

TOWN OF SOUTHTON
PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

Regular Meeting Minutes
October 2, 2013

Present: *Members:* Chairman Peter Romano, Sandra Feld, Christopher Palmieri, Garry Brumback. *Ex-Officio Members:* Jim Grappone, Steve Wlodkowski.
Absent: Chief Jack Daly, Albert Natelli, Fred Rogers

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Romano called the meeting to order at 4:35 p.m. in the Town Hall Council Chambers, 75 Main Street, Southington, CT.

MINUTES: Minutes of the June 5, 2013 meeting were unanimously approved.

COMMUNICATIONS:

a. Reports on Ongoing Operations/Special Notices

- i. **Bulky Waste Station:** We are continuing to experience large volumes at the station. However, we are still continuing to see signs that monitoring access is working. We have the scanners back. They have been programmed and tested and we will once again use them beginning this Saturday. As most already know, this program has gone from several hundred thousand dollars to less than \$200,000 over the last couple of years. We will continue to monitor it.
- ii. **Leaf Program:** Program will begin November 4. Steve Wlodkowski will work through all four zones and again go back to Zone 1 as usual. However, in discussion at the Council meeting on Monday and continued at this meeting, based on the weather and how the leaves drop, we will consider going back to Zone 2 if necessary. We recognize the goal of providing good customer service and Highway will ensure that if it is appropriate we will go back to Zone 2. This is not going to be publicized because in the event it is unnecessary we do not want to create unrealistic expectations.
- iii. **Retention/Detention Pond Maintenance:** Completed for the season.
- iv. **Parks Department:** The pools are closed, and they are preparing for the Apple Harvest Festival and other events. Sports have picked up and there are a lot of fields being lined and parks being maintained.
- v. **Police Department:** No report.
- vi. **Snow Removal:** Great work in the past. We have now good bids and are preparing for snow removal in the hopes that we do not need it.
 - i. **Mail Box Replacement:** There was conversation about mail box replacement and the recommendation of establishing a policy where we limit the town's liability for mail box replacement. Current policy is if a snow plow strikes a mail box, the town will replace the mail box. We have had instances where claims have reached \$1,000 to replace a mail box. The vast majority are less than \$100. However, in order to be fair and reduce the administrative burden, staff recommendation is that we establish a value of \$75 for

replacing the post and the mail box and \$50 to replace the mail box only. It was agreed upon by the Public Works Committee and the policy will be forwarded to the Town Council for action.

vii. **Storm Drainage Maintenance:** Completed for the season.

viii. **Street Lights:** The report was out today. Jim Grappone apologized for the lateness but wanted to check on some discrepancies in the report. Those have been resolved and the report was released. One additional section has been added to the report, and that is pending complaints to insure we maintain visibility on those complaints that have been lodged and not yet resolved. This will continue.

ix. **Water Department:** No report.

x. **Other:** No report

b. Members Communications

None.

c. Public Communications

Art Cyr spoke about a couple of maintenance items.

NEW BUSINESS:

- a. Road Repair Projects. A very good discussion revolved around how to proceed with road repair projects in light of recent concerns. The recommended policy is that the town Highway Department will be challenged to repair and replace all damages associated with road repair projects and will handle on a case by case basis only in major road repair projects requests from residents to go beyond the minimum replacement, even if it is at their expense. Additionally, the Highway Department will make sure that residents at major reconstruction projects understand what repairs and what replacements are available should they want to take advantage of it. If there is going to be a replacement beyond the minimum, it will be decided upon jointly between the Town Engineer, the Highway Superintendent, and the resident. The committee wanted to make clear two things: (1) everybody is able to take advantage of the program if it is offered to anyone; and (2) all repairs and actions taken on a work site are transparent.
- b. Cuts on New Road Repairs. The Public Works Committee discussed the current policy and moratorium on utility cuts into new road repairs. The conversation revolved around whether or not non-emergency cuts are appropriate. Current policy is that once a road has been newly paved there is a moratorium against any utility cuts that are not an emergency. The committee defined emergency as repair or replacement based on an urgent need with no reasonable alternative to cutting the road. Financial concerns were discussed and it was agreed to that the cost should be reasonable to make alternative arrangements. Therefore, a gas leak or a water leak that threatens public safety clearly is an emergency. This, too, will go before the Council for final approval.
- c. Roof – Fire Station #3 Bids. Bids came in significantly below expectation and it appears that all the bidders are qualified. However, we are asking for a 20% contingency based on some uncertainties about what is underneath the current roof. This is a lesson learned from the highway roof.
- d. Western Little League Water Line. Steve Wlodkowski has approval from public health to put in the water line and at a minimum will run the connection in the next couple of weeks

while he may end up hooking the line up during the winter. He will have this operational prior to the spring Western Little League season.

- e. Community Services Parking Lot bids. These bids came in approximately 50% over estimate. Therefore, we are going to relook and see what we can do before bringing this project forward.
- f. Driveway Permits. We discussed the idea of having a requirement for driveways to be permitted based on industry standards to avoid problems we have begun to experience rather recently. These are driveways that were constructed improperly creating either plowing and maintenance issues or flooding issues for both the town and the residents. The intent of this permit is not to be onerous nor to make money but to insure that our residents are getting quality driveways that comply with industry standards. We will come back with draft language to the next Public Works Committee meeting.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

ADJOURNMENT:

Meeting adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter J. Romano, Jr.
Chairman