

Town Manager's Report

Select Board Meeting 1/8/2024

1. Grant Project Updates:

a. Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) Grant (Pedestrian Accessibility Scoping Study): NO CHANGE. Last Update: 9-9-2023 – The Town was awarded \$1.2M for this project. The Selectboard accepted the grant at the August 28th regular Select Board meeting. The signed acceptance was forwarded to VTrans. Per the federal guidelines, the next steps are to select a municipal project manager and resident engineer for the project. The most expeditious process I can use without compromising the quality of the process, is to use the VTans “At the Ready” list of engineering services. These engineering firms have been vetted by VTrans and found to be capable and qualified to provide such services for these large type federally funded projects. I have used this method for the past five years and with the exception of one project, everything has gone well from start to finish on those projects. **Updated: 8-14-2023** -A grant application was submitted for the large-scale and small-scale Bike and Pedestrian grant. We will not hear about an award until the August timeframe. **Updated: 5/6/2023** – I met with Ethan Pepin from RRPC and discussed the project and a strategy to best fund the total project. We decided that breaking the project into four phases to reduce how much we need to apply for each phase. There are two major funding sources available to apply for right now, which I will apply for in the month of May. The Bike and Pedestrian Grant requires a 20% match, and the Congressional Delegate grant requires no match. **Updated: 3-10-2023** – I spoke with Devon Neary regarding whether or not be thought it this project would be a good candidate for the Congressional Delegation Grant opportunity, to which he agreed. I will apply for this congressional add grant and ask that Jarrod Sammis reach out to Senators Welch or Sanders to promote it on behalf of the Town. I will apply for the entire \$1.7M. **Updated: 2-10-2023** – I received emails from project engineer Nicole Fox and VTrans Project Manager Pete Pochop that we should get the finalized copy of the scoping study in March 2023. The last TAP Grant application scored #3 of all the large scale projects and this was using the draft scoping study results. I remain hopeful that the next application scores even higher. It will take some further scrutiny of the project costs. The last application was slightly over the threshold for approval. The threshold was determined on the funding available for projects that year. It so happened that the available funding was able to fully fund only two large-scale projects in the county. **Updated: 8-15-22** – The Town was disapproved for the Bike & Pedestrian Grant for this project I will apply at the next available opportunity.

Action needed:

None.....at this time.

b. TAP Bike & Pedestrian Grant (Parsons Hill): NO CHANGE. Last Update: 11-13-2023 – Fuss & O’Neill is the preferred Municipal Project Manager. This was sent to Pete Pochop for approval. **Last Update: 9-9-2023** – *Bid packet not thorough enough. I requested assistance from Fuss & O’Neill (Dan Monette) and await a proposed contract from him to put together the bid packet (using our format) and the costs associated with such work. Fuss & O’Neill help with the design concept and are intimate with the project, so this is why I solicited a contract for your review from them.* **Updated: 8-12-2023** – *Bid packet completed and sent to VTrans for QA/QC.* **Updated: 7-7-2023** – I spoke with VTrans Project Manager, and a bid packet will be released on 7-11-2023 in hopes there will be a contractor able to fit this into their schedule before the end of October 2023. **Updated - 6-5-2023** – I received the VTrans 1111 Permit to allow work in the State ROW and a signed project commitment for was sent to Peter Pochop. This project is ready to go out to bid.

Action needed:

Request the SB consider obligating \$92,000 in ARPA funds to cover the Town's (Local) share of the Small-Scale Bike and Pedestrian Grant required for the Parson's Hill project. This will ensure the sidewalk carryover accounted for under the highway budget will not be depleted and available for use to help cover the Town's (Local) share of the Bike and Pedestrian Grant recently awarded for Pedestrian Accessibility and Safety in the village.

c. TAP (Transportation Alternatives) Grant for Stormwater Mitigation and New Salt and Sand Shed –NO CHANGE. UPDATED: 11-12-2023 – Jeff Davidson and I have been talking with vendors who build these salt and sand sheds to get a sense of building plans and prices. To build a salt and sand shed the size the Town needs to house 100% of our winter sand and salt stores will exceed \$800,00. If we reduce the size of the shed to house 50% of our winter salt (500 tons) and get two deliveries per year rather than one, while only putting half of our sand in the building, we can reduce the price by about half of the \$800,000. Although not the best solution, it will fit better into a budget we can afford. **Last Update: 9-9-2023** – I met with Dave Fabricius and Jeff Davidson earlier this week and discussed the salt and sand shed grant agreement. I tasked them to continue what Brent Clark started and that is to contact vendors who design, manufacture, and sell buildings used as salt and sand sheds. I am looking for a company that includes engineering site design as part of their services. Because the Town employees lack the engineering experience and knowledge associated with such types of projects, I find it best to stay with one company throughout the process. It is a possibility that I will not be able to apply for the Municipal Mitigation grant for the additional \$200,000 for another year if the NEPA requirements are not met (<https://www.epa.gov/nepa/what-national-environmental-policy-act>) and the Right-of-Way certificate is not issued. I reached out to Pete Pochop, Rutland Regional Planning Commission, and the VTrans Program Manager for the Municipal Mitigation grant requesting their assistance navigating a somewhat complicated federal requirements process. **Updated: 8-13-2023-** (Awaiting Municipal Mitigation grant to open so I can apply for the additional \$200,000). **Updated: 6-8-2023** – I received an email from a VTrans TAP Grant administrator on 6-7-2023, advising the Town is eligible to apply for the additional \$200,000 toward the salt and sand shed project. I will work on that application once I am back at work. 5-19-2023. **Updated: 5-22-2023** – I received the official grant award on 5-19-2023, which I will sign and return on Monday, 5-22-2023. **Updated - 5-6-2023** – Municipal Highway and Stormwater Mitigation Program (MHSMP) open this fall and this grant will provide an additional \$200,000 to the Town toward construction of a new salt and sand shed on Staso Road. According to the application guide, the maximum amount of funding per project through the VTrans Municipal Assistance Section (i.e., the sum total of MM and TAP grants) is capped at \$500,000 of federal funding which will require \$125,000 of local match funding, for a total grant amount of \$625,000 (i.e., 80% federal or state / 20% local funding split). Any additional expenses per project cannot be funded through these programs.

