

## TOWN OF BEDFORD

### HIGHWAY SAFETY COMMITTEE MINUTES

September 22, 2009

A meeting of the Bedford Highway Safety Committee was held on Tuesday, September 22, 2009 in the Bedford Meeting Room, 10 Meetinghouse Road (BCTV). Present were: David C. Bailey (Chief of Police), Scott Wiggin (Fire Chief), Jim Stanford (Director of Public Works), Paul Roy (Town Councilor), Bill Dermody (Alternate Town Councilor), Jerry Gagne (Town Resident), Tony Grande (Alternate Town Resident), Kenneth Peterson (Town Resident), Kathy Benuck (Alternate Town Resident).

The meeting was called to order at 7:16 AM. Chief Bailey stated we do have a quorum.

#### Approval of Minutes

**MOTION by Chief Wiggin to accept the minutes of the March 24, 2009  
Seconded by Jim Stanford. Motion passed.**

#### Correspondence/Communications

None

#### Sub Committee reports

None

#### Unfinished Business

None

#### New Business

#### Item #1 Discussion on school traffic

Chief Bailey stated we are here today for an update on the school traffic and if anyone has any observations please state so. School has been open for about one month and it is a work in progress out on 101. They have now closed Nashua Rd completely at the entrance for the next two weeks. During the construction we have been prohibiting left hand turns and the signs are still out there at night. First few days we stood back and observed to see if there was any self caution on the traffic and there has been none. So what we have to do is to direct traffic in front of the High School in the mornings from about 7:30 am till about 7:50 am because it jams up. A good portion of people were taking the Wallace Rd route coming from the south which was good. We thought it might self correct itself however, it appears we will have to do direct traffic every single

day of the school year. We also have to direct traffic in the mornings at Gault, County and Liberty for approximately the same period of time. Then the High School in the afternoon is fine, because there is not the same amount of cars picking up as dropping off, so we do not need any one at the High School in the afternoon. However, we do need someone at five/six corners. At 3:20 pm when McKelvie gets out we do have to step out there for a few minutes to clear that. All these back ups are for fifteen to twenty minutes. The problem is I will not put people out there when there is a snowstorm because it is too dangerous someone will get hurt and there will be days they have school even during a storm. Or if we have something in the morning like a major crash or so I will have to pull the people. We have it worked out with the SRO's to direct the traffic in front of the High School. My thought is when we do the project in the spring for Gault Road that we might look at a three to four way stop signs at County and Liberty Hill which I feel might eliminate a police officer out there however, Chief Wiggin does not agree and I will open this up for discussion. Most four way stop signs per my observation is that the people go around the circle for the most part. I believe at the High School we cannot do a four way because it is too wide of an intersection. The past few days we have been out there with this new pattern of Nashua Rd being closed and it appears it has not caused any more traffic plus it is easier to direct traffic at Nashua Road because we do not have them coming south. It is open for emergency vehicles for the most part and we can get a police car or a fire truck through the construction. Jim Stanford states that the project is not ahead of schedule but it is going very well. We do have the DOT involved because it is a municipally managed project. They are currently reviewing the signal details. It maybe some time before we get the signals installed. Right now we are doing the road work, the added lanes and the shoulder work. As soon as we can get the approval we can order and get the materials in however, there usually is a back log of steel especially for signals. Chief Bailey states that, that was our fear that there would be a gap between the finished construction project and the actual erection of the lights. Hopefully we will not have to direct traffic out there because I really do not want to have a person out there on Route 101. We will have the turning lanes which will make it better and we will just have to watch it and see what happens until we get the lights in. Tony Grande has there been any discussion on putting up temporary polls? Jim Stanford we have not looked into that at this at this point, we are still optimistic that we can get this in quickly however it might be something that we should think about. Chief Bailey replied that he agrees because Constitution Drive several winters ago, a truck took down the whole signals there and they did put the wires across and it took eighteen months for the whole reconstruction.

