

**TOWN OF BEDFORD  
HIGHWAY SAFETY COMMITTEE MEMBERS  
February 23, 2016**

A meeting of the Bedford Highway Safety Committee (HSC) was held on Tuesday, February 23, 2016 in the Bedford Meeting Room, 10 Meetinghouse Road (BCTV). Present were: John J. Bryfonski (Chief of Police), Scott Wiggan (Fire Chief), Jim Scanlon (Councilor), Madonna Lovett Repeta (Resident), Jerry Gagne (Alternate Resident), Bill Jean (Resident), Jeff Foote (Town Engineer/Assistant Director of Public Works), Anne Wiggan (School Bus Coordinator). Absent was Jim Aguiar (Councilor).

Chief Bryfonski called the meeting to order at 7:16 a.m., with a quorum present.

**Roll Call**

**Approval of Minutes**

**MOTION by Madonna Lovett Repeta to accept the minutes of the January 26, 2016 meeting; second by Jerry Gagne. Minutes approved unanimously.**

**Correspondence/Communications**

The committee received some Communication/Correspondence in the last four weeks. One an electronic mail message dated February 19<sup>th</sup> from resident and NH Representative, Terry Wolf, regarding traffic concerns at Bedford High School and McKelvie Intermediate School. This is an item that is on the current agenda and will be discussed. The second is an e-mail dated February 22, 2016, from Ms. Davida Ruben-Baker, whom Chief Bryfonski had a phone conversation on February 11<sup>th</sup>, concerning traffic safety at Liberty Hill Road and County Road. Again, this is another item on today's agenda that will be discussed.

**Sub Committee Reports**

- 1. Report from Nashua/County Road Sub-committee-Tabled from January 26, 2016 meeting: Recommendation for traffic study.**

The sub-committee who is studying the Nashua Rd/County Rd, Bedford High School and McKelvie corridor are looking at various engineering studies. All committee members have received and had time to review the memorandum from Lt. Michael Bernard, Bedford Police Department, to the Highway Safety Committee, dated November 17, 2015. The attachment contains three (3) proposed engineering studies. Sub-committee met back in November 2015 to perform a study of the intersection. Members of the committee are representatives from the school administrative unit, Supt. McGee, Jeff Foote, Town Engineer and some members of the Bedford Police Dept. They have suggested improvements to the intersection of Nashua and

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County Road to occur after a consultation with a professional transportation operations engineer. Three (3) proposals have been brought forth to study the intersection. They are: McFarland Johnson, VHB Engineering, and CHA Consulting. Chief Bryfonski explained the Highway Safety Committee is a consultive committee, with no budget, but we can make recommendations to the Town Manager and or the Town Council with respect to having a study done, and if so, which proposal may be the best in the interest of the Town.

Chief Bryfonski mentioned since the last meeting, the Acting Town Manager has been asked to identify intersections where the Town wishes to have a signalization warrant study performed. These studies are conducted by the Southern New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission (SNHRPC) for member Town's, to determine if a traffic signal is warranted at a particular location. The signal warrant studies are formal reviews, standardized and involve some elements, such as the following: configuration of the intersection, vehicular 4 hour volume, peak hour volume, pedestrian volume, pedestrian peak volume, pedestrian 4 hour volume, proximity to any grade crossings and turning traffic. Both Chief Bryfonski and Fire Chief Wiggin have made recommendations to the Acting Town Manager regarding warrant signal studies and the first priority is Nashua Road and County Road. We don't know how many warrant studies the SNHRPC will conduct for the Town. Typically it is one (1) per Town. First priority is Nashua and County Road in front of the High School Complex, second priority Liberty Hill and County Road. These are the two (2) signal warrant studies that we are asking SNHPC to do for us. A decision by the SNHRPC on this request will not be made for a few more weeks.

Chief Wiggin mentioned he was also counting on Back River Road to be included in the study. Chief Bryfonski indicated that traditionally, SNHRPC has done only one (1) signal warrant study per Town in the past. He will see what can be done and if they are able to perform two (2).

Chief Bryfonski said there is a signal warrant request to be done. Each one of the three (3) proposals did include a signal warrant study within each of the three (3). All three (3) are similar in how they plan to review the geometry of the engineering and possible alternatives at the Nashua Road/County Road intersection.

Jerry Gagne stated he would recommend that we accept the recommendation of the sub-committee and assign VHB the task of looking at the intersection of Nashua and County Road. As part of their effort, if they could do the warrant study and if SNHRPC can only do one (1) study for the Town, they would transfer that study to County and Liberty Hill Road, and have VHB do the warrant study as part of their analysis of Nashua and County Road. Chief Bryfonski indicated if the Town elects to pay for the study, then the signal warrant study could be performed by the consultant and then we could ask SNHRPC to move to Liberty Hill Rd and County Rd.

