

**Town of Richford**  
**Selectboard Approved Meeting Minutes January 20, 2025**

Chair Steinhour called the meeting to order with members, Andy Pond, Sherry Paquette, Alan Fletcher, and Kristin Sheperd present. Guests at the meeting were Town Administrator Marissa Tessier, Town Clerk Kiley Deuso, Tim Smith, Rowena Brown, Robert Wetherby (Teams), and cameraman Gerry Vasey.

The board said the pledge of allegiance.

**3. No additions or deletions.**

**4. FCIDC – Tim Smith**

- Tim Smith from Franklin County Industrial Development discussed the project in Enosburg involving the Perley Block. He also discussed the interest in the Boright Block on 1 Main Street in Richford. Members of his board, including himself, have been through the building multiple times. He stated there is going to be some housing money available through the State, and there is potential for 16-18 units, some with a river view. This would be up for more discussion early summer, once they wrap up in Enosburg. There was discussion regarding the housing for the Boright Block and if there were any other option discussed for that building.

**5. Approval of 1/6/25 Meeting Minutes**

**Selectwoman Paquette made a motion to approve the minutes from 1/6/25. Selectman Pond seconded. Motion passed 4-0. Selectwoman Sheperd abstained.**

**6. Approval of 1/13/25 & 1/16/25 budget Meeting Minutes**

**Selectwoman Paquette made a motion to approve the minutes from 1/13/25. Selectman Fletcher seconded. Motion passed 3-0. Selectman Pond and Selectwoman Sheperd abstained.**

**Selectman Pond made a motion to approve the minutes from 1/16/25. Selectman Fletcher seconded. Motion passed 3-0. Selectwoman Sheperd and Selectwoman Paquette abstained.**

**7. Town Administrator Update**

- TA Marissa reminded everyone of the upcoming public charter change meeting on January 30<sup>th</sup> at 6pm upstairs of the Town Hall.
- Due to the increase in questions regarding plowing sidewalks, Chair Steinhour spoke with Jason, and it was determined that only certain street would have their sidewalks plowed. The following sidewalks would be plowed, River St, Province St, Eastern Ave, Main St, Noyes St, Thomas St, and Troy St. TA Marissa revised the public works winter maintenance policy to reflect these changes (see attached).

**Selectwoman Paquette made a motion to approve the revised Winter Maintenance Policy. Selectman Pond seconded. Motion passed 5-0.**

- Rowena asked if it was in the Policy how many times, they would plow the streets if it were snowing. TA Marissa stated that it was addressed in the policy, there are sections for plowing operations, mailbox replacement, towns right of way, mailbox replacement & reimbursement, and salt & sand application. She was asking because they did a good job of plowing in the morning, but at the end of the day it was hard to go back up her hill. Chair Steinhour explained it takes each plow truck driver 3-4 hours to complete a route, and there was a lot of snow that last week and the crew did the best they could to keep roads clear. There was also discussion on where it was decided to put the extra snow that accumulated.
- Marissa had a Priority list application for the Golf Course Rd water line project that needs to be signed.
- Working with boards members to get reports finished for the Town Report.

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- Working on specific language for a reserve fund for the Fire Department and Charter Changes for the ballot.

**8. Highway Report**

- Piles of snow have been cleaned up around Town after the big storm. Streets have been scrapped.
- There were 2 vehicles that were down, and some of our personnel are mechanically inclined and able to fix the repairs on their own after getting the parts needed.

**9. Buildings Report**

- The outlet at the fire station was replaced.
- Upgrades to the electrical have started at the Town Hall.
- Upstairs Post Office work will begin sometime this week.

**10. Water & Sewer Report**

- Nothing to report.

**11. Parks, Playgrounds, & Cemeteries**

- Continued use of the ice rink. Thanks to Tim Irons for posting and keeping the rink cleared off. Also thanks to the fire department for getting him water when he asks. The Rec Committee purchased a snowblower for him to use at the Ice Rink.

**12. Other Business**

- Rowena stated the DRB recently found out that their meetings need to be recorded. With permission from the board TA Marissa will look into getting them a voice recorder to record the meetings, and she can upload those recordings to the website.

**13. Executive Session**

**Selectwoman Paquette made a motion to go into an executive session for personnel at 5:40pm. Selectman Pond seconded. Motion passed 5-0.**

**Chair Steinhour made a motion to come out of the executive session at 6:05pm. Selectwoman Sheperd seconded. Motion passed 5-0.**

**There were no votes as a result of executive session.**

**Meeting adjourned at 6:05pm**

**Submitted by**

**Marissa Tessier – Town Administrator**

**Attest:**

## **TOWN OF RICHFORD PUBLIC WORKS WINTER ROAD MAINTENANCE POLICY**

The Richford Public works Winter Road Maintenance Policy is based on the goal of obtaining safe highway travel surfaces during the winter months. It is our goal to achieve this at the earliest practical time and in the most cost efficient manner during and after a storm event. Providing bare dry travel surfaces during a winter storm event is not practical and therefore not expected.