Chief Bailey states he is open for discussion for the four ways stop signs. Chief Wiggin states he does not agree at this time that we should wait and see what the road figuration does and what the impact will be of Gault Road coming into Liberty Hill and see what kind of relief it creates or if any and he also mentions that Chief Bailey stated that the problems are for a short period of time for about one half hour to forty minutes. Chief Bailey states that reconfiguring Gault Road is not going to bring any less traffic it will be the same traffic through it, it will be coming in from up further and then come down. Chief Wiggin states this would be impacting people to move to other areas whether they go down Smith Road or Meadowcrest Rd giving traffic onto other areas, if that is the intent of creating a four way stop it would only create traffic elsewhere. Given the

amount of time that the traffic does flow when school is not in session I do not feel it would not be a good decision at this time. Chief Bailey states he somewhat disagrees. In the past we have asked the council to pass a temporary ordinance to see what happens. We just cannot put a police officer out there for the next fifty years we need to do something there. Jerry Gagnon when is the Gault Road realignment going to occur? Jim Stanford replied it should be late spring depending how the winter goes. Jerry Gagne replied so it would not be realized till the following school year? Jim Stanford states we have to see how the weather goes and hopefully it will be done by the next school year, it is relatively a simple project however, there are wetlands involved and we will get some of the work done this year which has to be done during low flow. Chief Bailey question to Jim Stanford, are all the approvals in place? Jim Stanford replied yes. Kathy Benuck states that as a resident that lives across from McKelvie School, that having an officer there during the school bus times has made a huge difference in terms of safety. Also, in terms of the four way stop signs I think that would be fantastic because everybody are always in a hurry and never gives way to any one else even late at night. Chief Bailey states in the beginning they did have some criticism because we wanted to step back and watch what exactly what was going on and it wasn't good. Kathy Benuck replied even with a cruiser visible it was not good. Chief Bailey states that he does not feel that there would be that much of a back up. The school has tried all various ways of drop offs and pick ups and still have not been able to solve the problem. Chief Bailey states it would be worth a try on a temporary basis so when the time comes we will be ready. Paul Roy does not feel it would be necessary that when Gault Rd is realigned and the traffic lights at 101 and Nashua are up and running a lot of the traffic coming down County are going to use Nashua and 101 and the cars will not be shooting down diagonally across like they do now. I would like to take a look once Gault Rd is realigned and the lights at 101 and Nashua Rd are working. Chief Bailey replies I do not disagree with you but somehow I would like to get something in place not the actual thing an ordinance ready to go because we know how long it can take if we do find that there is a problem. I am not looking for more stop signs if it is not necessary. We also have to watch when this whole thing opens is that we will have other new patterns/issues that will come up. Meetinghouse and 101 are already in failure. Hopefully the people once they have the lights (the people who did the so call Bedford maneuver) are going to learn that you will not be able to go right and then take a left on Meetinghouse to go up the hill and to Bedford Center Rd then take a left out of Nashua Rd then go to Bedford Center then come up, because you can only get one car left hand turn off of 101 into Meetinghouse Rd there are no protective turns. Hopefully the state will be forced to do something. Chief Bailey also mentioned that once we get out of this meeting you will see on Meetinghouse Rd that the traffic is backed up pass the church and again, everything is only for ten to fifteen minutes. Jerry Gagne question is your concern the Merrimack traffic coming down Liberty Hill then cutting across. Chief Wiggin replied all of Greenfield Parkway and Merrimack comes down through there. There was talk about making a one way traffic proposal between Gault Rd and Liberty Hill. Then there was opposition from citizens for sending the traffic elsewhere. Chief Bailey states the other issue we are watching is that Wallace Rd backs up in the morning to 101 south bound almost to North Amherst Rd. Right now we have a left and straight lane and a right hand turn lane. There has been discussion if we want to make the right lane the straight lane