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Chief Wiggin expressed a concern regarding SNHRPC if the RFP would mirror what is being asked of the other contractors or if it would be just for a light. There are other elements being requested for proposals. Is there something above and beyond or would there be elements of the work they would not be able to do. Chief Bryfonski indicated SNHRPC will only do the signal warrant study. They look at the data, but do not go beyond in looking into alternatives, like an engineering consultant would.

Chief Wiggin feels the signal warrant for signalization on Nashua Road and County Road is the amount of pedestrian traffic on Nashua Road and County Road. There is a good amount of pedestrian traffic at both intersections. Liberty Hill and County Road have their own school congestion.

Jeff Foote spoke of the recommendation that was made by Jerry Gagne. Should we consider having VHB also review County Road and Liberty Hill Road since they are in proximity and request SNHRPC do the Back River Road and County Road section. He feels this would accelerate what we are trying to do. It makes more sense to have one firm performing the task for the two (2) areas. All will depend on available funding.

Chief Bryfonski said VHB will have to give us a proposal for that section. Jerry Gagne mentioned since they are the traffic consultants for the Town, they have a lot of data that others may not have. Jeff stated back in 2007, VHB reviewed our proposal in the Gault Road realignment, so they are familiar with that intersection. Chief Bryfonski indicated this is in line with what the committee has asked the sub-committee to perform and that is to look at the entire corridor from the intersection of Nashua and County Road, including the fields, parking, sidewalk issues, student parking issues, and corridor leading to McKelvie School. He agrees with the recommendation by Jeff Foote for VHB to return and give us another proposal to include Liberty Hill Road and County Road. The committee can make a motion with that recommendation and with the same motion, push it forward to the Town Manager, and consider the VHB study to look at both intersections. Chief Wiggin asked if we know where the funding would come from. Is it a Town project or assisted with the school? This would be a Town project. This would need to go before the Town Manager, determine if funds are available in the budget. Current VHB proposal is approximately \$6,000.00.

Councilor, Jim Scanlon feels SNHRPC could be a potential bigger influence on the Town Council if they performed the study for Liberty Hill Road and County Road intersection. This could have a strong positive effect on the outcome. They are already used to VHB's quality of work. Chief Bryfonski explained no matter who performs the signalized warrant study, ultimately, the values are the same. Councilor Scanlon asked if both studies would be for signal warrants. Combine a review of both intersections as part of a comprehensive review. Jeff Foote stated the proposal by VHB would include the signal warrant, look at other alternatives, including a roundabout, or do nothing. SNHRPC will look at one alternative while VHB would look at a

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minimum of three (3) or more. Chief Bryfonski mentioned they will look at the geometry of the intersection, lanes, location of current pedestrian walkways and etc. Believes they are looking into giving us a comprehensive set of alternatives at best to proceed with improving safety at both intersections.

Councilor Scanlon inquired as to when the process began. Jeff Foote stated the proposals were received in July 2015. Councilor Scanlon asked if it will be about a year before something is done. Jeff and Chief Bryfonski agreed.

Chief Wiggin questions the time sensitivity with SNHRPC as to when would we be notified that we have received the money, studies or the work, if approved. With VHB, we would have better time, in having it completed within two (2) or three (3) months. Sensitivity on the project is important. We could use SNHRPC for secondary projects, such as, Back River Road.

Jerry Gagne agrees with Chief Wiggin.

Bill Jean, resident, asked if the grant application is for the actual study or is it to fund the study. SNHRPC actually conducts the study. Chief Bryfonski stated the last study they performed was McAllister Road and New Boston Road, and it took several months, but at no cost to the Town. SNHRPC provides data collection for the warrant. The proposal from VHB would go beyond that, so Bill Jean would concur with the recommendation to go with VHB to analyze both intersections, Nashua Road and County and Liberty Hill Road and County Road. Chief Wiggin indicated SNHRPC could be used for secondary projects, as previously mentioned, Back River Road.

Chief Bryfonski believes that change can still be made regarding SNHRPC as the information is not due until February 25<sup>th</sup>. Bill Jean indicated there is a meeting today with SNHRPC (February 23<sup>rd</sup>).