There are many variables affecting winter road maintenance operations such as the type of precipitation, air and pavement temperature, traffic volume, wind, time of day and even the day of the week. The type and volume of traffic and road gradient are the primary factors in determining the order of winter road maintenance service. Therefore, during periods when school is in session it is top priority to clear the roads utilized by school buses.

Emergency service buildings shall receive the necessary maintenance required to provide for emergency personnel to arrive and for vehicles to depart and return safely. As necessary, snow and ice control equipment shall be redirected by the Public Works Foreman from assigned routes to assist emergency response vehicles in reaching their destination. Roads heavily used by commuters and hills are next in terms of priority.

Each winter storm event is unique; thus, it is impractical to develop specific rules on winter maintenance operations. The judgement of the Public Works Foreman often governs the quantity and type of applications used to control snow and ice. Public safety is always our top priority.

### **PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT CALL OUTS**

During the winter months the Public Works Department's regular working hours are 7:00-3:30, Monday-Friday. All Public Works Department employees are standby 24 hours per day, 7 days per week from November 1<sup>st</sup> – April 15<sup>th</sup>. In the event of a winter storm that occurs during weekend or evening hours, the Public Works Foreman will make the decision to mobilize in consultation with whoever else in the Public Works Department is on call and with other transportation emergency service officials as deemed fit. The determination will be based on the time of day, condition of roads and the predicted duration and intensity of the storms.

### **PLOWING OPERATIONS**

Plowing operations are generally initiated after 1 to 4 inches of snow has fallen and may continue until the storm has concluded. It is expected that each plow route will take 4 hours or more to complete.

For light accumulation snowfalls and snow squalls plowing may begin immediately and may include simultaneous salting and/or sanding to provide the desired results quickly and efficiently. Snow squalls, which occur after 8pm and produce only light accumulation, may not require immediate attention because of light traffic. Such light accumulation may be cleared very early the following morning, no later than 7:00 am and this will be at the discretion of the Public Works Foreman.

Excessive overtime hours for Public Works Department employees are also a consideration. State of Vermont guidelines for highway departments require employees to have at least four hours of rest after a ~~sixteen hours~~sixteen-hour shift. During a prolonged ~~snow storm~~snowstorm event we will clear all of the roads and intersections but we may not apply sand until after a ~~four hour~~four-hour rest period. Hills, intersections, and curves may be cleared before the shift ends, depending on their condition. Widening and intersections view clearing is performed following the storm and generally during daylight hours.

### **GUIDELINES FOR THE TOWN'S RIGHT OF WAY**

The Town will pursue recovery for damages if Town equipment is damaged by objects placed in the right of way. Pursuant to Title 23 Vermont statues Annotated Chapter 13 1126(a), **no person shall place (or cause to be placed) snow or ice within the Town's right of way for any reason.** This policy shall apply to any person engaged in personal or commercial snowplowing operations, who by the removal of snow from a residence or commercial building causes snow and/or ice to be placed in the Town right of way.

**Additionally, the Town of Richford prohibits the placement of trash or recycling bins (or any other object) in the Town right of way from December 1<sup>st</sup> – April 15<sup>th</sup>.** During this period of time trash or recycling bins may be placed in the driveway area instead of on the side of the road where the snow has been cleared by the Town.

During maintenance operations of any season, the Town of Richford will not be responsible for any damage or destruction of appurtenances placed within the Town's right of way. Appurtenance includes, but are not limited to: trees, shrubs, flowers, grass, fences, stone walls, and stone posts. It is the Town's policy to use special care and consideration when plowing in the vicinity of mailbox supports.

Despite this care and consideration, some mailboxes may be damaged or destroyed during the snow removal season. In the vast majority of cases, it is the wing of the snow coming off the plow or wing blade that damages a mailbox, especially when oncoming traffic makes it impossible for the plow or operator to swerve around the support. **Please see Town of Richford Rural Mailbox Placement Specifications & Reimbursement Policy below for specific guidelines on placement of mailbox.** The replacement of a mailbox or support does not take priority over snow plowing, sanding, salting or any other high priority winter maintenance

operations and a postal customer may have to pick up mail at the Post Office until the mailbox is back in place. The Town shall have no responsibility for clearing away snow from the entrances of private driveways that accumulates as a result of highway plowing operations.