Action needed:

None.....at this time. Informational Only.

d. Grants-in-Aid Project (2024) –UPDATE: 12-8-2023 - *The road selected for the 2024 Grants-in-Aid project is Pencil Mill Road. There are segments of Pencil Mill Road that require a culvert change, stone-lined ditches, tree removal, and reshaping of the road surface. Jeff has contacted Alan Mays from VTRANS to schedule a site visit to get approval that the road segments will qualify for the grant.* **Last Update: 11-12-2023** – The project area for the Grants-in-Aid has been narrowed down to Moscow Road or Eaton Hill East. They both address water runoff problems, but Moscow Road also needs some ledge removed to resolve the water runoff problem and provide for better ditches to collect and direct the runoff. **Last Updated: 9-9-2023**

– The Grants-in-Aid award for 2024 is \$18,000. I have tasked the DPW Director to work with the highway foreman to review our road segment inventory and put together their recommendation on which hydrologically connected road segments that are categorized as “high priority” that “Do not meet” the Municipal Roads General Permit standard to seek approval from VTrans as legitimate road segments to bring into compliance. The goal has always been to choose projects that will fully execute the grants funding. We have never had an issue meeting our local grant match requirements through in-kind means. The deadline for this project is September 30, 2024.

Action needed: *None.....at this time. Informational Only.*

e. Better Roads Grant (2024) – UPDATE: 01-05-2024 – *Three applications were submitted by the deadline. I spoke with the Better Roads Program Manager and he advised that it is unlikely the Town will received more than one grant this year due to limited funding capacity. There will be a decision point in the near future. I was told to expect grant award notifications to be sent out in April 2024.* **Last Update- 12-08-2023** – The road selected for the 2024 Category B Better Roads Grant is Birdseye. There is a culvert to replace, reestablishing ditches, grading, and some stone-lining of the ditches on slopes over 10-degrees. The road selected for the Category D is Belgo Road. Josh Carvajal has done the watershed area survey of this area in the past, so that is one less step we need to completed prior to the December 20, 2023 application deadline. **Last Update- 11-13-2023** - The Better Roads grant applications for fiscal year 2025 are due NLT 12/20/2023. My intent is to apply for a Category B (East and West Crystal Haven) and Category D (Belgo Road). **Last Update: 9-9-2023** – The Better Roads project for 2024 is a section of West Castleton Road near Glen Lake. This is a comprehensive approach project. This grant will address stormwater mitigation, paving, stone-lining of ditches with a 10% or greater grade, guardrails, signage, and culvert replacement. As Road Commissioner, is the method I have implemented for all grant projects moving forward. The deadline for this project is June 30, 2024.

Action needed: *None.....at this time. Informational Only.*

2. Transfer Station –

a. Operations –

(1) **UPDATE: 1-5-2024** – *Jeff and Jacob had a contractor visit the Transfer Station to discuss what can be done with replacing the concrete block walls with poured concrete walls and the cost to excavate the area around the existing walls (north side, where the area is paved), pour footings, backfill with stone (not gravel), and pour new walls is expensive. It is not something we can add to the operating budget, but something were money is put into a capital reserve and the work done once there is adequate funds in the reserve account.* **Last Update: 11-12-2023** – Another summer gone and still no quote to replace the block wall near the compactor with a poured concrete wall. I am going to assign this to the highway foreman, and I expect I will get results so we have a cost to try and get this project approved so work can be done in the summer of 2024. **Updated: 9-9-2023** – According to the DPW Director, Myron White has not responded, so I directed him to contact Jarrod Ellis, Tolin & Sons, or another concrete contractor. **Updated: 8-11-2023 – Poured concrete walls:** The DPW Director spoke with Myron White of Myron White Concrete and Myron visited the transfer station to look at what the Town is looking to have done. We await an estimate figure from Myron. The DPW Director will follow up with Myron the week of August 14th. **Updated – 2-10-2023.** The Selectboard approved \$6,000 in ARPA funds to replace a portion of concrete block wall near the compactor bin. The DPW Director will solicit bids in March 2023 for work to be done before

Memorial Day and the return of summer residents.

Action needed: I will remove the \$6,000 from the proposed ARPA Project List I provided to the SB.

b. **Vehicles. UPDATE: 1-5-2024** – Nothing significant to report

Action needed: None.....at this time. Informational Only.

c. **Personnel: UPDATE: 1-5-2024** - I hired a part-time laborer (Non-CDL license holder) to help Jacob at the Transfer Station until such time I am able to hire a permanent Roustabout. I had Karen advertise the position again as we had two applicants who I did not hire. The search continues. In the meantime, Heath and Russ have been filling in where needed.

Action needed: None.....at this time. Informational Only

3. Solar Projects –

a. **Nothing to report**

Action needed: None.....at this time. Informational Only.

4. Wastewater Treatment Facility –

a. **20-Year Facility Upgrades: Nothing to report. Project is complete.**

Action needed: None.....at this time. Informational Only.

b. **Sewer Infrastructure:**

(1) **Inspection of gravity sewer line under Castleton Four Corners – NO CHANGE. Last Update: 11-12-2023** – It has been over a year to get somebody to televise these lines and the job still isn't done. I spoke with Russ at the WWTF and he advised he has been in contact with the company to televise/inspect the sewer lines under Castleton Corners and Sucker Brook area and they are not committing to a specific date stating they are behind schedule with other projects. I will personally call them the week of 11-13-2023 to express my disappointment and try and get a date established. **Last Update: 9-9-2023** – According to the DPW Director, the lines are tentatively scheduled to be televised/inspected next week, but an exact date has not been confirmed. The same for the lines in the Crystal Haven and Crystal Meadows area. **Updated: 8-11-2023** – Russ Hallet received some quotes and provided them to Karen to include with the BoSC meeting packets for Monday, August 14, 2023. **Updated: 7-7-2023** – I have in my possession one quote to televise/inspect the gravity sewer line under Castleton Corners. Russ is working with Aldrich and Elliott to identify other potential bidders for this project. According to Russ, none of the local contractors want the job. **Updated: 5-6-2023** – I reminded the DPW Director and WWTF crew that this needs to be a priority. The Board of Sewer Commissioners need to know the extent of any problem(s) and potential cost(s) to make repairs or replace lines so a decision can be made and if needed, bids solicited to make repairs/replacement. My concern is the longer this drags out, the less likely we will be able to find a contractor to do the work prior to winter. **Updated: 2-10-2023** – The DPW Director is working with the wastewater technicians to locate a contractor who is willing to televise the gravity sewer collection line that runs under the Castleton Four Corners from the east. This gravity line has been previously identified as compromised and if it fails, raw sewage will leak into the ground and potentially, a portion of the intersection will have to be excavated to make necessary repairs/replacement. It is imperative we

