Board of Selectmen
Municipal Office Complex
Meeting Rooms 1 & 2
August 4, 2025
Special Meeting Minutes

Selectmen Present: I. Haines; E. Dill
Absent: T. Bourgoin
Also Present: L. Zemienieski and other members of the public

1. First Selectman Haines called the Board of Selectmen's meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and the attendees said the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Discussion of Private Roads Maintenance

Ms. Haines provided opening comments and provided an overview of the contents of the draft private roads maintenance policy. She read the following emails into the record:

- David Shelberg – asked why the residents of the private associations are being treated differently than other taxpayers in Town.

- Patrick Lacy – noted that many people are away during the first week of August and requested another meeting be scheduled. Ms. Haines advised that she plans to schedule at least one more follow-up meeting.

- Paul Riggio – expressed concern about the short notice for this meeting and quoted state statutes regarding the legal notification required for town meetings. Ms. Haines advised that this is a Board of Selectmen's meeting and the state statue related to town meetings does not apply to this situation.

- Ed Gubbins – wrote that he feels the draft policy is a reasonable proposal and thanked the Board of Selectmen for listening to the taxpayers regarding their concerns.

- Patrick Lacy – referred comments from several association members including their questions and suggestions on the proposed policy language.

- Ward Hunt – relayed questions, concerns, and feedback from members of the Moodus Lake Shores Association.

- Dennis Jolly – stated that he feels the current policy draft is over-complicated and too restrictive. He suggested a more streamlined policy and proposed potential language for the policy.

The following public comments were presented at the meeting:

- Paul Dapkus – stated that most of his concerns had been expressed in Mr. Hunt's email; however, he emphasized that the Town should not be given any protections in the policy

beyond what is required from any other resident. He expressed his concern for taking away the private associations' right to legal recourse if they don't agree with any of the Town's decisions concerning work on the private roads. He stated that the residents living on private roads expect the same services provided to any other Town resident; they want to get the same road plowing and treatment services that had been in place until they were stopped last year.

- Carole McCollum – requested clarification as to why the plowing policy had been changed.

- Alicia Dargenio – expressed her confusion as to why the private associations are not receiving the same services as the other taxpayers in Town.

- Ira McCollum – noted that the deed to his property does not state that it is on a private road.

- Xenia Coulter – stated she feels that the residents in private associations are being treated like "second class citizens", particularly in several bullet-points in the draft policy. She noted that no distinction was made concerning Town services available to homeowners living on private roads when she purchased her house.

- Susan Hollander – requested clarification on the two documents that had been distributed from the First Selectman's office. She stated the 4" snowfall standard for private roads is unfair if 2" is the standard for the rest of the Town. She advised that she had consulted with a trial attorney on this issue.

Mr. Dill distributed a document containing information on a survey conducted by the River COG with 17 member municipalities. Ms. Haines stated the survey asked what maintenance services, if any, the municipality provided for private roads in their town. She noted that most of the towns responded that they provided no maintenance services on the private roads in their towns.

- Martha Cohen – noted that the Town services to the Moodus private roads had been grandfathered in and, therefore, they are entitled to plowing and ice treatment.

There was a general discussion regarding the Town's previous policy of plowing private roads.

- Paul Dapkus – he noted that they need to give Irene a little support about the three types of roads because main or priority roads need to be plowed before secondary then tertiary roads.

- Stephen Cohen – noted that they want to be part of the way it has always happened. They want to be part of the standard town prioritization of roads. They don't want to be after every road in the town is done. That is not reasonable. They want to be at the same level as other roads that are similar in size in the way they have been treated in the past. They understand that the town has to take care of priority roads first.

- Paul Dapkus – added that the way the town has been plowing is that contractors have generally been doing the association roads while the town employees have been doing most of the standard town roads.

- Xenia Coulter – recommended separating plowing services from "road maintenance" in the policy.

- Ward Hunt – questioned the validity of the COG survey due to how the survey question was presented and suggested a follow-up survey be conducted specifically asking about plowing services. He further stated that he would like a simpler policy drafted.

- Stephen Cohen – questioned the relevance of the COG survey and stated that he wants to be treated like all other taxpayers in Town. He offered to work with other citizens to create a draft policy.

- Ira McCollum – discussed using a criteria of 4" of snowfall for private roads vs. a 2" criteria for all of the other roads in Town. He discussed his concern about plowing dirt roads.

- Mike Widger – reviewed several concerns he has with the language in the draft policy.

- Ed Smith – stated he appreciates First Selectman Haines' taking action on this issue. He stated he supports simpler language for the policy and eliminating the 4" of snowfall criteria for private roads.

Ms. Haines thanked the public for participating in the discussion on creating a Town policy for plowing and ice treatments for private roads. She stated that she will schedule another meeting on this topic before the winter season.

Michael Sewell - wanted to add that the Selectmen might want to double check the roads that were on the list from the last meeting as there are some people here tonight that were not at the last meeting and did not mention their roads. He wants to make sure we cover all the roads involved.

3. Potential Board of Selectmen Recommendation: Discussion of this agenda item was postponed.

4. Adjournment: There being no additional business to discuss, Ms. Haines adjourned the meeting at 6:57 p.m.

Recorded

Respectfully submitted,
Erik Dill, Secretary