

**TOWN OF PLYMOUTH**  
80 Main Street  
Terryville, CT 06786  
<http://www.plymouthct.us>

**Public Works Board**  
Telephone: (860) 585-4030  
Fax: (860) 585-4067

**Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, June 23, 2026**  
**Assembly Room, Plymouth Town Hall**  
**5:45 P.M.**

PLYMOUTH, CT  
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE  
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## **1. Call Meeting to Order**

The Regular Meeting of the Public Works Board of the Town of Plymouth was called to order on Tuesday, June 23, 2026, at 5:45 PM in the Assembly Room, Plymouth Town Hall, Plymouth, CT.

## **2. Roll Call**

**Present:** Nate Brown (Chairman), Joseph Carey (Member), Mark Lewandowski (Member), George Castle (Member), Joe Sopczneski-Public Works Director, Aaron Heller-Highway Sup't., Vicky Carey-BOF, T.J. Zagurski-Town Council.

## **3. Fire Exit Notification**

Chairman Brown provided fire exit notification to those in attendance, directing occupants to exit through the door to the right or down the hallway.

## **4. Pledge of Allegiance**

Chairman Brown led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.

## **5. Acceptance of Minutes of Previous Meetings**

### **Regular Meeting – 05/26/2026**

The minutes of the Regular Meeting of May 26, 2026 were presented for approval. Chairman Brown noted that Member Castle had not been present at the prior meeting. All other members confirmed they had reviewed the minutes.

Motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of May 26, 2026 was made by Member Joseph Carey and seconded by Member Mark Lewandowski. The motion carried with all in favor and one abstention (Member Castle).

## **6. Monthly Reports**

**Public Works Director's Report – Joe Sopczneski**

PW Director Joe Sopczneski provided an extensive update across several operational areas.

**Administrative / OSHA Abatements:** The majority of OSHA abatement work has been completed. The remaining significant task is the development of a Town Hall emergency action plan, being coordinated with the fire marshal's office and the building facilities lead. Evacuation maps are in place for each room, and a fire drill will be conducted once the plan is finalized.

**Stormwater / Bidding:** The stormwater permit with DEEP is ongoing with Laviero. An invitation to bid for excavation and drainage work resulted in two bids received from Laviero and 3 Leaf. A discussion ensued regarding prevailing wage obligations. The Board and Director Sopczneski acknowledged that projects exceeding \$100,000 in rehabilitation work are subject to Connecticut's prevailing wage requirements. Member Carey cautioned that the town must be careful not to be caught in a compliance issue, particularly if a lower-bidding contractor has not submitted prevailing wage pricing. It was noted that the bid included two pricing schedules. The Board agreed this matter warrants close attention going forward, and Member Carey suggested that any road project anticipated to exceed the \$100,000 threshold be put out to a formal bid rather than relying on unit pricing. A related concern was raised about whether one of the bidding contractors held proper licensing, specifically whether they operate under a P-7 license held by an individual no longer affiliated with the company. Director Sopczneski indicated he would look into the prevailing wage compliance question further.

**Fiscal Year 26 Budget Closeout / FY27 Budget:** The most significant FY26 cost overruns were in salt and overtime due to a heavy snowfall season, estimated at approximately 2,000 tons of salt usage. The Department is working to absorb those costs internally but may seek finance board approval for additional funds. For FY27, the finance Department is building out the budget to allow better tracking of costs across Departments, including fleet maintenance for fire, public works, and highway vehicles. The Department is also reviewing a five-year salt usage history to provide an estimate for the road salt contract due June 30th.

**Highway / Town Aid Road Work:** Reclaiming and grading of Night Lane and Katie Lane are complete, with catch basin repairs and top-replacement underway. Paving is expected in July. Within the bond program Phase 1, Tumblebrook under-drain is complete, and work on Fountainhead has begun with two additional catch basins installed on the upper western end. Reclaiming on that section is expected in July. Member Carey inquired whether the Farms project remained on budget; Director Sopczneski indicated he believed it was on track but would provide a more detailed report once all invoices are received.

On North Street, reclaiming from Schroback to North Harwinton Avenue is set to begin in early July, and milling from Schroback south approximately 5,500 feet will follow at the end of June or early July. A culvert replacement is planned in a low section of that corridor. Director Sopczneski noted that the reclaiming and milling contractors are being mobilized together to avoid multiple mobilization costs—a point Chairman Brown emphasized as important efficiency. The Chairman also raised the question of rock and ledge in thin-pavement sections of North Street, and Director Sopczneski confirmed a rock hammer can be made available as needed. The Department is maintaining an excavation profile report every 100 feet along active work corridors.

