

Town Manager's Report

Select Board Meeting 2/12/2024

1. Grant Project Updates:

a. **Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) Grant:** **UPDATE: 1-20-2024** – *The Town was awarded and accepted the \$1.2M Bike and Pedestrian Grant and a \$150K Small-Scale Bike and Pedestrian Grant. I signed the grant agreement for the \$150K Small-Scale Bike and Pedestrian Grant but I await the actual grant agreement for the large-scale that will need to be signed. Once received and I sign the agreement, I can move forward with soliciting a Municipal Project Manager and solicit bids from an engineering firm to do the final design so it can be put out to bid. I reviewed the reserve funds and highway carryover funds for sidewalks. I put together a spreadsheet for the meeting on Monday night to provide the board with financial information to help with deciding on whether to use ARPA funds to make the three sidewalk projects whole..* **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 of 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: Selectboard consider using ARPA funds to pay the for the Town's share of the two small-scale bike and pedestrian grant awarded. These are 50% matching grants.

a. **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.

Action needed: **Request the SB consider obligating ARPA funds to cover the Town's (Local) share of the Small-Scale Bike and Pedestrian Grant required for the Parson's Hill project, as well as funds to cover the Municipal Project Manager costs and costs associated with completing the design plans that were already started. 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 large-scale Bike and Pedestrian Grant recently awarded for Pedestrian Accessibility and Safety in the village.**

b. TAP (Transportation Alternatives) Grant for Stormwater Mitigation and New Salt and Sand Shed –NO CHANGE. Last Update: 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: *Request the SB consider obligating \$200,000 in ARPA toward the design and construction of the salt and sand shed.*

c. Grants-in-Aid Project (2024) –NO CHANGE. Last 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.

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

d. Better Roads Grant (2024) – NO CHANGE. Last Update: 1-20-2023 – I spoke with the Better Roads grant manager and he advised that the Town will not likely be awarded more than one grant due to amount of funding available and the number of towns who submitted applications. I was told to be prepared to rank order the three grant applications and based on the amount of the Category D (\$60,000) and the need for a costly replacement of a culvert on Belgo Road that sits on ledge, it would be my first choice. **Updated: 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. **Updated- 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 grant 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 complete prior to the December 20, 2023 application deadline.

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

2. Transfer Station –

a. Operations – UPDATE: 2-9-2024 – Revenues for the Transfer Station fell short for FYE2023 by \$26,705.60 and the operating budget has a surplus of \$52,202.83. The surplus was primarily due to underspending the personal services, employee benefits, and FICA expenses due to personnel vacancies (Roustabout) for approximately the same amount.

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

b. Vehicles. Nothing significant to report

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

c. Personnel: UPDATE: 2-9-2024 – *I issued a conditional letter of hire for the Roustabout position. He is currently working part-time as the laborer and would not be able to start full-time employment until March 5, 2024. Employment is conditional on a favorable criminal background check, license check, DOT physical, and drug test. Updated: 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. Construction of the large-scale solar array on the north side of Route 4 near Exit 5 is underway. Unfortunately, it will be the first thing travelers will see when entering Castleton from the east on Route 4. If the developer/contractor places the natural screening effectively, it will help reduce the view of the solar array.

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

4. Wastewater Treatment Facility –

a. UPDATE: 2-9-2024 - 20-Year Facility Upgrades: Post Construction Quarter 1 meeting was conducted 2-9-2024 to review the operation of the WWTF. Russ communicated his concerns and highlighted problems with Aldrich and Elliott Engineers. Some issues were previously reported and in the process of being addressed and there were some new issues. The plant is operating within normal tolerances and items that needed addressing are not significant enough to disrupt operations.

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

b. Sewer Infrastructure:

(1) **Inspection of gravity sewer line under Castleton Four Corners – UPDATE: 2-9-2024** – I was able to make contact with Green Mountain Pipeline and was assured our project was on their calendar for the last week of February. **Last Update -1-20-2024** – I shared an email with the Board of Sewer Commissioners that I sent to Green Mountain Pipeline on 1-20-2024. If a response is not received by the end of the week of 1-22-2024, I will work with Russ to find another contractor able to perform the inspections and televising in confined spaces. **Updated: 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. **Updated: 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.