find a contractor to perform the job so we can get video footage of the condition of the line and determine the best course of action to address the issue. **Updated: 12-10-2022** – I spoke with WWTF Chief Operator Jeff Jordan about having the gravity fed sewer lines under Castleton Corners intersection and he advised he has reached out to A1 and Dundon’s and still hasn’t received quotes back. I sent a message to the DPW Director and Jeff stating if we cannot find somebody local, they will have to go outside of the area. **Updated- 11-9-2022** – I asked the DPW Director and WWTF Chief Operator to contact A1 Sewer and Drain and Dundon’s Plumbing and Heating to get quotes to televise the gravity sewer line that enters the collection system from the east along Route 4A into Castleton Corners. I await the quotes. **Updated: 10-21-2022:** I was reminded by Aldrich and Elliott engineer, Jason Booth, that the gravity sewer line that comes into the Castleton Corners intersection from the east (by Dunkin Donuts) was identified during the last sewer line replacement project as needing further inspection. The line was found to be rotted in places and it was recommended a camera be run through the line to assess the condition. At the time, the Board of Sewer Commissioners, decided to use Sewer Enterprise reserve funds to pay for the camera work, as well as replacing the Bomoseen pump station located near the Prospect Golf Course along Route 30. I have asked DPW Director Dave Fabricius and Wastewater Chief Operator Jeff Jordan to get a quote from A1 Sewer and Drain to do the camera work and provide photos of the sewer line as well as get quotes to upgrade the Bomoseen Pump Station.

Action needed: None.....at this time. Informational Only.

(2) Wastewater Collection System Expansion – UPDATE: 1-5-2024 – Aldrich and Elliott are well underway with their engineering/design phase of the project. I have not received a status report (nor have I asked for one) from Aldrich and Elliott but I will contact Wayne Elliott next week to get an update. Last Update: 12-8-2023 – I received a call from Mark Courcelle advising that the sewer line for Crystal Heights has been designed and permitted. He is wondering why Aldrich and Elliott was hired for the design. I need to follow up with Mark to get details and verify his claim and then contact Wayne Elliott to sort it out. Updated - 11-12-2023 – The contract with Aldrich & Elliott for engineering of Crystal Heights was signed and returned. This was identified by the Board of Sewer Commissioner’s as their number one priority. Updated: 9-9-2023 – There is an agenda item on the 9-11-2023 Board of Sewer Commissioner’s meeting to discuss funding source options for the proposed four sewer expansion projects and to rank order them for funding. Updated: 8-11-2023 – There is an agenda item on the Board of Sewer Commissioner’s meeting agenda for August 14, 2023 for address what is needed from the BoSC to prioritize the four proposed projects and decide on how to fund it, along with what those connecting to the sewer expansion would be required to pay and options for them to pay their contributions to the expansion. Updated: 7-7-2023 – I forwarded to the board members estimates from Wayne Elliott for the costs and type of collection system proposed for Crystal Heights, Preston Lane, Depot Terrace, and Creek Road. That information is included in the Board of Sewer Commissioners meeting packets for Monday night. Updated: 5-20-2023 – I received a copy of Town correspondence from Jim Thomas that goes back to 1985 regarding the sewer line extension up Route 30 and how the costs were broken down. The estimated cost back in 1985 was \$1.6M, with a local share of \$250,000. It also breaks down how much each homeowner to be serviced by the new municipal sewer line would pay. For those who needed a pump, the initial payment was \$500 and the remainder to be paid over a 5-year period. For those who only need gravity service, the cost was \$2,500, which was pro-rated over a 5-year period. The memo as discusses ownership, connection fees, electric bill payments, and more.

Action needed: None.....at this time. Informational Only.

(3) Wastewater Collection System Repair and Maintenance – UPDATE: 1-6-2024 – Problems continue with the gravity sewer line on East Crystal Haven. The WWTF crew has been dealing with restricted flows on that line that have caused alarm to residents on East Crystal Haven because water is slow to drain from sinks and toilets. Russ and Jeff had to hire AI Sewer and Drain to come in and use a water jet to clear debris from the lines. During this process, they discovered three manholes not shown on the “as built” plans for the sewer extensions in the Crystal Havens. It was during the excavation of these manholes that they discovered that a brick channel in one of those manhole cleanouts was missing six bricks. The mortar had deteriorated, and six bricks were “washed away” into the lines. They were able to locate four of the six bricks, but two remain at large. The restricted flow issue has been corrected, but the WWTF crew need to locate the two remaining bricks before they become an issue. More of a concern to me is the condition of all the manholes in that area. Until a couple of years ago, these sewer manholes had not been opened and inspected since they were emplaced in the late 1980’s and now the discovery of additional manholes has caused me to more aggressively pursue the hiring of a contractor to camera (televise) the lines and for the Town’s WWTF crew to develop an inspection plan and schedule of all the manholes, pump stations, and cleanouts in the sewer collection system and ensure that unknown manholes are accurately added to existing plans.

c. Sewer Vehicles & Equipment:

(3) Vehicles – UPDATE: 1-6-2024 – The Kubota tractor needed a new floor due to excessive rot. Town Mechanic Evan Chalmers was able to fabricate and weld in some new pieces steel to solidify the floor of the cab. Operators will no longer be able to stick their feet through the floor and use their feet like the Flintstones, so expect the fuel costs to operate it to increase. **Last Update: of 12-8-2023** – I was approached by WWTF Chief Operator Russ Hallot advising that the GMC pick up went in for inspection and it could not be inspected due to a a fault light illuminated on the instrument cluster. The code is emissions related and two new sensors were ordered to try and clear the code and the light. If that doesn’t work, the next step is to replace the catalytic converter, which with parts and labor will cost over \$1,500.

Action needed: None.....at this time. Informational Only.

