

Report of the Highway Study Committee

At the onset of the 2010 year the Board of Selectmen formed a five member Study Committee to research inquiries that have arisen over the past several years.

This Committee worked together to insure that the information gathered would be accurate and available for all residents. Surrounding towns were referenced for the collection of data such as Danville, Brentwood, Newton, Hampstead, Sandown and Chester to name a few. The Committee also invited a Road Agent from a neighboring town to share the ongoing challenges of budget constraints.

There was a considerable amount of time spent on drafting snow plow and sander contracts to insure that all sub-contracted vendors meet the proper Town insurance and other requirements. The specific vendor plow routes were formatted for record from this outline.

Over the summer the Highway Department was able to measure and document specific road needs for Town record as well. The results of the exercise produced a total measurement of 42 miles. This was slightly lower than previously recorded. During that exercise an assessment of each road was determined and listed by priority for future work.

It was noted that both Newton and Brentwood had hired contractors (engineers) to produce "Road Condition Evaluations." These reports targeted specific roads and estimated costs. This Committee hopes to do the same, as these reports would be a valuable tool for decision-makers and our residents alike, to understand the cost needed and for future forecasting within the budget process.

The Committee was also able to obtain exact quotes for reclamation of one mile of road at a cost of \$150,000.00. This excludes the cost for road drainage and additional side work. The State of NH guidelines recommend that at least two miles of reclamation be completed per year to maintain a proper road improvement schedule. Unfortunately this has not been the past practice in Fremont, therefore Fremont is now in need of playing catch up. The Committee has the support of both the Board of Selectmen and the Budget Committee to place the Town on a two mile per year reclamation schedule and this will be reflected in the upcoming 2011 Budget. The Committee hopes that the residents of Fremont will value this need as well.

Highway Equipment: The Committee obtained price quotes for a backhoe at \$ 112,000 and has calculated the associated ownership costs to the Town. Bond schedules were reviewed and the final beneficial determination was that a five year conventional loan with scheduled payments would be more cost effective than obtaining a bond. Reviewing operator cost, insurance and equipment maintenance, determined that owning our own equipment would be most cost effective for the Town than renting/leasing. This will be the objective for the upcoming 2011 budget year.

Highway Building: The review of equipment needs prompted other issues that the Committee felt should be addressed in preparation for acquiring new Highway equipment. This includes where and how this equipment would be stored and how and where it would be maintained.

Currently the Town has an existing 3 sided shed designed to hold road sand and salt supplies only. This offers no protection from the elements of weather if work is needed on equipment, nor does it offer protection for signage, tools or other supplies needed to maintain town roads.

The Committee researched all costs associated with this project. A Request for Proposals was drafted and posted for the Shed renovation and two bids were presented to the Board of Selectmen. The most cost effective bid came in at \$ 97,800.00. The material cost to erect a two bay pole barn for housing road sand and salt came in at approximately \$8,000.00 and \$6,000.00 for labor. The total cost for a salt and sand storage pole barn is \$14,000 to include materials and labor.

Currently the Highway Building Capital Reserve Fund has a fund balance of \$112,640.00 to pursue these changes; therefore all objectives can be met while creating no additional tax burden to our residents. There will be a warrant article for voter consideration in 2011 for \$112,000 to complete the renovations to close in the existing building to a maintenance garage and construct a sand and salt storage pole barn. This will be entirely funded from the existing Capital Reserve Fund and will not create a tax impact for 2011.

The Committee meets monthly and will remain in effect through 2011. Meetings are generally held the last Monday of each month at the Fremont Town Hall at 6:00 pm. We thank the Board of Selectmen, the Budget Committee and the Public for their continued support. We anticipate that the new year will bring additional savings and much needed road improvements to the Town of Fremont.

Respectfully submitted,

Highway Study Committee Members

Jack Downing
Leon Holmes Jr
Steve Harms
Mark Pitkin
Greta St Germain