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

(2) **Wastewater Collection System Expansion – UPDATE: 2-9-2024** – I spoke with Jeff Lewis and Jason Booth on 2-9-2024 regarding the status of the Crystal Heights and Depot Terrace sewer extensions. I was briefed in detail on Crystal Heights and the biggest takeaway was the cost increase. The total project cost, as briefed to me, has increased to \$651,000. This is substantially higher than the last estimate. I sent the Selectboard an email with all the documents, which will be in the Board of Sewer Commissioner's meeting packets, and ask you review them over the weekend and bring your questions or concerns to the meeting on Monday night. If you have something you would like answered before the meeting, please let me know and I will seek out an answer on Monday before the meeting. Also before the BoSC is an agreement with Aldrich and Elliott for the design of the sewer extension on Depot Terrace. **Last Update-1-20-2024** – I spoke with Jeff Lewis of Aldrich and Elliott this past Wednesday and he advised they are 80% complete with their updated design and wish to have an in-progress review with me and Russ the week of 1-22-2024. It sounds promising and with a cup of hope and pinch of luck, this will go out

to bid before spring. **Updated: 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. **Updated: 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: Request that the BoSC approve the engineering agreement with Aldrich and Elliott for the design of the sewer extension on Depot Terrace for a small forced main and not a gravity sewer line with a small pump station.

(3) Wastewater Collection System Repair and Maintenance – UPDATE: 2-9-2024 - *Since the last report, there have been some problems with the sewer collection lines on East Crystal Haven. The WWTF crew and highway department had to excavate the road due to a brick in the line that could not be removed using a water jet or the camera. Groundwater was discovered at approximately 4-5 feet under the road and made excavating down to the sewer line challenging. A pumper truck was called in from A1 Sewer and Drain to keep water out of the hole while the crew worked to expose the sewer line. Excavation revealed a lateral line coming from a private residence consisted of materials inadequate for the application and had to be repaired. The brick was removed, and the sewer lines were televised from manhole to manhole (300-feet apart) and the lines appeared to be in good shape. Heavy water flow was also discovered in the collection lines north of the Crystal Haven Common Area (north) suggesting that there may be breaks in other private lines that are collecting the groundwater, or water from basements are being pumped into the Town's sewer collection lines. I basement survey will be organized sometime in April to try and identify sump pumps in the area. With the groundwater being 4-5 feet below ground level, there could be basement that take on water year-round. Last Update -1-20-2024 – See notes in paragraph (1) above regarding the televising of the sewer collection lines in Crystal Haven area.* **Last 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 A1 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.

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

c. Sewer Vehicles & Equipment:

(1) Vehicles – Nothing significant to report.

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

(2) Equipment - NO CHANGE. UPDATE: 1-20-2024 - The new generator at the Sucker Brook pump station failed during the first power outage on 1-12-2024 and an emergency service call was made to Brookfield. The generator was diagnosed, and the technician had to “reset” it because when prime power was lost, there was an internal electronics issue where the generator started but was not providing power to the pump station. The Town has not been billed by Brookfield and if we are, I will dispute it because this is a new generator, and it failed the very first time it was needed. Whatever was done during the service fixed the problem because power was lost again on 1-14-2024 and the generator worked as it should. Power outages at any of the pump stations trigger a callout of our employees, so when they show up and the emergency power standby generator is not working and the pump station has no power, it typically triggers our wastewater technician to request a pump truck to be onsite, so the pump station does not overflow. This means added costs in overtime and the cost of the pump truck.

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

6. Highway Department –

a. Paving in FY24-25 – UPDATE: 1-20-2024 – I shared some initial cost estimates that the DPW Foreman solicited from Wilk Paving at the last Selectboard meeting. As noted, the roads on the list I provided are Class II State Highways. Two of the roads, East Hubbardton and Blissville Road need immediate attention before they deteriorate any further and end up costing more money to repair than just the cost of repaving. IF the Town is awarded a Class II paving grant this year, the amount we would likely receive (based on amounts awarded in the past decade) would not be enough to cover the milling and paving costs quoted on either of those two roads. No matter what road gets paved, it will require the use of some of the Town’s paving funds to round out the funding needed for just one of those roads. I am inclined to not spend the remaining Town funds in 2024 and let the money carry forward into the next fiscal year, where combined with that year’s funding, we would then have adequate funds to pave roads like East Hubbardton and South Street. The per ton price of paving is largely determined based on the price of liquid asphalt. This fluctuates year-to-year, but the Town is likely get a better price per ton if

we pick one longer stretch of road to pave because the paving company won't have to mobilize several times and jump around town, which also drives up the cost per ton. **Last Update: 1-8-2024-** 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**

(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 -NO CHANGE. Last 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.