5. Highway Department –

a. **Paving in FY24-25** – DPW Foreman Jeff Davidson met with a representative from Wilk Paving and they visited a couple of roads to get an opinion on the what is needed to prepare it for paving, what the best type of application would be to resurface the road, and how many tons it would take to resurface the identified segments of road. Jeff did the same thing (different roads) with a representative from a company out of Massachusetts who offers the oil and stone chip sealing method of surfacing a gravel road (like Belgo Road resident Stephen Dechen mentioned at a previous SB meeting). The intent of these road trips around Town was to get a sense of the methods/application/cost associated with paving in 2024. There is no doubt that the costs associated with paving the identified roads will far exceed the amount budgeted, but it is all part of building a road assessment spreadsheet and paving replacement schedule that will be presented to the Selectboard in February 2024.

Action needed: None.....at this time. Informational Only..

b. FEMA

(1) (South Street Trestle) – NO CHANGE. Last Update: 9-9-2023 – Recent

email correspondence from John Nummy advised he is moving on and a new project manager will take his place. I asked for a phone conference call with both of them before he moves on to discuss where this project is headed. I seek clarification because in the recent email correspondence from John, it sounds like VTrans is taking responsibility for the project. **Updated: 7-7-2023** – I shared with the SB an email I received from John Nummy from VTrans. It appears that there may not be a maintenance agreement between the Town of Castleton and the railroad for the culvert that runs under the trestle. If that is the case, it may end up being the responsibility of the railroad and VTrans to make the necessary repairs to the culvert. If this ends up being the case, it will relieve the Town from any fiscal responsibility. If they were to ask the Town to then take over the maintenance and repair of the culvert, I would then propose they remove the trestle and build with build something more manageable for pedestrians, cyclists, and snowmobilers. **Updated: 5-19-2023** – I received an email on 5-19-2023 that I shared with the Select Board providing an assessment of the watershed and required size culvert opening running beneath the trestle. I will coordinate a meeting with John Nummy (VTrans) and our DPW Director and Highway Foreman to unravel the letter received as it pertains to our options. The bad news is that the Better Roads grants the Town was awarded is not eligible for use with the options contained in the letter received.

Action needed: None.....at this time. Informational Only.

c. Equipment.

(1) **Grader -UPDATE: 1-6-2024** – A Milton Caterpillar representative came to the highway garage to assess the grader. He identified and fixed a fuel leak on an injector but was not able to locate a transmission leak. His expert advice to the Town Mechanic was to ensure the transmission oil level was good and to “run it” and monitor it for a leak. If it does leak, give them a call, and they will come back down and perform additional troubleshooting. **Last Update -12-8-2023** – The grader has a transmission leak that requires inspection by a Caterpillar representative. This could be related to work done by Milton CAT. Jeff advised that a Milton CAT representative will be in Castleton next week to make repairs to a damaged door hinge on the new backhoe. When the rep is here, he will inspect the grader and determine whether the grader can be repaired in our garage or if it has to be transported to their facility in Richmond, VT. **Updated - 11-12-2023** – The grader was repaired and just about every gravel road has been graded. According to Jeff, all roads will be graded by the end of the month, likely earlier. Last week the grader was non-mission capable for a couple of days because a few older hydraulic hoses blew and had to be replaced. They were not part of the components repaired while at Milton Caterpillar. It is back in service and being used.

Action needed: None.....at this time. Informational Only.

(2) **Vehicle Replacement –UPDATE: 1-6-2024** – Before the Selectboard at the 1-8-2024 meeting will be a proposal to replace the 2011 Ford F-450 with another type truck and plow package. The Town of Hubbardton uses this type of truck and brought it to the highway garage for “show and tell”. Jeff spoke to Jeremy Waite at the VTrans District #3 garage in Castleton and they switched to using some of the smaller trucks a couple of years ago. It reduces overall costs and helps with the situation we all face, and that is not being able to find and hire drivers with a CDL. **Last Update - 12-8-2023** – I spoke with our mechanic and his assessment of the Ford F-450 is to only use it this winter unless absolutely necessary. These smaller 1-Ton trucks are workhorses in the winter to plow the smaller streets in the village and along the Route 4A corridor and in the summer for the myriad of roadside projects. Using it to plow with is hard on the frame and drivetrain, so due to its age and condition, so it shall be used only when absolutely necessary. In the meantime, I have included replacing the Ford F-450 with another 1-

Ton and front plow on the ARPA considerations list. If this is something the Selectboard wishes to consider, I want to reiterate that ARPA funds have to be obligated by 12/31/2024 and spent by 12/31/2026. Items like fire trucks and plow trucks are taking 12-24 months from time of order and time of delivery, so this means obligating funds that will allow adequate time to take delivery of the new truck before the ARPA timelines for obligation and expenditure expire. **Last Update-9-9-2023** – The highway department vehicle replacement schedule is behind schedule. The F-450 1-ton dump truck is a bucket of bolts, duct tape, and bailing twine. I asked the Town mechanic to provide an assessment of whether he can keep the truck going for the winter. I await his assessment. The 1-ton trucks are workhorses for the many small jobs throughout the year where a single or double axle truck is too large to use. They are also the trucks used to plow parking lots because they can be more easily maneuvered and clear the snow and apply salt without tearing up the place. The thought is sell two single axle dump trucks and purchase a new tandem to replace those two single axles. Better resale value holds more material, so it is more efficient, and it reduces the number of trucks by one, thus removing a truck from the future replacement schedule. I recommend using the municipal truck/equipment loan program through the Vermont Treasurer's Office to purchase the new tandem. The program provides for a 2% interest rate, but is capped at 75% of the loan amount, or \$110,000, whichever is less. A new tandem fully outfitted with a plow and sand/salt system is approximately \$269,000. The delivery time once ordered is ~~18-24~~ 12-18 months. That said, I recommend the Select Board approve me to work with town mechanic and highway foreman to get at least three competitive bids to bring before the Select Board for approval to finance a new tandem using a combination of what the municipal loan program provides (Max of \$110,000) and financing through one of the two financial institutions the Town uses. This tandem would replace the two older single axle dump trucks. The money in the operating budget that funds the vehicle replacement fund is such that it cannot fund the outright purchase of a new truck. The new tandem loan was paid off this year so that opens the **\$45K** to be used for payments on the loan for the new tandem. This is important because the highway department vehicle reserve is at **\$77,475**.

Action needed: Request the Selectboard consider using ARPA to fund replacing the 2011 Ford F-450 1-Ton dump with another 1-Ton dump with a front package and removeable sander. Because the ARPA funds have timelines tied to them and delivery of new trucks and equipment is taking 12-18 months, it is important to make decisions to obligate the funds by 12/31/2024 and have delivery/expenditure of the funds by 12/31/2026.

d. Municipal Roads & Streets.