Jim Scanlon asked if the VHB proposal is accepted, would the school administration be involved in both being interviewed and a recommendation. There are 4506 students in Bedford. Approximately 1500 are high school students, 1285 between McKelvie and Lurgio Middle School. With 3,000 students, there are buses, vehicles and motorists traveling to work in the morning. Then there is the issue at Back River Road at Peter Woodbury School. In a recent conversation Councilor Scanlon had with representative, Terry Wolf, taking the schedules of the high school, Lurgio, McKelvie and balancing arrival and departures times better. Start and departure times currently are not far apart from each other. He would like to have the school administration be involved in the interviews and discussions with VHB or SNHRPC. Jeff Foote indicated the School Superintendent has been very involved as long as he has been involved, which is the last 6 to 8 months. He is very aware of the concerns. Chief Bryfonski mentioned when this was set up a year ago, they included the school Superintendent.

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A motion was made by Jerry Gagne to accept the recommendation of the sub-committee to award the contract for the study of Nashua Road and County Road to VHB, subject to them modifying their proposal to include Liberty Hill Road and County Road, to evaluate that intersection in a similar form to what is being offered in their proposal, subject to Town Council and Town Manager's approval. Motion second by Jim Scanlon. Scott Wiggin indicated not to combine with VHB, but that Back River Road and County Road for SNHRPC. Chief Bryfonski said we can make a recommendation to the Acting Town Manager to move it to Back River Road and County Road. With all this said, motion passed unanimously.

Chief Bryfonski will put the correspondence necessary for the committee so all of this can happen. VHB will be contacted, possibly by the sub-committee, contact VHB and have them provide a separate proposal to submit to the Acting Town Manager for a review and decision.

Chief Wiggin asked if there is funding for the 2016 budget for this scope of work? Jeff Foote mentioned Public Works has a budget for engineering services and we could approach the Town Manager should he be happy with the proposal.

### New Business

#### Traffic Concerns at Liberty Hill & County Rd.

Chief Bryfonski indicated this intersection has been looked at several times in the past several years and as recent as September 2014, again in early 2015. As noted above in the correspondence, the committee received from resident and representative, Terry Wolf, a copy was provided to all committee members and has been made as part of the record for today's meeting. Representative Wolf stated that she drops off her student at McKelvie School for activities several times a week. Shortly after the accident that occurred at the intersection on February 11<sup>th</sup>, she noticed significant heavy traffic in that area. Rep. Wolf has asked the committee to review the intersection of Liberty Hill and County Road for information purposes. Attached was a file containing enrollments, and start times for the area schools. Also noted the combined enrollment for McKelvie and Lurgio Middle School is only six (6) students less than the high school enrollment of 2,956. This does not include traffic for staff, parents, visitors and busses.

Correspondence on February 20, 2016, from Ms. Davida Rubin-Baker electronically signed, along with 105 supporters/residents, asking the committee to find a solution to resolve the safety issues at the intersection of Liberty Hill and County Road. Ms. Rubin-Baker is aware of the pending signal warrant study, however, she is requesting that we take action now. Suggested a four-way Stop sign or a traffic officer. Added comments, noting the heavy traffic in the area, the amount of high school drivers heading to and from high school. She described the

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traffic as a game of “chicken” when you stop at County Road attempting to make a turn onto Liberty Hill Road and facing a driver coming the other direction on County Road. Comments from others indicated the intersection was challenging, even for experienced drivers and that pedestrian traffic complicates safety issues.

Chief Bryfonski went to the McKelvie intersection during dismissal a few times last week and found the same items that were mentioned in the letter. Significant congestion whereby vehicles are unable to get into McKelvie, cued onto County Road and spilled out into the intersection.

As a result, the chief has directed two (2) things to happen from the Police Dept.

1. Directed patrol units during dismissal time or on a call to move traffic off the road.
2. Directed the Captain and Patrol Lieutenant to meet with Principal Fournier at McKelvie to determine whether or not they can further load balance the pickups between the front and the back of the school. This was already done once at the beginning of the school year.

There are 2 issues before us. First, the intersection itself. Currently there is a signal warrant study pending or engineering study, which can provide additional alternatives for our review and make recommendations on changing the intersection. Second, is congestion caused by the traffic spilling out of McKelvie School during dismissal time.

A motor vehicle accident study was done in late 2015, from October 2010 to October 2015, with 26 motor vehicle accidents at the intersection. This is consistent with motor vehicle accident reviews going back to more than that period of time, averaging 4 and 5 accidents per year at the intersection. This intersection was also looked at for the September 23, 2014 meeting with some of the same motor vehicle data presented. SNHRPC motor vehicle daily average volume at that time was 4,126 cars per day at peak (0700 and 0800, and 3:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m.) July 18, 2013 a letter from SNHRPC to the Town listed Liberty Hill and County Road as one of the intersections, from their study, has a high rate of motor vehicle collisions out of a list of 17, that area was listed #13 out of #17 from the SNHRPC study.