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

(2) Vehicle Replacement – UPDATE: 1-20-2024 – *Before the Selectboard at the 2-12-2024 meeting is a proposal to purchase a new tandem dump truck with plow package. It was presented at the 1-8-2024 meeting but the board wanted to see bids from additional dealers. The highway foreman solicited bids from additional dealers and has made a recommendation based on the needs of the highway department and the bids he received.*

Action needed: *Request the Selectboard consider approving the highway foreman’s recommendation. The funding for this replacement is already built into the highway department’s operating budget. The funds from the operating budget are in the vehicle reserve. I don’t have a rate and loan amount from the bank at this time. The Selectboard can still approve the recommendation as it includes the dollar amount and dealer name. Once the board approves the amount and dealer, and approves me to order the truck, I will get a purchase and sales agreement from the dealer and provide it to the bank. The loan term will not exceed the 7-year warranty period and will be less than \$50,000 per year to stay within our budget.*

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.

7. Town Office & other buildings –

a. **Fire Station. . UPDATE: 2-9-2024** – *I spoke with Mickey McClure on 2-9-2024 to get an update on the repair of the ceiling at the fire station and the insulating of the attic/eaves. Mickey replaced the sheetrock on the ceiling and taped it. He has two more coats of joint compound to finish and it will be ready for painting. He advised that the insulation has been difficult to get, but as soon as it arrives, he will get it installed.* **Last 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. **Updated: 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: UPDATE: 2-9-2024** – *The Municipal Energy Resilience Program pressure test of the highway garage is scheduled for 2-14-2024. I do not expect it to be a positive report. That would be in our favor because it increases our odds of receiving assistance in the way of a no match grant. I am working on a Request for Proposal for a painting contractor to finish painting the highway garage and will time it to get it done prior to new doors being*

installed. **Last 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: NO CHANGE.** The wind from the last storm broke the 4x4 pressure-treated post that the Town Office sign hung on. This will have to be replaced. The sign was brought inside the building. I will work out a temporary fix and put in a new post in the spring.

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

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

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

e. **Municipal Facility Key Control - UPDATE: 2-9-2024** - I have drafted a policy that will provide greater guidance and accountability for key and lock control for employees and other Town officials. I have a concern about the safety and security of our buildings, facilities, and equipment based on the sloppy key and lock control that currently exists. The specifics, or the “how to” is contained in the policy and the policy will be briefed to the supervisors at each facility so they have a chance to ask questions before implementation. This is a tried and proven system whereas the process is not tedious or cumbersome to work with, yet thorough enough to provide peace of mind that our real and personal properties are as secure as possible from theft, vandalism, or trespass.

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

8. **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** – Nothing significant to report

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

c. **Vehicles and Equipment** – **UPDATE: 2-9-2024** – The Town of Fair Haven Police Department wants to purchase the Ford Taurus for \$3,000. This is on the meeting agenda for Monday night. A Fair Haven police officer was in a crash with one of their cruisers and did enough damage that they are looking for another vehicle. It is a fair market price for the vehicle, and we don’t have to remove any of the blue lights, which would cost approximately \$500. **Last 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.

Action needed: Selectboard approve the sale of the Ford Taurus to the Town of Fair Haven for \$3,000, “as is”.

9. **Emergency Management** –

a. **Personnel/Training** – Emergency Management Coordinator (EMC) Peter Mantello is working with Cindy Ell, who is on the fire department, the Public Information Officer for the fire department and Emergency Management, and the emergency shelter manager for the Town, to build a core group of volunteers who can help work in the Emergency Operations Center and/or the Emergency Shelter at the American Legion, should either be activated. I am trying to work training, travel costs, and supplies and equipment into the Emergency Management budget each year. The primary focus has been on purchasing needed supplies for both the shelter and emergency operations center, and the budget has been able to absorb the costs, but the shortfall has been in funding training and providing some modest monetary compensation for many hours of personal time Cindy has devoted to public messaging, building a shelter plan, attending training events, and staffing both the shelter and EOC during every event over the past two years. It is my objective to build a team of trained and available community members who have a passion to help others in a time of need, which oftentimes comes with sacrificing time away from their own family. We cannot provide emergency services like this without those who give so selflessly of their time to the community.