South Eagle Street, originally slated for chip sealing, has been elevated to a mill-and-pave project due to the condition of the roadway, with milling anticipated within the next one to two weeks. The chip seal program crack-sealing is complete, with sweeping, shimming, and shoulder repair done, and chip sealing scheduled for the last week of June.

**Todd Road Bridge:** Engineering is finalizing right-of-way information and design. The property owner has been contacted to secure the necessary easement. Director Sopczneski confirmed the project remains on schedule and noted that the engineering consultant (WMC) will be responding regarding whether the project estimate accounts for winter work conditions.

**Connecticut Water / DOT Projects:** Connecticut Water has submitted an in-lieu-of agreement for paving repairs on Grove Street, Emmett, Benedict, and surrounding roads, currently under review. The DOT project on US Route 6/North Main Street is ongoing, with a major milestone being night milling along Main Street expected to begin in late July. A meeting was held with PD, DPW, and the mayor's office to review the contractor's detour plan; large truck traffic will be routed via Route 72, Preston Road, North Harwinton, and Seymour Road. The project completion date is end of 2027.

**Transfer Station:** A third compactor quote came in as the most favorable and aligns with the \$180,000 budget. The vendor plans a site visit on June 30th from Michigan to take final measurements, with a goal of completing installation by Christmas.

**Facilities:** NEEC, the town's HVAC provider, conducted training with facilities staff on building controls. Repairs to condensers have improved air conditioning performance, and staff are working to balance the system. The driveway apron at 259 Harwinton Avenue was completed today.

### **Highway Superintendent's Report – Aaron Heller 32:26:05**

Highway Superintendent Aaron Heller reported that one highway crew position remains open, with ongoing recruitment efforts hampered in part by prevailing wage pay rates that have led to candidate turndowns. The crew responded to storm damage on June 5th, 7th, 11th, and 22nd, including a significant incident on the night of June 22nd in which a tree approximately three feet in diameter at the base came down on South Main Street, taking out power lines and communications infrastructure. The crew mobilized at 11:00 PM alongside Eversource to clear the scene.

Ongoing work includes annual sweeping, roadside mowing, and hot patching. Catch basin repairs were completed on Swicklas, North Street, and three locations on Watchtower Road. Additional repairs are ongoing, including at locations off Napco and North Street, where two basins were repaired and six more require replacement.

The chip seal program is progressing, with Phase 1 chip seal roads swept and prepped. Town vehicle maintenance continues on an as-needed basis. Minor Pond and Indian Haven Pond are being monitored for beaver dam activity.

Member Carey raised the ongoing beaver dam issue, noting his prior experience with the DEP and suggesting the use of a corrugated flow pipe device to mitigate continuous damming. Superintendent Heller noted a similar pipe previously installed off Wolcott Road has become compromised. Member

Carey suggested reaching out to DEEP Regional Supervisor Walter Kearns ("Skippy") for assistance, though Member Castle noted that DEEP's District 4 headquarters has relocated and that the relevant permitting may involve the Army Corps of Engineers for some pond-related work. The Board agreed it would be advantageous to find a more permanent solution rather than performing monthly manual removal of beaver dams.

Chairman Brown noted a sinkhole developing behind a catch basin at the intersection of North Harwinton at the Farms, near the four-way intersection heading toward Schroback, and asked that staff take a look at it.

## 7. Old Business

**Road Opening Ordinance:** Member Carey recalled that Director Sopczneski had previously presented a draft road opening ordinance for the Board's consideration and asked about its status. Director Sopczneski confirmed the draft had not been revised since but noted it would ultimately need to go before the Town Council for approval. He indicated he would revisit it. The Board agreed the most efficient path would be to email the draft to all members for review prior to the July meeting, vote on it at the July meeting, and present it to the Town Council in August. Director Sopczneski noted that the website rebuild presents an opportunity to post related policies—such as road opening procedures, tree warden roles, and other Department policies—in a publicly accessible format, and indicated more policy items may be forthcoming.

## 8. New Business

**Fleet / Truck Lease Review:** Member Carey raised the upcoming expiration of a seven-year truck lease, noting that a decision would need to be made on whether to renew the lease, purchase the truck off-lease, or procure a new vehicle, and asked that Director Sopczneski and Superintendent Heller prepare a cost analysis for the board's consideration during the upcoming budget season. Director Sopczneski confirmed the FY27 budget includes funds to retain the existing leased truck rather than return it, as the fleet has no backup vehicles—every truck corresponds to a plow route with no redundancy. He noted that two additional trucks will be coming off lease in approximately three years and that the Department is gathering information from Freightliner and Truck Builders on lead times and pricing. Superintendent Heller spoke to the importance of preventative maintenance, including proper caulking of wiring plugs and the potential use of Rhino liner frame coating, which he noted could add seven to eight years of longevity to a vehicle at a cost of roughly \$3,000–\$4,000.