The last speed analysis conducted by the Bedford Police Dept. in that corridor was in July 28, 2014 to August 4, 2014 where the equipment was installed at Liberty Hill and Appledor. Speed is posted at 30 mph. The percent of traffic traveling more than 10 mph above the limit was 4.4%; northbound 6.3 and southbound 2.3. During that period, 23,576 vehicles measured during that period, approximately 4,000 vehicles per day. This analysis is consistent with SNHRPC average. However, this was during the summer time, whereby traffic is lower at that time of the year. Out of the 23,576, 16,782 or 71% go 1 to 10 mph above the posted speed limit (31-40 mph). This is north and south on Liberty Hill Road.

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There were some residents in the audience regarding this intersection, so at this time, they were given the opportunity to speak.

Kristin Trent, 60 Reed Drive – thanked the committee for taking the issues on Nashua and County and Liberty Hill Road and County Road. Feels this is all due to the design whereby Peter Woodbury, district office, McKelvie and the Middle School and High School complex all on the same road; artery that runs through the Town. The before and after school activities impact the traffic. Highly recommends the studies and hopes action is taken. Needs a permanent solution. Resident would like to know when the next possible meeting would occur so she would be able to attend. Chief Bryfonski mentioned if the committee puts forward some of the recommendations, based on the study to the Town Manager, and then brought forward to the Town Council, there would be an opportunity to address the Town Council. The Town Council agendas are posted on the Town's website. Councilor Scanlon did mention the Town Council meets twice a month and gave the meeting time as well. He also indicated the budget process begins in late summer, and that would be a good time to come in to make a recommendation or request for a certain amount of money for a particular item of interest.

Lois Carter, 8 Winding Road – her children do take the bus, however, on a recent day with a storm, she drove him to school. Had to pick up her son for a doctor's appointment in the afternoon and could not believe the traffic. Feels the study needs to be expedited. She mentioned about the possibility of having the buses use the entrance by the Bedford Village Shops (Chestnut Drive). Concerned about the new licensed driver's exiting into the traffic as well as there being only one entrance and one exit for the high school complex.

Chief Bryfonski pointed out to everyone that the Town, Police Dept. nor the Highway Safety Committee have any influence on the school's traffic pattern.

Charlie Fairman, 243 Liberty Hill Road – thanked the committee for their support on the sidewalk on Nashua Road that is on the ballot for the March elections. This is a very important safety improvement. Hoping the study around the high school area will include alternative entrances and exits to the school. He noticed during the primary elections, the emergency access road, was opened and was very nice to use. Mr. Fairman hopes we do not begin with traffic lights on Town intersected roads. Stop signs are good only if motorists stop. He has seen people go through the stop signs on a regular basis at McKelvie. Speed limits are not obeyed. Would like to see more enforcement and ticketing done. People need to observe speed limits. Safest way for children to get to and from school is to have the children take the school bus.

Lynn Hawkins, 4 Wright Acres Road – mother of triplets, 16 year old boys, learning to drive. Concerned with the major intersections and young drivers. Feels people do not always abide by stop signs, but do abide by traffic signals. Feels it would improve the flow of traffic.

Jerry Gagne commented on the parking at the former highway garage and that varies as the school year progresses with more students obtaining their license, creating a parking problem. He believes this has been discussed with the school. Chief Bryfonski indicated yes, and the Superintendent's decision was to add a warrant article on his budget to construct the sidewalk from the former garage and fields to intersect with the current sidewalk in front of the student parking. This will be voted on in March by the public.

There are many young and inexperienced drivers traveling this corridor on a daily basis. The accident rate for new drivers is higher, as per the latest insurance stats. Nationwide, the fatalities during the first half of 2015 are up by 8%. Traffic safety after 12 years of improvement has now taken a turn.

Since there currently is a motion for an engineering study on Liberty Hill Road and County Road intersection with VHB, Chief Bryfonski suggest we "Table" this item until we have the results of the engineering study.

Chief Wiggin indicated the study of the corridor may not capture all of the traffic and activities since many of them are seasonal.

Chief Bryfonski would like to see this study done sooner than later and is hopeful to have the data back by May or June that would give us some direction as to how to make recommendations to the Town Manager and the Town Council to move forward, just in time for the 2017 budget season, especially if any type of construction would be required.

The decision was unanimous to "Table" the Liberty Hill Road and County Road intersection at this time due to current warrant study recommendation that was proposed today.

A motion was made to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 a.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Joanne E. Fraser, Executive Assistant, Public Works Dept.