

Union Board of Selectmen & Assessor's Meeting

September 19, 2017

6:30 p.m. Meeting

Selectmen present: Greg Grotton, Lyle Cramer, Jim Justice, John Shepard, Sarah Drickey

Others present: Jay Feyler, Lawrence Nash, Vicki Harriman, Catherine Meyer, Amy Cornell, Erik Amundsen, Kip Boetsch

- 1) **Call selectmen's meeting to order:** 6:30 p.m.
- 2) **Pledge of allegiance:**
- 3) **Public comment:**

Discussion centered on road and traffic concerns.

Lawrence Nash spoke about having used Cole Road as a through road for the past 10 years in all weather. He wanted to know why, now that Cole Road is paved, it says "no through traffic."

Selectmen and residents talked about how many townspeople use Cole Road as a through road, and the irony of improving the road only to use it less.

Jay clarified Cole Road was designed for heavy traffic but technically for all traffic. He reminded two years ago when we did Davis Road, we did both roads at the same time, during a public hearing, for weight limits and for through traffic. That's one of a couple roads in town that would get used extensively and at high speeds if used for through traffic, and you'd have many complaints from residents about traffic speeding through there. It's what was voted on two years ago and what he recommended.

Cole Road is not yet finished. We will be chip sealing it next year. It is a town-maintained road, not a private road.

All board members want to revisit this issue. Jay reminded the board has the authority to enact traffic ordinances on local roads, but there would have to be a public hearing like the first one. If approved we will have it pending the chip seal. Next meeting there will be more discussion.

Catherine Meyer brought up how challenging Rt. 235 by the Post Office has become for both walking and driving. She mentioned accidents and speeding particularly during summer.

Greg Grotton said since 235 is a state road, the town has no control over the speed limit, crosswalks which need sidewalks, etc. We are working with the

state to redo all sidewalks in town. He believes 235 sidewalk will be the first to be redone, so there will be a sidewalk with DOT requirements. He added Common Road, Depot Street, Old Townhouse Road will all have sidewalks redone. The sidewalks will take time, though, with the earliest possible date 2020.

Increased law enforcement presence in Union was brought up. They are doing a great job.

Erik Amundsen, who lives on 235, would some pressure on the state regarding speed and load limits. He described sharp turns and accidents.

An increase in traffic was acknowledged.

Jay said speeding is the biggest complaint we get on all the roads. State roads, because they are federally funded, are all basically interstate highways so fall under federal guidelines including load limits. They do post some of the roads such as Wottons Mill during the spring. The state would love the town to take over roads, but it would cost another million dollars a year.

We can put out a speed trap sign on state roads, but when you look at all the data, it is pretty standard – 15 mph over is less than 10% of traffic. The signs lose effectiveness after a couple weeks. Will see if they can get one by Erik.

Vicki Harriman noted some speed limit signs are obstructed by tree limbs, such as parts of 131. Jay reminded 131 is a state road, along with 235, Wottons Mill Road, Common Road, etc. and the state is responsible for keeping signs on state roads clear. He said we do that with town roads. Will take a look at obstructing branches at state level.

Jim Justice thanked the Town of Union & Select Board for the fruit basket following his accident.

4) Approve minutes of September 5, 2017:

Motion by: Lyle Cramer

2nd by: Sarah Drickey

5-0

5) Discussion on DOT light at four corners:

Jay put this on the agenda when Sarah Drickey came to him about it. He has not done a ton of research yet, until the board votes, but knows it is a hot topic. He does know from Wottons Mill Road experience that if the municipal government asks for a light, we will probably have to pay for the light as well as annual maintenance. The light alone would probably be \$30,000 plus.

The process would be for the board to have Jay send a letter to the person who handles this at DOT. There may not be enough site clearance to put in a stoplight.

There was talk about stoplight maintenance, including contracting with a vendor— a boom truck, training Public Works, contracting with a vendor. Other traffic questions came up, such as: why does Hope have signs saying 45 and 40, but coming toward Union four corners from Maritime Farms there is nothing? Maybe down by Agway it goes to 45 mph but nothing after that? Sarah Drickey asked how Hope got a 40 mph sign through their town.

John Shepard asked about a traffic study done by DOT for Dollar General. Greg said the projected increased traffic flow did not meet DOT requirements for a traffic study. He suggested seeing if there is anything we can do to get the state to re-examine the intersection, other than having the town put in a light.

Jay said DOT signed off on the Dollar General entrance permit. They had to do traffic counts last summer. Speed limits are done in this region by David Allen. Sometimes when you ask for speed limit review, you don't get what you want: you can end up with a higher speed limit based on density of houses and average speed of vehicles. At any time you can ask the state to set speed limits on municipal roads; not as much luck with state roads. He is about six months out on municipal roads.

Jay clarified DOT is not expecting so much more traffic with Dollar General open. They figure not a lot of additional people will come to the area to go there; it will be mostly people already going by on 17.

Greg Grotton and Lyle discussed sending a letter and whether or not it would have much impact before the store opens. The plan is to draft a letter.

Vicki Harriman spoke of the tragic loss of her sister and a good acquaintance who both died at this intersection. She said something needs to be done to make the four corners a safer intersection. She noted too many blind entrances.

Greg said Dollar General met every requirement of the ordinances which have been approved by the citizens of the town. To change things would require changing ordinances. We have had more accidents on Rt. 17 than in past 2-3 years. We are contacting the state with our concerns and seeing what we can do. We will revisit once we get the results.

Motion by: Jim Justice
 2nd by: Sarah Drickey
 5-0

6) Sign Treasurer's Warrant dated September 5, 2017:

John Shepard asked about Stryker Sales Repair on page 5. Jay said there was an issue with a power stretcher that had to be repaired.

Motion by: John Shepard
 2nd by: Sarah Drickey
 5-0

7) Town Manager's Report:

Jay said we got a check for \$3964 from Maine Municipal Association for workers comp & property & casualty rebates. We have had no workers comp claims in more than three years. Our rating is going down every year; next year it will be the lowest if no incidents.

He hopes to announce by the next meeting a Public Works employee. The town will hopefully soon be fully staffed.

He also talked about the Thursday meeting at Friendship Village School at 7 p.m., about the money SAD 40 was supposed to return to member towns but instead is trying take the money to cover their deficit.

Regarding road work, some striping was just finished. All that's left is shouldering on Cole Road, and on Ayer Hill Road gravel being put down with a machine, which is more efficient than by hand, and that will be the end of it for this year.

8) Other Business:

9) Selectmen's Report:

Jim Justice brought up town office signage. Jay put an electronic sign in the 2018 budget, so they can look at it and make a decision come budget time.

Jim, Jay, Lyle and Greg discussed the pros and cons of using a "donation boot" to raise money for our fire department. Rockland, Rockport, and other towns have done this successfully; or is it a dangrous traffic hold-up? It was noted that area fire departments all do this at the same time of the year. Consensus was this idea will be revisited.

Greg said we received a letter from Midcoast Community Action thanking the town for \$500 health assistance.

10) Future Agenda Items:

11) Adjourn:

Motion by: Jim Justice

2nd by: John Shepard

5-0

Meeting adjourned at 7: 20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Sherry Abaldo