenches, and other types of road failures. The system is reviewed when the DPW is determining how to expend its Chapter 90 funding each year. As former Director Jeff Bina advised the committee in the past, it's not always the lowest-rated road that may receive all of the funding. Some might need to be spent on a higher rated road to keep it in better condition for a longer period of time. Traffic counts, proximity to schools, whether a utility project is slated, and constituent complaints, also affect the determination and priority of road pavings. A list is created with all of these factors taken into consideration. A broad discussion takes place with the DPW, the Mayor's Office, and public utilities.

Chairman Harrington asked about the update on the document. Since it was completed, there are projects that have been completed. He further asked if the DPW has software at its disposal to be able to update the study, and is it being done on a regular basis? Mr. O'Connor responded yes; the Engineering Division of the department is in charge of the Chapter 90 program and in charge of the documents. All of the records are located at the DPW. The software to update it was received in the 2013 season so at the end of the season the program will be updated with the projects that have been completed. No changes have yet been made to the original document, and it will continue to be a viable document.

Councilor Mathews asked if the DPW has a portable compactor for pothole repair. Mr. O'Connor responded that they have a tamp. Councilor Mathews noted that there is a serious concern and many complaints as of late with utilities failing to return roadways to their original condition following excavation. Moving forward, he would like to see it kept under better control. It's his opinion that the subcontractor for National Grid is being paid by the quantity and not the quality of the work being done. In District 4, Village Road was repaved within the last two years and National Grid just ripped it up to put in a new gas main. He has spoken with the DPW and he knows that the utility is given a list of streets that are being repaved, so they have no incentive to do it. There's another street being ripped up and already had two gas lines hit because the contractor for National Grid placed the pipes too shallow when they were installed. He does not understand why the utility company isn't out inspecting and upgrading on streets that are slated for repaving so that there aren't these issues. He may suggest going forward that if it continues then they may have to direct National Grid to limit replacement of gas mains to

only streets that are on the list to be repaved in the upcoming year and that's it, until they can get their subcontractors in order. He will support this going forward. Mr. O'Connor thanked him for the support, and he noted one of the first things he did when he came back as interim director was to cease all National Grid street opening permits and he has not signed any since. Additionally, he brought in supervisors from the National Grid district and had a meeting with them and the contractor. In the last six weeks, they have caught up on the repairs to acceptable levels at Morningside Path and have committed to repairing the whole street, curb to curb next year. Odor of gas calls must be treated as emergent and the DPW must try and deal with it and do what is best for the community.

Chairman Harrington asked who has the authority to enforce utilities compliance with the ordinance changes regarding street openings. Mr. O'Connor responded that the DPW is the enforcement authority and they can and have ceased signing permits. The oversight after the job is complete is also DPW's responsibility.

Councilor DiFazio asked if the DPW keeps a man at the site to oversee the work. Mr. O'Connor responded that DPW does not have the manpower to place a worker at each site. The engineer travels from site to site to review and have responded as needed to complaints by constituents.

Councilor Burke asked if water and sewer work has closer oversight? Mr. O'Connor responded that they do have better oversight on their own projects. The contract includes hiring an engineer to oversee the project, and their own staff to make frequent visits.

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:11 PM; there being no further business, a MOTION was made by Vice President O'Connor to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Councilor Smart.
UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Respectfully submitted by Mary Barker

Approved by Ed Harrington as Chairman of Public Works