Board of Selectmen
Municipal Office Complex
Meeting Room 1
April 29, 2026
Special Meeting Minutes

Selectmen Present: T. Gelston; E Dill; T. Sevigny
Also Present: D. Angersola; M. Cohen; A. Consiglio; T. Dumaine; T. Falvey; W. Hunt; P. Lacy; D. Marie; C. McCollum; I. McCollum; M. Miller; M. Sewell; O. Weaver; L. Zemienieski and other members of the public

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance: First Selectman Gelston called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and the attendees said the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Discussion of Private Roads Maintenance: Mr. Gelston noted that this meeting will focus on a proposed ordinance governing limited maintenance of private roads. He emphasized that this was not a public hearing, but a preliminary discussion ahead of a formal hearing.

   First Selectman Gelston introduced Town Attorney Owen Weaver. Attorney Weaver provided the following high-level summary of the proposed ordinance:

   - Establishes when the Town may provide limited maintenance services (e.g., snow plowing, deicing, sweeping, signage).
   - Applies only to designated private roads meeting minimum standards (notably 8-foot width and safe condition).
   - Roads deemed unsafe will be posted publicly and will not receive services until corrected.
   - Allows agreements with homeowners for additional work at their expense.
   - Clarifies that maintenance does not constitute acceptance of a road as public.
   - Limits Town liability and affirms discretionary authority of Public Works.

   Key Issues Discussed:

   - Road Condition & Safety Standards: Public Works explained roads must be wide enough and structurally sound to allow plowing; deep ruts and narrow widths are primary concerns.
   - Responsibility for Repairs: The Town cannot fund improvements to private roads; costs must be borne by property owners, though the Town may assist via agreements.
   - Ownership Confusion: Several areas lack functioning homeowner associations, making it unclear who is responsible for road maintenance.
   - Public Safety Concerns: Residents emphasized the need for plowing to ensure access for emergency vehicles.
   - Notification Process: Unsafe roads will be posted at Municipal Office Complex, Town Clerk's Office and online, with a proposed annual determination date of July 1.

Public Comments

- Unidentified Resident (Moodus Estates): Raised concerns about inadequate notification to all residents; suggested broader outreach such as mailings.
- Al Consiglio (resident): Asked whether the Town intends to continue plowing private roads; Town confirmed intent is to continue, provided roads are plowable.
- Martha Cohen (Lake View Road): Requested clearer standards for what qualifies as a "safe" road; emphasized need for guidance so residents can comply.
- Multiple Residents: Expressed frustration over unclear responsibility for repairs and lack of participation among neighbors in maintaining roads.
- Carole McCollum: Asked how costs would be handled if some residents refuse to contribute; noted lack of authority to compel payment.
- Ira McCollum (Moodus Estates): Described prior attempts to maintain roads and lack of a functioning association; highlighted limited participation and coordination challenges.
- Donna Marie: Shared personal financial contributions to road repairs and frustration over inequitable burden.
- Michael Sewell: Requested a list of roads needing work to assist associations in budgeting.
- Donna Marie (Blue Heron Lane): Noted significant personal expense to pave a road and concern about access if connecting roads are not maintained.
- Resident (Beach Tree area): Raised concerns about non-residents using private roads and causing damage; asked about enforcement.
- Additional Residents: Suggested creative solutions (e.g., one-way roads), private contracting, and improved signage.

3. Potential Board of Selectmen Recommendation: Mr. Gelston indicated that the draft ordinance will be revised to make minor edits, corrections, and incorporate public feedback. He advised that a formal public hearing will be scheduled and properly noticed; following the hearing, the ordinance may proceed to a Town Meeting for vote.

4. Adjournment: There being no additional business to discuss, a motion was made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Mr. Sevigny, to adjourn the meeting at 7:48 p.m. .

Recorded

Respectfully submitted,
Erik Dill, Secretary