(1) **NO CHANGE. Last Update: 9-9-2023** – Hydeville Plaza property owner Nancy Libatore was at the Town Office two weeks ago and we had a brief discussion about the subject of the Town taking over the 60-foot-wide strip of land owned by Joe Howard that is currently co-used by patrons to the Hydeville Plaza, Paul's Pizza, residents on Gilbert Lane, and to access the property Joe Howard is developing behind the plaza. This 60-foot strip of land is owned by Joe Howard is the access to the property he is developing into single-family residences. He currently has three houses built on those parcels. The property is bordered by South Woodard Way to the east, U.S. Route 4 to the north, East Creek Road to the west, and multiple private residences to the south. Joe has proposed to deed the 60-foot-wide strip of land to the Town (end point to be determined, but approximately 400-500 feet in length) and the Town maintain it. The 60-foot-wide strip of land will be the single common access to the Hydeville Plaza, Paul's Pizza (and business behind Paul's Pizza), residents on Gilbert Lane, and the 7-11 single family homes on Joe's parcels. I explained to Nancy that the Town would not even consider taking over the road unless it is brought up to Class III standards and accepted by the Town as such. This includes a proper subbase, base, and surface of gravel approved for use by the highway foreman and road commissioner. The cost of such construction would have to be on Joe Howard. He would have to work out any cost-sharing with other users and the Town would have no involvement or responsibility in this

matter. **Updated: 8-11-2023** – There is an item on the agenda regarding how the Town plans, authorizes, and builds roads. The Town itself doesn't have a policy on how we, the Town plans, authorizes, and build roads. The Selectboard is the authority over roads and if they [Selectboard] decide to have a road built or upgraded in classification, they would follow State statutes to do so, and the highway department, or contractor, would build the road in accordance with industry standards and follow any State statutes or policy regarding rights-of-way, drainage, etc. The Selectboard may decide to take over a private road and make it a public road, and they would follow Statutes and be sure that the road meets VTrans recommended standards before agreeing to take over the road and maintain it. The Town building a road on Town-owned property is different than the Town seeking permission from landowners to lay out a new road, or to take over an existing road all have different requirements.

Action needed: Decide on whether or not to accept the 60-foot strip of land that provides access to the Hydeville Plaza, Paul's Pizza, the houses on Gilbert Lane, and the two parcels of land owned by Joe Howard, where he is building 7 new homes. The road through the property would connect Route 4A to East Creek Road. In the short term, Joe Howard has stated he would deed the 60-foot-wide strip of land to the Town and the Town would then be responsible for plowing and maintaining it. Joe would have to agree to provide a snowplow turnaround area and bring the 60-foot strip of land up to standard before the Town would agree to accept the property from him. This could prove cost prohibitive to Joe and he may abandon the idea. To the best of my knowledge, Joe has not committed to bringing the road up to Class III standards.

e. State Highways

(2) **NO CHANGE. UPDATE: 8-11-2023** – I met with representatives from Dubois & King and VTrans on Thursday to discuss the paving project that would only pave the section of Town owned Class I road, which encompasses Route 4A from Sand Hill Road to the bridge east of the train depot. The plan is to mill two inches of material from the road and replace it with a shim and overlay. This project is scheduled for 2025. This project will include raising the utilities to ½ inch below the grade of the road, replace signs, line striping, crosswalks, etc. It will also include any drainage needed. I explained that following the last VTrans Class I paving project in the village area, that it created these low stops where water was trapped and could not make it to the stormwater catch basins, and that I would like those problems to be resolved, even if it take milling a swale into the pavement to mitigate the ponding and allow water to reach the catch basins. This primarily occurs in front of the Castleton Free Library and along the south side of Main Street. I will share the minutes of the meeting once I have them. **Updated: 6-5-2023** – I was contacted by a representative from Dubois & King regarding the Castleton STP PC25(2) Class 1 paving project. Sometime in the coming months the contractor will reach out to schedule a meeting with you and the public to discuss the project scope and get any feedback on other potential improvements that can be incorporated. At this time, they are developing the preliminary plans and as such are looking into the existing signage and what sign replacements should occur. This project is scheduled in the FYE25 construction season.

Action needed: None.....at this time. Informational Only.

6. Town Office & other buildings –

a. **Fire Station. UPDATE: 1-6-2024** – *I spoke with Paul McClure this past week regarding repairs needed to the hot water system at the fire station and he advised the parts needed are scheduled to arrive this week and once he has the parts, he will complete the work. I reached out to Mickey McClure this week and asked for an update on his timeline to complete the work at the fire station. He advised that he had to close up some current jobs but would be able to start the project in a couple of weeks.* **Last Update: 11-12-2023** – The Town received an insurance payment of \$27,000 for the damage done to the roof and ceiling above the apparatus

bay. The work to the roof is complete and I spoke to Mickey McClure and he will get the interior work done since there is no evidence of leaking since the roof was repaired. The fire chief reported to me that he contacted Paul McClure because the apparatus bay heat was not working, and that Paul was going to stop by and diagnose the problem. I haven't heard back what caused the problem, but the fire chief hasn't reported the problem still exists

Action needed: None.....at this time. Informational Only.

b. **Highway Garage: NO CHANGE. UPDATE: 11-12-2023** – The painting of the exterior of the highway garage was not completed by the DPW Director. This is going to have to be bid out and painted by a professional. It will be addressed this winter through the bid process and scheduled for the spring/summer of 2024. The highway garage was approved for an energy audit through the Municipal Energy Resilience Program Grant (MERP) the Town was approved to participate in this year. I await the next step which is contact from a contractor to schedule a date for the energy audit/testing. **Last Update: 9-9-2023** – Painting was started by the DPW Director and was not completed. The DPW Director asked the Transfer Station operator if he was interested in completing the job during his “off time” and be paid by the Town using the funds encumbered to have the building painted. I am disappointed it has even gotten to this point because it was supposed to be completed last year. It will get done prior to cold weather arriving. **Update: 8-11-2023** - The building was pressure washed this past week and painting is scheduled to commence the week of August 14th, weather dependent. Once the side of the building is painted where the new overhead doors are to be installed, the highway foreman will reach out to Overhead Door Company to have the new doors scheduled for installation. The delays getting the building painted has directly impacted scheduling the installation of the new doors.

