

**TOWN OF BEDFORD
HIGHWAY SAFETY COMMITTEE MINUTES
September 27, 2016**

A meeting of the Bedford Highway Safety Committee (HSC) was held on Tuesday, September 27, 2016 in the Bedford Meeting Room, 10 Meetinghouse Road (BCTV). Present were: John J. Bryfonski (Chief of Police/Chair), Scott Wiggin (Fire Chief/Vice-Chair), Jerry Gagne (Alternate Resident), Ken Peterson (Alternate Resident), and Anne Wiggin (School Bus Coordinator).

I. Call to Order 7:15

II. Quorum Count

III. Approval of Minutes from August 23, 2016

MOTION by Jerry Gagne to accept the minutes of the August 23, 2016 meeting, second Ken Peterson. Vote taken – All in Favor - Motion Passed.

IV. Correspondence/Communications

V. Sub Committee Reports

VI. New Business

1. Request for a Crosswalk at County & Back River Rd – across from PWS

Chief Bryfonski: Correspondence from Ms. Nicole Dunn requesting a crosswalk at PWS was received by this committee. In the past Public Works (not present) indicated ramps and sidewalks are required when installing a crosswalk. If the committee did recommend the installation of a crosswalk, surveying and engineering would be needed to determine the appropriate route and cost. On October 12th DOT will be conducting a Road Safety Audit at the intersection of Back River and County Rd. The DOT road safety audit is predicated upon crash data and other factors. DOT will review the intersection; talk with members of this committee and the PD; review crash data, review engineering and then make appropriate recommendations with respect to any modifications that may be required for this intersection. The PD and the PWS staff observed no pedestrian traffic on those occasions when the area was monitored. [Note: No member of the public was present in support of the crosswalk.].

Jerry Gagne: Back in April 2015 Officer Lavoie did a study of the intersection and a traffic count was done. The recommendation at that time from the department was a 4-way stop or a crosswalk was not necessary. Not sure if things have changed to warrant the crosswalk. In the past people have seen some pedestrian traffic at the intersection and living close by I have not seen any pedestrian traffic and this would be a real challenge to put in a crosswalk. Curbing would be needed for a sidewalk that initiates drainage and redesign. This would be an expensive proposition and I don't see the pedestrian traffic to warrant a crosswalk.

Chief Bryfonski: There have been some changes/improvements to the intersection. DPW did extensive clearing to improve line of sight for approaching traffic and this summer the school district made extensive renovations to their parking lots and did more extensive clearing to improve the line of sight. There is no significant crash data, however, there was one pedestrian fatality in November 2014; the victim was not crossing at this intersection, but crossing Back River Rd approximately 100 to 200 feet north of the intersection. A crosswalk would not have affected the outcome between the motor vehicle and the pedestrian.

Chief Bryfonski: I would recommend to this committee that we table any further discussion until we review the results from the DOT's Road Safety Audit that is being done on October 12th. We will mention the crosswalk to the DOT so they can take this into consideration.

All in favor to Table until the committee receives any recommendation or information from the DOT.

2. Request for a 4 - Way Stop at PWS

Chief Bryfonski: Correspondence received from Ms. Anne Lucey requesting the consideration of the instillation of a 4-Way Stop/All Way Stop at Back River and County Rd. Referring to Mr. Gagne's comment that Back River and County was the subject of concern for the committee, which reviewed and studied the intersection in prior years. The DPW (not present) weighed in with the same concerns regarding a crosswalk. There would be a need for significant engineering and other work, including a study to determine if the intersection met the conditions for a 4-way stop in connection with the manual for uniform traffic control devices (MUTCD), which our engineers use to determine whether or not traffic controls are warranted. Back River Rd is a significant commuter road connecting Bedford with Merrimack. The last traffic count indicated this road handles approximately 6,800 vehicles in a 24 hour period. There is an elementary school that sits on the corner and there is a school zone speed limit reduction that is in effect morning and afternoon to slow traffic during the school commuting hours.

Anne Lucey 83 Sebbins Pond Dr: Has been a resident for approximately 13 years. Needing to get across the road several times a day, very concerned about the safety of getting across the intersection. It is very difficult to maneuver because cars are coming from all over. There is S curve on Back River Rd causing limited visibility on either side. The decision making to go left or right and to get across is quick. People on the other side of County Rd regardless of which side you are on, people are not following the rules of the road, it's a guessing maneuver. I feel it is a really dangerous intersection. I'm concerned for the safety of in-experience drivers maneuvering at this intersection. It is a very difficult intersection to get through. In the winter time when the snow banks are up the visibility is even worse. Coming out of County from the Sebbins area there is a giant pine tree on the corner lot that is in the way causing vehicles to have to pull out more. Not sure if a 4-way stop is the answer or a traffic light. People are going fast on Back River Rd and not paying attention to the 20 mph speed limit making this a very dangerous intersection. I have been concerned about this for many years and it is very dangerous and confusing and with the S curve it is very tricky.

Chief Wiggin: Regarding the traffic light I believe we had all 3 intersections looked at and I don't think Back River Rd and County Rd met the warrant for a signalized traffic light. There is criteria what determines traffic movement and traffic counts at the time not to say that this cannot be revisited as traffic volume is always changing. As the Chief indicated during this DOT Traffic Audit it will be brought up as a targeted intersection of concern.