**Transfer Station Landscaping Maintenance:** Member Carey noted that the transfer station grounds, recently mulched and cleaned up, are now beginning to show weed growth, and asked that weed control measures be applied to maintain the improved appearance.

**Bid Results Distribution:** Member Carey requested that bid results be distributed via email attachment to board members for their reference files.

**InterDepartmental Coordination on Road Access / Permitting:** Member Carey raised a concern that the Public Works Board has been excluded from discussions and decisions made by other boards—

specifically citing a recent action by the Police Commission regarding street access that could adversely affect emergency vehicle navigation. He stated that the same coordination framework that exists for building permits—where multiple Departments must sign off before a permit is issued—should apply when any board or commission makes a decision with implications for road access and public safety. Member Castle acknowledged the concern and noted that the Police Commission does route some matters to the Public Works Director, though he agreed the fire Department and other stakeholders should also be looped in. Director Sopczneski noted that the specific Police Commission action in question did not allow for any prior interDepartmental review as it was raised and voted on at the same meeting. Member Carey clarified he was not seeking punitive action against any board, but rather advocating for a formal policy of interDepartmental coordination to be adopted or enforced by the mayor and Town Council. The Board agreed that communication and coordination is the core need.

**Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs):** Member Carey suggested that the Department of Public Works develop a binder of standard operating procedures, noting the Department's current exposure to legal liability in the absence of any documented procedures. He acknowledged this would likely take one to two years to develop fully but encouraged beginning the process, noting that the Fire Department has an established SOP framework that might serve as a reference. He framed even beginning the effort as demonstrating awareness of the deficiency and a commitment to addressing it.

## 9. Public Comment

Vicky Carey, Board of Finance, addressed the truck leasing discussion. She noted that the Board of Finance did not include a new truck lease in the current budget due to efforts to keep debt service levels stable and because of concerns that the leasing program may have become more costly than outright purchase. She indicated that the Finance Director had identified discrepancies in the payment schedule and is working to correct them. Ms. Carey expressed that she and the capital improvement process would work with Director Sopczneski going forward to determine the best path—whether continued leasing, a different lessor, or outright purchase. She also expressed support for adding an administrative assistant position for the PW Director, noting the Town Council had denied the request this year but that it could be revisited for the next budget cycle. She commended both Director Sopczneski and Superintendent Heller for their work and the positive feedback she has heard from the community.

Member Castle noted that the Capital Improvements Commission begins its review process in September and October, and that all Departments submit capital requests at that time, with the commission setting priorities for Town Council consideration.

## 10. EXECUTIVE SESSION – Personnel Matters – if needed

Not held.

## 11. Administrative

No administrative items were presented.

## 12. Chairman's Report

Chairman Brown emphasized the importance of coordinating milling, reclaiming, and paving operations to minimize mobilization costs and keep contractors in town until all work is complete. He noted that in past years roads were opened prematurely, resulting in unnecessary mobilization expenses. He expressed optimism that, given the current schedule, paving could be completed by mid-August—an outcome he noted has not been achieved in decades.

## 13. Commission Member Comments

**Member Lewandowski** asked Superintendent Heller to assess whether the truck coming off lease would be worth purchasing given its age and exposure to road salt and chemicals, or whether it would be better to trade it in and acquire a newer vehicle. He also raised the question of whether the new roadside mower had been purchased or the existing one repaired, and was informed the existing mower was repaired and operating satisfactorily.

**Member Carey** echoed comments on the truck lease cost analysis and complimented the pothole patching work, particularly on South Main Street near Inland Fuels, describing it as the best the program has been in the last ten years. Superintendent Heller noted the Department is exploring a new tack solution to improve patch longevity and that the hot box and plate compactor setup is being continuously refined.

**Member Castle** had no additional comments beyond those offered during earlier discussion.

## 14. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Member George Castle and seconded by Member Mark Lewandowski. The motion carried unanimously.

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*Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Public Works Board, Town of Plymouth, Connecticut, held Tuesday, June 23, 2026, at 5:45 PM, Assembly Room, Plymouth Town Hall.*

Submitted by,

Pam Pelletier  
Recording Secretary