Action needed: None.....at this time. Informational Only.

c. **Town Office: UPDATE: 1-6-2024** – Dick Combs completed a frame to cover the old Rutland County painted map in the conference room at the Town Office. He used UV protective glass, and he hung the frame in place this past week. In the proposed 2024-2025 operating budget, I included funding that would pay to have additional rooms at the Town Office repainted as well as the hallway, restroom, and meeting room at the fire department. I reached out to a local painter who did the work last year at the Town Office and asked him to contact me to set up a date/time to meet so I can show him the project area and to get a quote. He also does the type of work needed to repair the two wooden exterior doors at the Town Office.

Action needed: None.....at this time. Informational Only.

d. **Police Station. Nothing to report**

Action needed: None.....at this time. Informational Only.

7. **Police Department** –

a. **Dispatching Costs – NO CHANGE: Last Update: 5-6-2023** – The Vermont legislature took up the topic of regional dispatching during this year's session. VLCT provides legislative updates on their website that outlines what has been discussed in the legislature and their actions to address the issue. **Updated- 9-23-2022** – I provided a letter to the Selectboard from the State of VT, Department of Public Safety dated 9-22-2022 that provides an update on the progress being made on regional dispatching for police, fire, and EMS agencies. **Updated: 8-4-2022** – The

Rutland County dispatch working group is still working to determine a location and strategy to pay for the dispatching services after the grant expires. Chief Mantello advised that the Rutland County Sheriff's Department used a Homeland Security Grant to order dispatching consoles. It appears that the location will likely be the Rutland County Sheriff's Office, but the big question is how to sustain the services over time. There have been discussions about how to pay for the services, which have included a county tax, which may have case law that states a county tax cannot be imposed for dispatching services. There is also a working group that was directed by the Vermont Legislature. That group is being led by Chief George Merkel from Vergennes.

Action needed: None.....at this time. Informational Only.

b. **Public Outreach – Reward for the arrest and conviction of Honoree Fleming's killer** **UPDATE: 1-6-2024** – Chief Mantello put out a press release for the \$25,000 reward leading to the arrest and conviction of the Honoree's killer. It was also posted across a couple of social media platforms. **Last Update - 12-8-2023** - Chief Mantello and I have been fielding questions about making donations toward the reward for the killer of Honoree Fleming. We both spoke to Vermont Digger about the situation and our message was clear, the Town is not going to collect donations and hold it for an unforeseen time. The reward requires a conviction of the Honoree Flemings killer, and that may take years to take place, possibly never, so those pledging money will have to pay if that time comes. There is a Go Fund Me account established by a local business. The Town should not be involved in such activities or should not collect money or place it into our accounting system.

Action needed: None.....at this time. Informational Only.

c. **Vehicles and Equipment – UPDATE: 1-6-2024** – There was no interest from the Vermont Constable's Association to purchase the Ford Taurus so it will go out on public auction sites and local media the week of 1-8-2024. **Last Update - 12-8-2023** – The First Constable is now using the 2017 Ford Explorer from the CPD and the Chevy Impala is being shopped around the Vermont Constables Association. If there is no interest by Wednesday, December 13th, I will post it on the Muncibid and Gov Deals website. Melanie was able to re-establish Town accounts for both those sites. **Updated: 11-12-2023** – The new Chevy Tahoe is in service. I have spoken with the police chief and First Constable about the transfer of the 2017 Ford Explorer to the First Constable and the sale of the Ford Taurus. I took photos and video of the Taurus and will put in on the Muncibid site for sale. I will also send the photos to Fair Haven Constable Don Proctor who will send them out to the Vermont Constable Association to see if any of them are interested in buying it.

Action needed: None.....at this time. Informational Only.

8. **Emergency Management** –

a. **Personnel/Training** – Nothing significant to report.

Action needed: None.....at this time. Informational Only.

b. **Facilities/Equipment – UPDATE: 1-6-2024** – The new Emergency Operations Center still needs some sanding of sheetrock and painting, but the electrical work is completed. Depending on what the Mother Nature decides to deliver over the next week, I expect the work to be completed next week and I will start moving in furniture and supplies.

Action needed: Selectboard consider the purchase of an emergency standby generator for the highway garage and EOC (upstairs at the garage). The highway garage is the next Town building on the list of Town facilities that would benefit from an emergency standby generator. This is a critical facility for providing services across the entire Town. This building also now houses the Emergency Operations Center. In order to open and close bay doors, power the boiler, lights, and communications equipment, a long-term power outage would interrupt the ability to provide critical services, repair equipment, and operate the Emergency Operations Center. The size of the generator will be the same as the Town Office, or approximately \$10-\$12K to make it turnkey. This is too much to add to the Emergency Management budget in one year, so I am asking the board to consider either using ARPA or placing a article on the ballot this year to purchase it using the undesignated general fund surplus. The general fund surplus is estimated to be approximately \$234,000.

9. Fire Department –

- a. **Dispatching Costs** – See notes under police department.

Action needed: None.....at this time. Informational Only.

b. **Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) – UPDATE: 1-6-2024** – I received an email from the grant writer from Lexipol advising that window for submitting grant applications will open at the end of January 2024 and that additional information may be required. Chief Goyette and 1st Assistance Chief Ducharme were also included on the email and are compiling the additional information the grant writer advised may be required. The grant writer recommended that the air refill station be removed, and a gear washer (extractor) be added in addition to the new sets of turnout gear. The grant writer was concerned that the grant for the gear would not be considered if the air refill station was included in the grant because this year the focus of the grant was individual firefighter safety. The gear washer, also called an “extractor” removes nasty carcinogens from gear that has been linked to higher certain types of cancer rates in firefighters that in the general public. This does mean that replacing the current air refill station falls either into a future grant (no guarantees) or build it into the small tools and equipment reserve the voters approved last year. One quote Chief Goyette received from a company called MES puts the replacement of the air refill station/compressor at \$75-\$90,000. **Last Update - 11-12-2023** – Chief Goyette and 1st Assistant Chief Dan Ducharme are working with Lexipol to submit grant applications for new turnout gear for members, a new air bottle refill station, and a gear washer. According to Chief Goyette, he spoke to FEMA representative for the AFG Grant, Lance Harbor, and the fact that the Town spent money to replace the air packs, it looks good when this new grant is peer reviewed at FEMA. **Updated: 9-9-2023** – I received correspondence from Julie Fisher (Lexipol) advising she is moving on and we will have a new Lexipol representative to work with regarding reapplying for the AFG Grant. I passed this information to Chief Goyette and 1st Assistant Chief Dan Ducharme to follow up with the new representative before the grant period opens later this year. **Updated: 8-11-2023** - I spoke with Julie Fisher from Lexipol about resubmitting the grant application this fall since they are the ones who made the mistake last year. They agreed to file a new application, however, the SCBA would be removed since the SB authorized the purchase of new SCBA using ARPA funds. These grants are never a guarantee. I reached out to the Fire Chief and asked him if there was something else he would like included in the grant in lieu of the SCBA. Once I have a response, I will reach out to Julie Fisher with the item(s) the Fire Chief would like to include.