Jerry Gagne: Is the audit done by District 5 or by the traffic division.

Chief Bryfonski: The communication and correspondence has come from DOT. They might be having District 5 and or the planning commission to conduct the actual field work.

Ken Peterson: Suggestions to Ms. Lucey, in the winter time call the Town Manager (TM) who will contact the DPW to move the snow banks and for the large pine tree call the TM to have the DPW take a look at it to see if it is on town property or personal property.

Chief Bryfonski: Factors that affect a motorist's decision to enter the intersection is based upon engineering and construction of the intersection that affects line of sight. A motorist's ability to see traffic is negatively affected by the elevation and engineering of Back River Rd as there is an S-curve and a bit of elevation as you look north on Back River Rd. The most important factor is speed. As speed increases, a motorist's decision time decreases. The speed limit is based on consideration for the line of sight for intersecting and conflicting traffic to ensure sufficient time is available for a motorist to see and avoid traffic.

The Police Department is issuing more tickets in an attempt to change the behavior of the operators in Bedford. Safety violations and speed are the primary factors that we consider in terms of violation(s). The Police Department will continue to conduct speed enforcement on Back River Rd. DOT will provide us with further information from the road safety audit. Referencing Chief Wiggin's comment; there are a number of factors that are considered in reviewing a particular intersection for a signal; it is called a Traffic Warrant Study to determine if the intersection warrants a signal, which is based upon volume as well as other factors. .

Ms. Lucey: Will the road safety audit be done during the busy times during the commuting times and the school times.

Chief Bryfonski: DOT has all the traffic volume and data and may decide to come back to gather additional data. The data that we have is from 2015.

Ken Peterson: Is there any data to support the installation or the use of these large signs, that as you approach, the speed limit is posted and if you are going over the speed limit a giant number start flashing your speed. Do these signs reduce speeds and do they help to enforce/promote safety.

Chief Bryfonski: I believe these types of signs would be helpful. When the radar trailer is out, it does influence speed because the driver sees the flashing speed sign and causes them to slow down. Unfortunately, when the trailer is removed, speeding returns. We have looked into the

mobile signs that can be moved around town. I suggest this would be up to this committee to make a recommendation to DPW or the PD to purchase the signs Mr. Peterson referred to.

Ken Peterson: Would people get inured to these signs if they are there for a while.

Chief Bryfonski: In my experience, if the radar speed sign is a permanent fixed device and motorists know there is no speed enforcement connected to it; motorists may eventually ignore the prompt to slow down; however, drivers that don't usually travel that route would be positively influenced.

Ken Peterson: How much are these.

Chief Bryfonski: Not sure, probably about \$4000. They are solar-powered; moveable can be hung on the post where the sign already is.

Chief Wiggin: Could this be acceptable for the Highway Safety Grant.

Chief Bryfonski: It could be and we should look into that.

Chief Bryfonski: Any motion or recommendation regarding the 4-way stop.

Ken Peterson: We should wait for the study/data to come back to see what it says.

Chief Bryfonski: No motion is needed; we can table this item in consideration of the Road Safety Audit take a look at the information and recommendation. All in favor to Table

Unfinished Business

Chief Bryfonski: At the August 23rd meeting the committee recommended that we request to DOT install rumble strips on Route 101 in the center line from Wallace Rd west to the Amherst town line.

Chief Wiggin: I am supportive of the rumble strips, however for many years there is a lack of double barrier lines. There are many zones between the commercial districts and going over the hill past the old Weathervane, there are passing lanes. The passing lanes can be passed east bound, west bound and at some places there are opened dotted cross lanes that you can cross east or west bound. I would like to recommend doing away with any type of passing lanes once the rumble strips are installed, so there is no opportunity for people to pass. For instances people coming out of Goedecke's going westerly looking out it appears there is a lot of opportunity for east bound traffic and if someone passes that vehicle, now there are 2 vehicles in the posing lane. I suggest solidary stripping would be a supplement to the rumble strips.

Jerry Gagne: DOT would have to take care of.

Chief Wiggin: This would be included in the letter to the DOT.

Gerry Gagne: I agree with Chief Wiggin.

Chief Bryfonski: If all in agreement, I will modify the letter to DOT to request the further modification for no passing zones for that length of the highway. All in favor.

Comments or Concerns

Chief Bryfonski: There has been a number of violations and complaints of motorists passing the school busses that are stopped, particularly on South River Rd which is not a divided highway. It seems motorists on South River Rd; a 4 lane road with no divider; motorists in the opposite lane of traffic feel they are not required to stop for a stopped school bus; they do need to stop. The Police Department has been focusing on and enforcing the school bus rules and a number of tickets have been issued to violators. Motorists are indeed required to stop on a 4 lane road for a stopped school bus with its red flashing lights on. The only exception is if it is a divided highway where there is a separate lane of travel in either direction separate and apart from each other. This is not the case on South River Rd. We recommend that everyone closely obey the rules and always stop for a stopped school bus, at a minimum of no less than 25 feet away from the bus and not proceed until the bus resumes motion.

The next national drug take back day is on October 22, 2016 from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm at the Bedford PD. There is a prescription drug drop box located at the PD and available to residents 24/7/365 to get rid of unused and unwanted medications and prescriptions.

Meeting Adjourned 7:50 am
Respectfully Submitted
Charlene T. Robinson