

May was full speed ahead for public works. We began our regular mowing schedule of the five cemeteries, ball field, Common, and town parks. Without any weather interruptions, two guys can get everything mowed including all the trimming, once per week. And in case you haven't done so lately, take a drive sometime through the Common and Lakeview cemeteries in order to get a full appreciation of how hard this crew works. There are a lot of gravestones to trim around, and the guys have done an excellent job making sure that everything looks top notch by the end of each work week.

Those of us who aren't mowing concentrate on road work. In preparation of the roads being paved later this year, we replaced seven road and two driveway culverts on Sidelinger and ditched both sides of Townsend. We are planning on ditching several more roads this summer including Barrett Hill, Miller, Payson, and Clarry Hill. We also have identified multiple other road and driveway culverts that will need to be replaced. Some of these projects will require our whole crew be present to ensure we do them safely with flaggers on each side. This means these projects will have to be strategically coordinated around the mowing schedule. Hopefully, mother nature will cooperate with good weather this summer and allow us to complete it all before we are back to plowing snow.

We had a unique opportunity this month when Union resident (and former public works/road commissioner/selectmen/etc.) Bill Packard, approached me and offered to provide grader training. The Town of Union has owned a John Deere grader for many years but hasn't had anyone properly trained to use it for the past several, so we obviously took him up on this offer. Chris Packard (no relation) had already been able to get all the dirt roads graded with his Harley rake, so this was the perfect time to conduct some training without the pressure of "getting it perfect". Bill spent two days sharing his knowledge and expertise with employee Tom Fontaine and together they were able to completely re-grade Barrett Hill and Miller Road. Tom did excellent, considering he has never operated a grader before. I plan to have Bill come back for another day or two in the fall and continue training Tom so he can gain the experience and confidence needed to grade our own dirt roads instead of relying on a private contractor to do so.

In between all the mowing and road work, we managed to find some time for training classes. I attended a Public Sector Compliance class and employees Paul Dever and Tom Fontaine attended an Auto Lift & Jack Safety class, both in Augusta at Safety Works. All five of our crew attended a three-hour Work Zone Safety class via Zoom which was put on by Maine Local Roads.

It amazes me that we were able to achieve all that we did this month considering that two of the guys each took separate one-week vacations. It wouldn't be possible if not for the fact that we have a very hard-working public works department who work very well together.

Respectfully submitted,

Matt Elwell - Public Works Director



Grading Barrett Hill Road



Replacing culvert on Sidelinger Rd