Action needed: None.....at this time. Informational Only.

c. **Operations – Nothing significant to report**

Action needed: None.....at this time. Informational Only.

d. **Public Outreach & Support – Nothing significant to report**

Action needed: None.....at this time. Informational Only.

e. **Apparatus – UPDATE: 1-6-2024 -**

(1) I spoke to Jim and Dick on Friday about meeting with the fire department's truck committee and highway department foreman and Town Mechanic to discuss the proposed vehicle/equipment replacement plan and both were agreeable to meeting the week of 1-8-2024. **Last Update: 7-7-2023** – I sent an email to Chief Goyette asking him to bring his proposal to replace Engine 6 back before the Public Safety Committee ASAP. The cost of replacing that truck since the first time he asked to replace it and his request was denied by the Select Board, **has increased by \$100,000 \$150,000** and the timeline for delivery from the date of order is over 12 months. This cost of purchasing a replacement for Engine 6 is likely going to continue to increase and that increase will need to come from the fire department's vehicle reserve, depleting it even more. The \$100,000 increase represents at least ¼ of the total fire department reserve. **Updated: 5-19-2023** – I spoke with Heath Goyette and he advised that the owner of Har Rob Fire Apparatus is going to come to Castleton to assess Engine 2 and decide whether he wants to purchase it as a parts vehicle. The potential buyer that Mark Brown connected with Heath offered a purchase price lower than both Heath and I feel is fair. **Updated: 5-6-2023** – Engine 2 still sits in the fire station. It needs to be sold and the ball is in Chief's Goyette's court. He was working with Brown's Auto Salvage and Har-Rob Fire Apparatus to get it sold. The last conversation I had with Chief Goyette was that he had no commitments to purchase it. I recommended that it get put on eBay, or one of the many Facebook Marketplace sites for fire apparatus.

Action needed: Consider using \$115,000 in ARPA to fund the purchase of a quad-cab pickup truck, UTV, enclosed trailer, and slid-in wildland skid unit for the pickup truck. These pieces of equipment would replace the van and Engine 5. The cascade air refill station currently in the van would be moved to the enclosed trailer and the ice water rescue gear would be stored in the enclosed trailer. The van and Engine 5 would be sold and the proceeds placed into the fire department vehicle reserve account or used to help outfit the pickup and UTV with lights, and an environmental enclosure for the UTV (doors/heater/AC). This would allow adequate funds to purchase the used aerial ladder truck from Forest Grove, PA, and to replace Engine 6 with a new quad cab mini-pumper or quick attack truck with a full-sized 1,200-1,500 GMP pump. Replacing the van (old ambulance) and Engine 5 (wildland fire/brush truck) with a quad-cab pickup increases the fire department's capability while removing two older vehicles that are well past their operational lifespan. The introduction of a quad-cab pickup truck, UTV, and trailer will allow more firefighter riding positions as a wildland unit/brush truck and for wildland fires/brush fires, manpower is always a concern because wildland operations are physically taxing and oftentimes remote. The UTV would allow access to remote locations and can carry heavy equipment and water, something that will fatigue a firefighter and by they reach the location of the fire, are physically exhausted and not capable of sustained physical exertion.

f. **PACIF Scholarship – NO CHANGE. Last Update: 11-12-2023** - The grant period opens on 1-1-2024. This year my intent is to request funding to pay for the training of fire department personnel on the new ladder truck. This is a no-match grant through VLCT/PACIF.

Action needed:

None at this time. Informational Only

10. Town Lands –

- a. **Crystal Haven Common Area** – Quiet until spring.

Action needed:

None.....at this time. Informational Only

b. **Park & Ride. NO CHANGE. Last Update: 9-9-2023** – The park and ride was crack sealed, seal coated and new lines painted. The Park & Ride grant was just announced, and I will review the criteria and come to the Select Board with a proposal.

Action needed:

None.....at this time. Informational Only

c. **Five parcels of land. NO CHANGE. Last Update: 5-6-2023** – I spoke with the Town assessor and asked about getting the five parcels of land the Town owns in the Crystal Heights and Crystal Meadows area assessed ASAP. As soon as the abstract for the grand list is submitted in June, she will conduct site visits of the properties and provide assessments. **Updated: 12-10-2022** – I spoke with Assessor Mary Jo Teetor about providing an updated appraisal of the five parcels of land owned by the Town near Crystal Heights and Crystal Meadows. This is something she can and will do after the beginning of the year. The Selectboard didn't instruct me to make it a priority, so unless the Selectboard wants to make it a priority, it may have to wait until the spring to allow Mary Jo and I to walk all the properties. Depending on what we find for timber, it may make sense to have a logger or forester walk the parcels and assess whether it is worth select cutting timber from the land. **Updated: 11-11-2022** – Sean Sargent provided a quote to appraise the five Town of Castleton vacant land parcels that were conveyed to the Town from the now disband Castleton Economic Development Corporation.

Action needed:

None at this time. Informational Only

11. Miscellaneous

a. **Streetscape in the Castleton Village –NO CHANGE. Last Update: 8-11-2023** -I will have to apply for additional funding from other sources to help cover the costs of the VTrans Bike and Pedestrian Grant for the village area. The application should open later this fall. I will work with Rutland Regional Planning Commission to determine the best course of action to bring before the Selectboard.

