

Report of the Highway Department

To the Residents of Fremont,

Thank you for all of your support to myself and to the entire Highway Department crew over this past year. It is very much appreciated! As I write this report, it is a reflection of 2016 and plans for 2017 and beyond. In the early winter months of 2016, January, February and March we had approximately half the amount of snowfall as we did in 2015. This meant a savings in the winter equipment hire budget line, a savings in the amount of fuel used in the town backhoe and one-ton truck. Also, fuel prices were a little lower than the previous winter. Between all three of these budget lines, there was a total of \$33,984.00 saved.

April came and the Highway Department was facing a default budget. As a result, plans for the year needed to be adjusted. At the end of April, I requested of the Board of Selectmen to transfer these savings into the summer hot-top and reconstruction line of the Highway Department budget. Both the Board of Selectmen and Budget Committee agreed to do so. By doing these transfers and adding funds to the hot-top reconstruction line and the voter approved Sandown Road warrant article, we were able to reclaim, grade and re-pave base coats of Sandown Road and Whittier Drive. Total length of paving work was 9,980, just shy of our two (2) mile goal that we try to reach. This was a very good year for road paving.

The 2017 highway budget is requesting for the finish overlay of these two roads. Aside from this we were able to repave a small section of Ann Lane and Taylor Lane. These areas needed to be repaired for safety and to keep the road plowed through the winter months. Due to age, these two roads, many other subdivisions and side roads connecting to main high travelled roads are falling apart and need to be repaved as well.

As I stated when elected Road Agent, my goal is to get all of these main high travelled roads into good safe conditions and then begin working on updating subdivisions. Many of these roads were built in the 1980's and 1990's and have not been repaved and are overdue for repavement. An average life of a road is 15-20 years. I ask of you to approve the 2017 Town budget and all related Highway Department Warrant Articles so this can happen and become reality.

Last year we were able to replace the Town-owned street sweeper. This machine was worn out and breaking down when we needed it. This machine is used extensively in the spring to clean up winter sand and to sweep roads before they are repaved. This purchase was funded through the Highway Equipment Capital Reserve Fund.

We have close to \$300,000 worth of Town-owned Highway Department equipment. The Equipment Capital Reserve Fund is for replacing equipment when needed. Thank you for supporting this article every year.

Through the spring and summer months after the winter sand is cleaned up, we do pothole

repairs, tree trimming, hazardous tree removals, replacing shoulder gravel, a lot of drainage work, and cleaning catch basins and cleaning or replacing culverts when needed.



Once we are somewhat caught up, prepping for new hot-top begins. This first photo shows Sandown Road and it's condition prior to our summer work, and the second, the repaving of one lane.

Last summer we devoted six weeks to preparing Sandown Road and Whittier Drive for base coat hot-top. This included pruning trees, removing trees, extensive drainage work, building erosion stone water swales, removing loam, grading shoulders, adding good gravels and cleaning or replacing culverts. Once completed, bids went out for the hot-top project. Sections of these two roads were ground up, reclaimed and regraded.

Other sections that were in better condition were shimmed and overlaid with binder hot-

top. Due to lower costs of hot-top we were able to get this project done under budget.

Photos courtesy of Leon Holmes Jr

The Department spent six weeks of planning and working ahead with the Town's engineer on this road work, including all the prep work done in advance of the grinding, regrading and repaving.



Last year as well as the past six years, we rented a roadside mower-brush hog which we use the last three weeks in August. This machine not only cuts down grass and weeds, but it keeps brush from growing large enough to require chainsaws and chippers. It is money well spent every year for visibility. (Photo courtesy of Chelsea Ouellette, August 2016).



After the roadside mowing is finished, it is close to fall and time to start prepping for the winter months ahead. This means service to all snowplowing equipment, cleaning catch basins and culverts, and removing debris and leaves from catch basin grates.

In closing, there are many people I need to thank for all of their help. I'll start with my assistant Jared Butler, who is right there with me every day and all of the plow operators for their long hours, sleepless nights and endless dedication. Also, the Fremont Board of Selectmen, Budget Committee, the Fremont Fire Rescue and Police Departments, Selectmen's Clerk Jeanne Nygren and our Town Administrator Heidi Carlson.

Respectfully Submitted,

Leon Holmes, Jr.
Road Agent

View from inside the plow truck during the 12/29/2016 heavy and wet winter storm with wind, rain, snow and multiple power outages.

Photo courtesy of Katie Holmes.

