

Report of the Highway Department

This year we accomplished more projects with the paving money allotted. We spent a lot of time during summer months in Poplin Acres working on drainage. Significant roadside cleanup and trimming was done, and we paved as much as the budget would allow. Shoulder work followed the paving. These subdivision roads are more than 30 years old and were in need of a lot of work.



The other area we paved was Shirkin Road. We completed work begun in 2012 and ground 1,050 feet of hot top, spread 650 yards of gravel and then paved. This will need an overlay in 2014 to preserve the new work. This is part of our planned paving work within the 2014 budget proposal.

The Town of Fremont has approximately 40 miles of roadway to maintain, most of which is paved. Current engineering standards result in a 20 year life of correctly constructed paved roadways, meaning that the Town would need to get into a replacement schedule that included two miles of rebuilding annually. Funding has not been in place for this in years, and we have fallen behind. Given the current economy and budget constraints, we do far less, and thus fall further behind. Many of our roads are in need of significant upgrade.

In 2013 we had extreme weather conditions, and I would like to thank the devoted plow operators and contractors. The February Blizzard yielded a FEMA declaration, and staff spent a full week following the storm with cleanup, and hauling snow from areas where no storage is available (intersections and the like). We received \$18,103.83 in reimbursement from FEMA, of which \$10,975.86 was used to pay for some of the overages in the operating budget for the Highway Department.

During the summer, we rented a tractor for roadside mowing. While we did not reach every street as planned (due to repair issues with the rental); a vast majority of our roads were cleared of roadside brush and overgrowth. This is important for visibility and makes the winter maintenance and drainage work the way it is designed.

The Department is busy day to day with many maintenance tasks that include repair and replacement of street signs, potholes, gravel road maintenance, brush cutting, removing dangerous and dead trees from the right-of-way, cleaning and improving roadside drainage, culvert repair and replacement, and roadside mowing. In addition there is the work created by each snow or ice event, and the maintenance and general upkeep of our equipment. At the end of the winter season, we sweep excess sand from many roadways.

In 2013 we dug the electric and water lines for those improvements to the shed area. Leon cleared and finished landscaping on the area of the highway site used for Bulky Day, and maintained that all during the summer season.

We have one full-time employee, Leon Holmes Jr, who handles the bulk of this work every day. We have one summer part-time laborer, Jared Butler; and this year hired a new winter part-time driver/laborer, Peter "Butch" Porter. Leon Holmes Sr had resigned from the driver's position last March when he was elected to the Board of Selectmen. As the Road Agent, I oversee these employees and provide oversight and some equipment as needed for project-related work.

At the end of the year, Selectmen moved forward with a contract for renovations to the existing maintenance building, to close it in and make it a fully functioning maintenance shed instead of the open storage bays it has been since construction in 2001. This will be a vast improvement to our working situation, allowing for a place to get in out of the weather to attach plows, fix sanders, service and maintain the one ton truck and backhoe, in addition to the Town's small equipment and tools. We will do the site work for the septic system ourselves, and look forward to having this complete in early 2014.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Pitkin
Road Agent

Photos Courtesy of
Mark Pitkin
Summer 2013

