

The Town of Taghkanic Highway Department Monthly Report  
June 7, 2010

Regrettably I cannot be at this council meeting because of a commitment to attend Highway School in Ithaca on June 6, 7, & 8. If the council needs to contact me before June 9<sup>th</sup>, please call my cell at (831) 234-2867 or email me at youhas@live.com.

### **The imperative for new vehicles**

On June 2<sup>nd</sup>, the '89 International Dump was driven to Ben Funks for its annual inspection and found to be severely compromised and not roadworthy. The truck, 21 years of age and with mileage in excess of 200,000, was found to have over a dozen structural and mechanical issues deeming the vehicle unsafe and not roadworthy. A formal estimate to correct the problems is due next week, but Funk's initial guess at repair costs exceed ten thousand dollars, and that proposed effort merely enables the vehicle to pass inspection. The truck is worth perhaps two or three thousand dollars in scrap and used parts value, and the repairs, while allowing the vehicle to legally remain on the road, will not allow full function or use.

The 2002 one-ton dump truck remains in use, albeit limited, largely because of the lack of a replacement vehicle. In addition to an irreparably cracked frame, it has developed an engine bearing knock, indicating the compelling need for an overhaul. The truck's condition is such that it is unusable for hauling and trips outside of a reasonable tow-radius, and can no longer be used for snow plowing. It will most certainly fail inspection this coming October.

The '95 International Dump remains unusable on the back lot at Funk's.

***If we as a town do nothing***, we will have only three dump trucks capable of plowing at the onset of the winter season.

- Jan. 2010 – Mar. 2010: It took three and a half hours to complete a circuit of snow-removal.
- Projecting removal times for the next winter season, each cycle will take five hours average, and longer when repairs escalate as the winter progresses.
- Multiple circuits would be needed for heavy storms which would increase the total time needed to clear town roads.

Outside of the winter, loss of two vehicles will further compromise our abilities to do our own hauling. This is an important budgetary consideration; this January alone, we paid Gaylord \$5610 in hauling fees. If we should be unable to do our own hauling, the cost of hiring an outside firm hired is projected at absolute minimum to be \$31,000 for 2010, and will increase if extensive chip sealing is done during the summer season.

The purchase of a 2 –3 ton Four Wheel Drive dump truck is critical because the current 1-ton dump is severely compromised and unable to perform on the 18 miles of roads that cannot safely support larger vehicles. Bids on a new replacement vehicle will be opened on the June 7<sup>th</sup> meeting and will be scrutinized later this week for adherence to specifications. The selection, if any, of a suitable vehicle bid will be made later in the week and transmitted to members of the council.

This department in conjunction with Ben Funk, Inc. has developed specifications for a 10 Wheel Dump Truck with plow, wing plow, and built-in sander. The truck is capable of hauling more than twice the weight of any of our existing trucks and will obviate the need to spend most of tens of thousands of dollars annually in outside hauling fees. The ten-wheeler will also have the capacity to plow and sand up to twenty miles of paved road before returning to the garage for reloading, saving at least an hour of reloading time. Ben Funk has agreed to State Bid Pricing, eliminating the need of advertising for bids. The cost of the basic truck is \$189,166.00 and the dump body with plows and sander is \$65,315.90. Vouchers will be available from Funk's at the end of this week.

I feel the imperative to point out to the council that both the new 2-ton and the ten-wheeler will have very little maintenance cost for the duration of the warranties and that they will retain a substantial amount of their trade-in value for the next five to seven years. I urge the council to resolve to proceed with the purchase of these vehicles. Copies of the Cab & Frame quotation from Funk's and the Body and Accessories quotation from Viking Cives are attached to this report. Specifications for the 2 - 3 ton dump as submitted to bidders from this office are also attached.

### **Roadwork done last month**

- Installed 306 feet of culvert: Dran Bauer, Bloody Hill in prep for possible resurfacing
- Graded/raked/patched/cleared ditches on parts or all of Snyderstown, Sopak, Nugent, Hoyle, Reservoir Road, Near, Berkshire, Concra, Old Oak, Sheldon, Hay Press, Miller, Strohmeier, Notzel
- Mowed all town roads this month

### **Issues**

- There has been no response for a request for the chart of accounts from the bookkeeper. Our current method of fund accounting is woefully inadequate, consolidating many categories into one fund and making cost analysis difficult or impossible. I am developing my own system to enable cost analysis, but I rather have a system which complies with state bookkeeping guidelines. I am also unsure as to who is our bookkeeper/accountant; as of late I have been directed to submit payrolls to Brian Fitzgerald instead of Mark Fitzgerald. I request clarification from the council.
- It is most irritating and, I believe, illegal for me not to be served when being sued in my official capacity as Highway Superintendent. It is equally distressful to be ignored when a notice of a meeting to which I am a party has not been sent by mail, nor by email, nor by phone call nor in person. It is my right both in an official and a personal capacity to be noticed for meetings and events to which I am a party.

### **Development of a road repair plan**

A new, more realistic plan for the repair and upgrading of town roads is in the process of development. It will replace the ineffective plan known as the “Ten-Year Comprehensive Program II”. The primary short term features of this plan are:

- Drainage and safety remediation: the reason for the extensive culvert work being done currently
- Short road section paving: will allow the worst parts of a road to be repaired and spared further damage
- Hot patch: a method far more durable than the previously used cold patch
- Chip seal: will restore a cracked or repaired road for 2 or 3 years duration at a fraction of the cost of resurfacing

The idea behind this program is to save the roads that are recoverable through timely action. The first candidates are, in no particular order: Sopak, New Forge I, Stone Jug, Livingston, Meiers, the intersection of Bloody Hill at Route 11, and certain sections of Taghkanic, if the funding allows. The relatively short roads of DranBauer and Bloody Hill are candidates for paving, *if* the state budget is passed and the CHIPS fund remains intact. Snyderstown in its entirety is scheduled for paving next year and will be budgeted as such. For all other roads, the department will be diligent in its efforts to maintain safe travel in the best manner we can.

As always, your comments and input is welcome. 851-7806.