Action needed:

Selectboard considers using ARPA funds to pay the required \$75K ((50% of the grant) for the small-scale bike and pedestrian grant award to put sidewalks on South Street from the University to Main Street. This is a 50% matching grant, so no matter where the funds end up coming from, it will require 50% of the \$150K to get the project moving. The engineering costs are not included in the grant. The Town has to front the costs for design/engineering, but it does have plans for that section of sidewalk from a previous grant award. A previous Selectboard (over 10 years ago) chose not to fund the project, but since plans have already been created, it may not cost as much for the design/engineering.

b. **Street light at the intersection of Route 30 and East Crystal Haven – UPDATE: 1-6-2024** – The streetlight was installed and the residents are appreciative saying the streetlight creates safer conditions to enter East Crystal Haven from Route 30. **Last Update - 12-8-2023** –I await word back from Chief Mantello on his assessment whether or not the claim that the intersection is a public safety issue due to the lack of a street light. Residents claim it is dark in that area and they have difficulty seeing the road when turning off Route 30 onto East Crystal Haven at night.

Action needed:

None at this time. Informational Only

c. Public Concerns –

(1) **Stormwater Runoff – NO CHANGE. Last Update: 9-9-2023** – I visited West Crystal Haven with the highway foreman following a hard rain two weeks ago and our observation showed no discharge of dirty water into Lake Bomoseen from the culvert at Tom Kearns’s camp. The water in the ditches was slowed by the crushed stone allowing debris to settle out before getting to the culvert leading to the Kearns property. I asked the highway foreman to take photos and he had them on his phone for review. **8-11-2023** – I reached out to Evan Fitzgerald and Hilary Solomon to get an update on their progress developing a stormwater assessment and mitigation plan for West Crystal Haven. The response back from both was not uplifting. Due to the all the damage done by the recent storms, they are both inundated with work and advised they will not be able to devote any time to West Crystal Haven until sometime in September. Evan advised we should move on from his firm if we needed a quicker response. I don’t believe we need to move on at this point. As an FYI, the WWTF crew and the DPW Director used a camera to televise the culvert under Tom Kearns property and found one place where there was a hole in the top of the culvert and another place where there was dirt and debris in the culvert. The culvert should be excavated and replaced. Since there is no easement on record for the current culvert, Mr. Kearns may not want a new one running under his property. This is still something that needs continued discussions and resolution. The WWTF crew also inspected Mr. Kearns’ grinder pump station and found no leaks or infiltration. They are going to replace the top cover portion which is made of steel. These grinder pump stations are so old and outdated that parts are not available, and a cover will need to be fabricated. **Updated: 7-7-2023** – The DPW Director met with Crystal Haven West resident Tom Kearns to discuss the ongoing stormwater discharge concerns on his property. The Town is waiting for stormwater mitigation options from engineer Evan Fitzgerald.

Action needed:

None at this time. Informational Only

(2) Public Sand Shed – UPDATE: 12-8-2023 – *Complaints that the public sand shed included sand with large stones in it was addressed with the highway foreman. I asked that sand with large stones be removed and replaced with sand that does not include large stones. The highway foreman advised he would have it done. I don’t think buying sand to fill the public sand shed is the answer. Being proactive and have sand for the public sand shed screened during the summer, in preparation for winter, is the fix plan going forward.*

Action needed:

None at this time. Informational Only

(3) Problem Trees UPDATE: 1-6-2024 – *The highway foreman applied for a grant requiring a 50% match to remove dead, dying, nuisance, and hazardous trees from our roadsides. It also focuses on identifying and removing Ash trees that attack the highly destructive and invasive Emerald Ash Borer. This grant supports the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (yet to be adopted), which was referenced in the grant application, so I am hopeful the grant will be approved. The application was for \$14,000. If approved, the Selectboard will have to decide whether to accept it and approve funding.* **Last Update: 11-12-2023** – The highway foreman is working with Trees Incorporated to develop a cost estimate to address the removal/trimming of dead, dangerous, and problematic trees along Town roads. A proposal will be brought before the Selectboard at the second meeting in November. **Last Update: 9-9-2023** – The highway foreman and Tom Johnson from Trees Incorporated traveled roads in Town to identify the most problematic or dangerous trees in order to be able to create a bid packet. I added Moscow Road to the list and now wait for that road to be assessed in order to create a bid packet. It is my intent to come to the Select Board and request assistance using ARPA funds to address these “problem” or dangerous

trees. If approved, it will position the Town to use the operating budget to address problem or dangerous trees moving forward. Like vehicle reserves, many years of underfunded department budgets have come to a head, and now need intervention. **Updated: 7-7-2023** – Complaints about “hazardous” or “problem” trees is ongoing, but recently took an uptick in the frequency. Some of the complaints are legitimate and the Town’s responsibility, while some are not legitimate due to the tree being on private property. For those complaints that are legitimate, the highway crew or tree warden attempt to do work themselves to remedy the situation, however, there are situations where the work is beyond the Town’s capability and needs outside contractor intervention. This is costly and our budgets do not support it. My concern is that if we (Town) do nothing and somebody get injured or killed because a tree or large tree branch falls on them and we knew about it, the outcome would likely cost more than spending the money to get these trees removed or property limbed.

Action needed: I ask the Selectboard consider adding additional money into “Town Lands” to cover the Town’s \$14,000 local match, use some ARPA funds, or agree to a ballot article to use \$14,000 on operating (General Fund) surplus to cover the Town’s \$14,000 local match share. The problem of dangerous dead, dying, or otherwise hazardous trees grows each year and exceeds the capacity of our highway crew and tree warden’s budgets. This grant will help to address the dangerous/problem tree issue. The highway foreman has met with Trees Incorporated and has some figures to put together into a proposal. The grant requires the Town work with an arborist/State Forester to put together a plan that will best utilize the funding and meet the program requirements.

12. Follow up from last meeting –

a. I had phone conversations with a representative from Morton’s Steel Buildings and a local contractor (who builds these type buildings) regarding salt and sand shed construction and costs. The representative from Morton’s believes we could purchase and have a contractor erect two 60’ long x 60’ wide metal buildings with 8’ high concrete side walls, asphalt floor, with permitting, site preparation, and electrical completed for \$650,000. With the \$300K grant and the \$266K we have in our reserves; we are less than \$100K from making a new salt and sand shed a reality. I do need to send the local contractor some dimensions and construction type to get an initial estimate, something I will do next week.

b. John Alexander is the new Parks and Recreation Director. He started work on 12-7-2023 and had his physical on 12-8-2023. He has met with Martha Clifford to begin a line of communication regarding current programming and events in the planning/scheduling pipeline. This is a work in progress.

c. I still have to meet with Joe Mark to review/update the returnable bottle and can policy.