and the right hand turn the right lane then leaving the left lane just the left lane. Chief Bailey states that Jim Stanford feels we can do this on our own because that is the town road. Jerry Gagne question are you talking about doing a double left? Chief Bailey replied no. At one point we talked about doing two straight lanes however, we cannot do that either because they will be merging right in the middle of the intersection. We do not know how many cars go right in the morning because that would be holding it up as oppose to the middle lane going straight or left. Jerry Gagne states so right now it is a through left to a right turn and you are talking about changing it to a left turn through a right? Chief Bailey replied yes. Chief Bailey states Wallace Rd is a connector road between Goffstown and Merrimack both south and north and the traffic has increased and I will put the counters out there just to see what the traffic count is on Wallace Rd. It is basically AM peak. We do have issues with the cut through, through the center. They will come down the hill on 101 and see the traffic take a left at the lights go into Harvest market cut across then go up then if that is backed up they will go down Bedford Center and come out by the Bedford Village Inn. People are also avoiding the Constitution Dr intersection and taking a left by the Bedford Village Inn and there is no protective left turn lane. Jerry Gagne states do you think the state will ever close Bedford Center Road and Liberty Hill on the north side? Chief Bailey replied I would not think they would have any opposition to it because isn't also their thought to have less cross roads? Paul Roy can we pass an ordinance that would restrict left turns between certain hours? Chief Bailey states it is within our preview to restrict left hand turns out and left hand turns in would be the state. Paul Roy stated that it was done at Hardy Road. Chief Bailey at one point the road at the Bedford Village Inn was closed and there was talk they would restrict left in and left out and the project did not materialized and the road is still wide open. The problem is that you want them to come out of the Bedford Village Inn and go left then use the protective light at Old Bedford Rd and Constitution. We just want to get out of having an officer dedicated to these situations every day, for the most part we do it but in snow we cannot be out there it is to dangerous. Right now we are pretty much handling it because if we don't it would be grid lock and then people would start taking foolish chances to get through the intersection and then we will start having accidents, which so far we have had none. Jerry Gagne states with advent of the signal at 101 and Nashua and with the realignment of Gault Road I am kind of reluctant to recommend the four way stop at Liberty Hill and County. Chief Bailey states I am not asking for it at this point because we would have to have subsequent meetings however, I would like to have something ready in case a problem arises and we do need it.. Unfortunately we are at a stage where something is corrected then it impacts something else, we just have so much space to work with. Chief Wiggin states that this is the first full year that the High School is fully functioning all four grades and is there somehow we can put the counters out and get a more accurate numbers at the intersection of five corners during this activity to pick up County Road, Liberty Hill Road and maybe even Gault Road during the peak hours? Maybe we can determine how much of an increase, because there was some previous data when the school was being proposed. Chief Bailey states maybe we can get Southern NH to help us out. Chief Wiggin states we can treat all those intersections all at once for a period of a week during school session am, pm and even the night activities to see how much it diminishes down and where those movements are taking place. Kathy Benuck states it has been a few years that a count has been done. Chief