## **RURAL MAILBOX PLACEMENT SPECIFICATIONS & REIMBURSEMENT POLICY**

The Town of Richford requires rural mailboxes to be mounted on a steel pipe 1-1/2" inside diameter or larger, a 4x4 or larger wooden post, or a standard of equivalent strength, set at least two and one half (2.5) feet into the ground. The leading edge of the mailbox itself should be three (3) feet outside of the pavement or of the regularly traveled surface of a gravel or dirt road. The bottom of the mailbox should be forty-two (42) inches above the surface of the adjacent roadway so that the plow may pass completely underneath without hitting an obstruction. Adherence to these specifications will be required proper to an assistance from the Town of Richford being authorized to repair or replace any rural mailbox damage that is a direct result of winter road maintenance operations.

Any request for reimbursement for damages must be made in writing to the Selectboard. The owner of a damaged mailbox, including 'custom' mailboxes, will be entitled to a maximum reimbursement of \$30.00. Furthermore, the Town of Richford Public Works Foreman may, as ~~they are~~ he is performing ~~their~~ his duties, provide notice to any party who has a mailbox that is not in compliance that they need to bring the mailbox into compliance in order to increase the safety of winter road maintenance operations.

## **SALT APPLICATION**

Salt is used to reduce the adherence of snow to pavement thereby improving the ability of snowplows to remove it from the road surface. It is the position of the Public Works Department that salt combined with snowplowing is the safest, most efficient de-icing method available. It is the policy of this department to use only sufficient salt to restore safe travel conditions after a storm. It will be applied to paved roads and a minimum amount of sand will be applied as necessary. Salt is not effective when the road temperatures are below (10) degrees. Some particles of salt may be as large as three-quarters (.75) of an inch in diameter and may cause windshield or other types of damage. Travelers should use caution and avoid following other vehicles, especially town trucks too closely. The Town will not pay for any vehicle damage including, but not limited to, the repair or replacement of a windshield where such damage is alleged to be caused by the transportation of, or application of salt to road surfaces.

## **SAND APPLICATION**

Sand is primarily used to improve the safety of the travel surface following a storm. Generally, sand is applied after the conclusion of plowing operations. Sand will be applied to paved surfaces, and as with salt, it will only be applied in the amount necessary to restore safe travel conditions. Some particles of sand may be as large as three-quarters of an inch in diameter and may cause windshield or other types of damage. Travelers should use caution and avoid following other vehicles, especially Town trucks too closely. The town will not pay for any vehicle damage including, but not limited to, the repair or replacement of a windshield where such caused by the transportation of, or application of sand to road surfaces.

### **ICE AND FREEZING RAIN**

Frozen precipitation, including sleet and the buildup of ice caused by freezing rain is a special situation and is not subject to the procedures outlined above. For example, when a changeover from snow to sleet to freezing rain is predicted or anticipated, snow and/or sleet may be left on the pavement to capture the freezing rain to prevent the accumulation of glare ice.

### **PARKING**

Parking is not allowed along roadsides or in public areas from December 1<sup>st</sup> – April 15<sup>th</sup> from 2am to 6am and any vehicles that need to be removed will be done so at the expense of the owner.

### **SIDEWALKS**

There are many sidewalks throughout Town. The Selectboard has determined it is not practical to plow all sidewalks in Town. It has been decided the following streets will be where the sidewalks are plowed.

- River
- Province
- Eastern Ave
- Main
- Noyes
- Thomas
- Troy

### **GENERAL PROVISIONS**

Experience based judgement is essential in conducting and timing winter road maintenance operations. The Town of Richford Public Works Foreman is empowered to enforce the provisions of this policy and is given wide latitude and discretions to make the decisions he or she deem fit to respond to a winter storm event. Evaluations of the Public Works Foreman are performed by the Selectboard either at the conclusion of a specific winter storm event, or at any time deemed necessary by the Selectboard. These evaluations may be performed with input from the general public based on personal observations, or by the observations of the Selectboard. The goal of these evaluations will be to provide guidance and instruction of the Public Works Foreman should they encounter similar events in the future.

The Road Commissioner, or designated representative, is authorized to use reasonable discretion in resolving matters involving unusual circumstances.

Once adopted, this policy supersedes any and all other highway maintenance policies, should they exist, whether in writing or otherwise.

Adopted by the Town of Richford Selectboard on November 7, 2022.

Revised January 20, 2025

Wallace Steinhour – Chair

Andy Pond – Vice Chair

Alan Fletcher

Kristin Sheperd

Sherry Paquette