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

b. **Facilities/Equipment** – **NO CHANGE. UPDATE: 1-6-2024** – The new Emergency Operations Center still needs some sanding of sheet rock and painting, but the electrical work is completed. Depending on what 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 approve the use of \$10,000 in ARPA funds for the purchase of an emergency standby generator and automatic transfer switch from Fowler Services (includes electrical hookup) and Fyle Brothers to install the propane lines. This

includes a 10-year warranty on the generator and six years on the transfer switch. The Town will have to dig the trench for the wiring, which will be approximately 12 feet, something we can handle internally to reduce the cost. This purchase/install is for emergency backup power for the highway garage and the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) (upstairs at the garage). The highway garage is the only remaining year-round building, fully town-owned, that provides critical services to residents all residents without emergency backup power. This building also now houses the Emergency Operations Center. In order to open and close bay doors, power the boiler, circulator pumps, hot water heater, lights, welder, and communications equipment during a power outage, without disruption to critical services, an emergency power standby generator is needed. This is too much to add to the Emergency Management budget in one year, so I am asking the board to consider using ARPA. Highway department services and emergency operations benefits all residents of the community and therefore would be considered a practical use of ARPA funds.

10. 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: 2-9-2024** – The Assistance to Firefighter’s Grant application window is open and Chief Goyette and 1st Assistant Chief Dan Ducharme have reviewed the grant application, and it is ready for submission by Lexipol. **Last 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 have 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. This grant requires a 5% local match, something the fire department operating budget could absorb.

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** – **NO CHANGE. Last Update: 1-20-2024** -

(1) I met with Dick Combs and Fire Chief Heath Goyette last week and we conducted an initial review of a fire department vehicle replacement schedule. There were some changes made and the PowerPoint presentation and cost analysis spreadsheet was sent to the Fire Chief and his

two Assistant Chiefs to review the documents and schedule a time to meet with me to make any updates. This has to be done so they can schedule a follow up meeting with the Public Safety Committee to discuss the purchase of a new vehicle to replace Engine 6 (mini-pumper) and present a 20+ year succession plan for vehicle replacement. **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 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 to move personnel and equipment, 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 It would also improve the search and rescue capabilities across all public safety departments (police, fire, EMS).

f. **PACIF Scholarship – UPDATE: 2-9-2024** – *The PACIF Scholarship application period is open. This is a \$2,500 scholarship that the fire department can apply for toward training members on the new ladder truck. This is a first-come, first-served scholarship and will remain open until the available funds are exhausted. Training of fire department members to safely operate new equipment is an approved use of the scholarship.*

Action needed: None at this time. Informational Only

11. Town Lands –

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

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

b. **Park & Ride. UPDATE: 2-9-2024 – The Town was NOT awarded a Park and Ride grant. Last Update: 9-9-2023** – The park and ride was crack sealed, seal coated and new lines painted.

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*

12. Miscellaneous

a. **Public Concerns –**

(1) **Stormwater Runoff – UPDATE: 2-9-2024 – I spoke with Hilary Solomon on 2-9-2024 regarding the stormwater runoff problem on East and West Crystal Haven. Hilary has submitted the project for review and advised she will have Zappa Courage from ANR and a hydrology/stormwater engineer involved in a site visit, including local residents. Hilary stated she would reach out to Tom Kearns directly to let him know what is going on and when, so he can decide whether or not he wants to be present during the site visit. I shared with Hilary my concerns about a potential groundwater issue in the Crystal Haven area. During a recent sewerline excavation project, it was discovered that groundwater was discovered to be 3-4 feet below the road surface in some places. There is also a constant stream of what was described at “clean water” flowing into the manholes from the sewer collection lines. This stimulated the age-old discussion on sump pumps. It is expected that several homes in that area likely have water seeping into their basements and are using sump pumps to clear the water from the basement and into the sewer collection system. This is not an authorized practice and is attributed to an increased load on our pump stations and volume of water that gets processed at the Wastewater Treatment Facility. All of this leads to more operating costs. 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

(3) Problem Trees and Tree Removal Quotes **UPDATE: 2-9-2024** – *The Canopy Grant that the highway foreman applied for was not awarded. The letter received stated that it was a competitive process, the funding is extremely limited, and our project was not selected. No other feedback on our application or project was provided. Also attached are two quotes from tree service companies for removal of dead, dying and problem trees, as well as limbing trees branch that are in the Town's ROW that overhand the roadway or protrude into the road creating a hazard.* **Last 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 attract 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. **Updated: 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. **Updated: 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 funding the problem of dangerous dead, dying, or otherwise hazardous trees that threaten create hazardous conditions all over the town. These trees and branches grow exceed the capacity of our highway crew and tree warden to address the situation. The highway foreman met with Trees Incorporated and McCullough Brothers and received two widely differing estimates to address just some of the roads. The quote

from Trees Incorporated is \$32,305 and the estimate from McCullough Brothers is \$130,500. Trees Incorporated typically takes longer to complete a job due to personnel constraints, but they are nearly \$100,000 less than McCullough's.

13. **Follow up from last meeting** – Nothing