

(APPROVED)



Town of Plaistow - Highway Safety Committee
145 Main Street, Plaistow, NH 03865

PLAISTOW HIGHWAY SAFETY COMMITTEE MINUTES

MEETING DATE – Friday, September 18, 2015

PRESENT – Police Chief Kathleen Jones, *Chairman*; Fire Chief John McArdle, *Vice-Chairman*; Michael Dorman, *Building Inspector*; Sean Fitzgerald, *Town Manager*; Dan Garlington, *Highway Department Supervisor*; John Sherman, *Selectman Representative*; Lisa Withee, *Citizen's Representative*; Richard Latham, *Citizen's Representative*; Ernie Sheltry, *Citizen's Representative*; and Greg Jones, *Town Planner*

EXCUSED – None

ABSENT – Michelle Auger, *Pollard School Principal*

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER - 9:35 a.m.

MINUTES – J. Sherman motions to approve the minutes of 07/16/2015, seconded by D. Garlington. No discussion. None opposed. All in favor except E. Sheltry, who abstained.

PUBLIC COMMENT- None

ACTION ITEMS:

1. S. Fitzgerald explains that the RSMS PowerPoint presentation was shown to the Board of Selectmen on 09/14/2015 and can be viewed on the Town's local access station and website. States how it will be presented to the Budget Committee on 09/29/2015 and includes the Town planning on \$230,000 for street improvements and \$60,000 for crack sealing. D. Garlington comments how the roads on the list for improvements are Smith Corner, Dauntless, Westville, and Harriman.

J. Sherman briefly explains how the Town focuses on more traveled/busier roads than the secondary residential streets, which carry less traffic. Chief Jones questions if the Committee would prefer to view the PowerPoint individually at their own convenience or as a Committee. J. Sherman suggest the Committee wait until after the paving is complete.

2. S. Fitzgerald informs the Committee that he sent a letter to N. Mayville at NH DOT regarding several issues such as intersections along Route 121A and truck traffic. Reads the letter to the Committee, anticipates being invited to a meeting within the next 30-60 days, and would like members of the Committee to attend. Requests that the Committee review the Main Street study at the next meeting in preparation for the scoping meeting with N. Mayville. Chief Jones also suggests discussing the slip lane prior to the meeting. S. Fitzgerald explains how he'd like the Committee to identify a few opportunities the Town has with NH DOT.

J. Sherman explains the Board of Selectmen's frustrations seeing nothing getting accomplished. Would like to see what the Town can do now on a short term basis on Main Street. S. Fitzgerald mentions the use of roundabouts. J. Sherman reiterates how he'd like the Committee to look at some items that can be done now such as possibly drafting an ordinance on J-Brakes.

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Chief McArdle explains the importance of defining what the problems are. States that NH DOT will not solve opinions and how the Town needs to show NH DOT factual data. S. Fitzgerald agrees and explains the reports that the Town has completed and explains the need to discuss each item and risks involved. Chief Jones mentions the worst intersection on Main Street at East/West Pine Streets since any crash at there is always serious. S. Fitzgerald comments that the Committee will need a plan when they go before NH DOT which will include the issue of truck traffic on Main Street.

L. Withee questions if it would help to explain how the Town Library and Elementary School are on Main Street. Chief McArdle explains that it's the cars not tractor trailers that are the most dangerous. L. Withee mentions how speed is an issue on all the roads. Chief Jones mentions that the traffic counts do show truck traffic but that they're not speeding.

S. Fitzgerald mentions how the design of the road encourages speeding and it should be redesigned to be more narrowed in some locations to help discourage speeding. Chief McArdle questions why the Town didn't get the \$800,000 grant. S. Fitzgerald explains that larger communities received the funding to assist with greater risks.

J. Sherman suggests the Committee compile a list of problems the Town has on Main Street and suggests everyone e-mail their items to Chief Jones. S. Fitzgerald would like to look at low cost efforts/improvements. S. Fitzgerald suggests inviting D. Walker and K. Russell back as a pre-meeting prior to the scoping meeting with NH DOT.

3. S. Fitzgerald mentions his conversation with NH DOT and that they are in the bidding process for 2016 work and anticipate scheduling a meeting over the next month once this is completed.
4. Action item completed. S. Fitzgerald distributed a copy of the map to everyone and mentions how he'd like to see more consistency in the speed limits. D. Garlington informs everyone how the only way to change speed limits is with a Public Hearing. Also mentions that private roads can be posted at lower speeds. **Chief McArdle motions to have a Public Hearing to make all classified roads 25 mph. Seconded by M. Dorman.** D. Garlington confirms classified roads are roads maintained by the Town. All in favor. None Opposed. Motion passes.

J. Sherman suggests reducing the speeds on Kingston and Kingshaw roads and confirms that no Town roads are posted above 30 mph. Chief Jones questions if Sweethill Road can be reduced. J. Sherman mentions that it's a State road and D. Garlington explains that the Town would have to speak with NH DOT.

5. Action item completed.
6. Chief Jones mentions her conversation with the City of Haverhill's Chief Engineer, John Pettis, who questioned if Plaistow had already spoken to NH DOT and been given permission on what can be done. States that Mr. Pettis explained to her that until Plaistow has this answer, Haverhill will not get involved in any discussions. Chief Jones mentions that she will also be reaching out to the City of Haverhill's Director of Public Works, Michael Stankovich.