Wiggin states if we bench mark it now with the school opening and then with the traffic light and the Gault Road realignment and as the opportunity comes we can do something at that time whether improvements are to be made and if there is any justification as to what has worked or what has not worked and if traffic flow has changed. Chief Bailey replied we have a month or a month and a half that we can put those out. Tony Grande states we need to wait to make sure that the construction is done. Jim Stanford states the additional back up that you are seeing now on Wallace is because of the construction on Nashua Rd. Also, Jim Stanford states that I am not sure that benchmarking during construction will get us any true significant information once the signal is in and we don't know when the signals will be in. Chief Bailey states per the discussion this is not a good time to put the counters out. Paul Roy states unless you want to put the counters out at the intersection with the conditions that exist. Chief Bailey states we can put the counters out now however the patterns will be changing. Kathy Benuck states why when the lights are in at 101 and Nashua Rd will reduce the traffic coming in at Gault Rd? The traffic that exists is from people who are coming from 101 rather than sitting there from light to light and that the light at 101 and Nashua will be making it safer for people at that intersection. Chief Wiggin states I believe it's the school people going through the Gault Rd intersection might get onto 101 during peak hours or whatever the hours might be. Kathy Benuck disagrees, because she states that everyone knows that 101 is a pain in the neck and people go to great extremes to avoid 101. Toni Grande the problem right now is that people cannot make that move off of 101 to Nashua Rd so they are restricted from doing that so they have no choice to either come down Liberty Hill and to go down County. Kathy Benuck states that has only been for a couple of weeks we have had that heavy traffic for a very long time. Chief Bailey states when he use to come down Wallace it is not all that stressful getting onto 101 and going through all that. It is more stressful trying to get onto 101 from Meetinghouse Rd. Toni Grande states I come out of Nashua Rd onto Wallace all the time and I have never seen so many people taking a left turn onto Wallace and Nashua. So as I am coming out, there is a line of cars with their left turn signal on because they are coming from both sides of town. Chief Bailey states so as of right now I guess we will have a wait and see attitude. Bill Dermody states do we know when the permanent lights are going to be available out on Nashua and 101? Jim Stanford replies I do not have an answer for that. Bill Dermody replies should we be pursuing a temporary concept. Jim Stanford states yes I think we need to take a look at that. Bill Dermody states what will be the trigger before we do such a thing. Jim Stanford states it is certainly not a problem to look at that right now to see what it will entail. Chief Bailey question to Jim Stanford do you have any idea if they have order the mast arm? Jim Stanford replied it is my understanding they have put in a pre order. Chief Bailey what does that mean? Jim Stanford replied it means that it is a project that is a go. Bill Dermody replied I thought I saw a schedule that was all on paper. Paul Roy states that he agrees that he also saw something that was on paper that said they anticipated November first. Jim Stanford replied at this time the state is still looking at the design and we are still waiting for their full approval and they are reviewing that and there is a lot to this and we are still at the mercy of the manufacturer. Chief Bailey why are we still reviewing the design? Jim Stanford replied this is a question we have to ask the state. Chief Bailey replies I will ask the state. Jim Stanford replied there is a little more to it as far as the structural analysis for the over hanging supports etc. so it is my

understanding that is what they are looking at today. Bill Dermody would it be wise to say if we cannot see the schedule that says the permanent lights will be in place say by the fifteen of November sometime before we expect the snow to start flying that we want to see a temporary span? Chief Bailey replies again that is controlled by the state. Chief Wiggin questions is it just a mast issue or other equipment issue. So if they put the controllers that could be the actual equipment instead of temporary or is it basically just the mast? Jim Stanford replies I think it is mostly the mast. Chief Wiggin states so the equipment that they put in could be permanent? Jim Stanford replies again I cannot answer and I think we were more concerned about it six months ago and at this point I do not think that there is that much of a shortage of steel. Bill Dermody states are we talking about the design of the mast arm or are we still designing the intersection? Jim

Stanford replies the intersection is all set it is the actual equipment we are waiting for. Bill Dermody states can we get the state to come in and give us what their time line is? Jim Stanford replies yes and Chief Bailey agrees for the state to give them a time line. Bill Dermody states the whole purpose to get that intersection in was to protect the kids. Chief Bailey questions, is there an engineer overseeing this project? Jim Stanford replies it is municipally managed and yes there is a project manager for the state and they have community assistance. Jim Stanford also states the other thing on the schedule we need to remember that when we initially put this out it was an April project and we did not get into the ground until July so that has to be factored into the schedule. Jim Stanford states that this is not something that we are controlling one hundred percent. Bill Dermody states how do we force the state to the table if it is a matter of them sitting down reviewing and approving the design? We just want to know when the state will be making a decision so that we can get those arms manufactured and get this thing done. If we do not get an answer then I think we should make whatever move we have to make. Chief Bailey states that he will have Jim Stanford to get answers so that we will go from there and if need be we can get something that is temporary.

Meeting adjourned at 8:05 AM.

Respectfully submitted by Charlene T. Robinson, Highway Safety Committee Secretary