R. Latham suggests positing no-thru trucking at the state line and if Haverhill would post the same on their end of the slip lane. Chief Jones explains how the Haverhill's City Engineer first needs to hear what NH DOT will allow Plaistow to do. Questions if the Committee would like to post no-thru trucking. S. Fitzgerald would like to discuss this at the scoping meeting with NH DOT. D. Garlington explains how the State will not post no-thru trucking but might consider posting a weight restriction.

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7. Action item to be completed at the next quarter, October 1st.
8. Chief Jones explains that the radar units only store one year of data so they were unable to go back to July/August, 2014 to compare traffic statistics pre and post when the Safe Route to School signs were installed last September.
9. Chief Jones mentions that a 50/50 grant was filed with the NH Highway Safety Agency for new radar/sign boards for 2016. S. Fitzgerald explains that he has received a few quotes for radar units and how it might be possible to purchase some without grant funding. J. Sherman explains the need to have statistics in order to show the need to purchase any new radar units. Mentions showing statistics before and after on the previous ones purchased. Chief Jones will hold off on this action item until the Town is notified on the acceptance or denial of the grant.

Chief Jones briefly comments on how the units located on Main Street have the ability to collect data even when the display is shut off. Also cautions purchasing additional stationary units as they begin to be ignored after a while.

10. Chief Jones questions if the no-thru trucking has been posted for six months, since it was approved by the Board of Selectmen earlier this year. D. Garlington mentions the delay in posting the signs so the six month period will not expire until the end of winter. Chief Jones will schedule this action item for the spring once the six month trial period has been completed.
11. S. Fitzgerald indicates that he has no update yet on the road counts from NH DOT and will work on getting the counts before the next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS – Electronically distribute monthly Main Street radar panel reports for July and August 2015.

Chief Jones mentions that the reports were sent to the Committee already and if anyone has any questions or concerns to reach out to her. S. Fitzgerald questions receiving traffic statistics when the reports are issued. Chief Jones explains that the statistics are already being run quarterly.

NEW BUSINESS – Meet with N. Mayville of NH DOT to evaluate options/recommendations for changes to Main Street including Border Ave.

Chief Jones comments that this item was already discussed during action item review.

NEW BUSINESS – Meet with N. Mayville of NH DOT to discuss options/recommendations for changes to Route 125.

Chief Jones comments that this item was already discussed during action item review.

OTHER BUSINESS –

Chief McArdle speaks about the median on Route 125 beginning at the Route 125/121A intersection northbound. Mentions how it's been discussed on social media about cleaning it up. Comments that if the garden club is considering maintaining it, that they should be informed not to. Stresses how it's a very unsafe location for anyone to be out on. S. Fitzgerald mentions his conversation with D. Garlington and the risks involved being out on the median and would like to look at other options. J. Sherman comments that it's his understanding that the garden club has volunteered to maintain the median strip. Chief McArdle reiterates how dangerous it is to be on the median strip and suggests that if anyone goes before the Board of Selectmen for approval to maintain it they should be denied.

J. Sherman asks for alternative options as he understands it's the Town's responsibility to maintain it and not NH DOT. S. Fitzgerald agrees, stating that the Town signed an agreement with NH DOT as the Town had the option to either have it paved or landscaped and the Town chose to have it landscaped. S. Fitzgerald suggests hiring a landscaper and look at what other Town's do as well. Believes the Town

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can find a low maintenance option that still looks presentable. Chief McArdle mentions that any options the Town decides to do, they should use fire resistant material in the area by the lights as lots of cigarette butts are thrown out of vehicles by motorists.

OLD BUSINESS – Present Committee with road map of Town with color coding showing the roads speed limits.

Chief Jones states that this has already been completed.

OLD BUSINESS – Update on discussions with Haverhill Police Chief regarding Border Avenue.

Chief Jones comments on how this was already discussed during action item review.

OLD BUSINESS – Update on Safe Routes to School Grant.

S. Fitzgerald briefs the Committee of his meeting with the project coordinator and how it's expected that funding will be available in mid November. Explains that Hoyle, Tanner & Associates are prepared to move forward and should hit the ground running soon. He mentions that he'll have several options for the slip lane at Elm Street available for review and anticipates construction to begin in 2017.

OLD BUSINESS – Update on status of traffic counts on Pollard Road and Forrest Street and posting 6 month trial period on same roads for "No Thru Trucking" GVW 12000 once count is completed.

Chief Jones will re-visit this item after the six month trial period is completed.

OTHER BUSINESS –

S. Fitzgerald mentions how the Safe Routes to School grant has spent approximately \$4,000 on non-infrastructure items. Mentions his interest in speaking with the Board of Selectmen about the Town supporting additional funds for the Safe Routes to School project above what has already been committed. Briefly explains the high costs involved in designs.

ADJOURNMENT- Motion to adjourn by D. Garlington and seconded by L. Withee. None opposed – all in favor. Meeting adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

NEXT MEETING DATE – TBD

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah Gibbs, Recording Secretary