

Town of Stow, Maine
Town Road Meeting MINUTES
January 31, 2026, 9:30am

I. ATTENDANCE

Select Board: Steve Dupuis; Rob Flint; Sarah Shute

Treasurer: Nancy Boros

Town Clerk: Christine Carone

Road Committee: Carl Drew, Mike Tamaska, Troy Drew, Isabelle Stafford

Public: 18 Townspeople

II. INTRODUCTION

Meeting format - The meeting will start with a presentation followed by Q&A. Meeting topics/discussion specific to roads only

Road Committee - Great move for the town to start a Road Committee - allows for division of labor. Members put in a lot of volunteer boots-on-the-ground hours - walking the roads, making assessments, marking culverts, driving roads while grading, being on premises when road work was done, meeting with engineers & MaineDOT etc...

Getting established - It took some time this year for the new Select Board and the Road Committee to assess the road situation and understand available funds. Our standards have to be different from MaineDOT highway standards. We believe we can repair our roads affordably without raising taxes, and the local road businesses that we work with seem to understand this.

III - 2025 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Summer Maintenance Plan - we intend to have an ongoing road maintenance program separate from capital projects. We got started this year, and were able to reach most of our goals despite the summer drought.

- Monthly grading with Kiehl - weather permitting
- Cold patch to preserve what we have - hot box (in the future) if necessary
- Comprehensive culvert inventory (GPS) for year-round monitoring and annual clean out
- Invoice tracking to know exactly what work has been done on each road, and for budgeting purposes

Consulted with Engineers - we began the process of establishing relationships with several engineering experts who understand small town roads. These are engineers who have worked with other towns like ours, and they understand that our standards have to be different from MaineDOT highway standards.

- Pine Tree Engineering - Lake Road project - engineering plans completed
- Sebago Technics - signed service agreement - can consult with them as needed
- MaineDOT engineer - site visit to Lake Road - will work with them on future grants

South Chatham Road - because Fryeburg was doing their section of the road, we had an opportunity to complete our section. It was a narrow window, but it worked in our favor.

Large cost savings on grinding because the equipment was already there (10K savings)

- Cost savings on paving because it was just before the end of the season
- Fast completion of culvert work with bigger company - only closed road 8 hours
- We learned that the bigger companies are willing to work with us
- They can save costs because they are fast (economy of scale) and they can squeeze us in between other jobs (shoulder seasons)
- This job was just a base coat - top coat will be necessary at some point in the future
- We still have some edge work to be completed in the Spring
- We will re-establish a Tar Account in the future
- We will take this approach with all the roads going forward

Kezar Lake Road Project - 80K grant from the state. Stow pays 4k (5%) of the total amount

- MaineDOT came and did a site visit for approval to move ahead w/engineer plan
- Two DOT employees and their engineer met with Selectboard and Road Committee
- The engineering design is complete thanks to Rob Prue of Pine Tree Engineering
- Project will go out to bid in mid February

FEMA \$\$ Received - after a very long wait, the last big reimbursement was received

- We have decided to put 90K into an Emergency Fund
- We elected not to do the mitigation work that we applied for in the FEMA grant
- Better to use our time & money on capital projects rather than piecemeal mitigation work
- For this reason we did not receive any mitigation fund reimbursements

Town Plowing - we met with Troy Morse last spring and again at the beginning of winter to go over the contract and make sure he was up on some of the changes in our roads. We got to ask him about the sand/salt process, which he is managing, and establish best ways to communicate with him and his crew during storms.

- This year has gone very well, with no complaints from the town
- Our contract with him has one more year after this

Openings on Committees - please go to the website to see a list of this year's openings

Any input from committee members?

- Belle: would like to commend the Road Committee for all of their time and effort - and the ability to pivot to the S. Chatham Road project and get the job done and save a lot of money.
- Steve: The road committee is all volunteer and put in 100s of hours. Without a road agent this has been invaluable.
- Rob: Nancy Boros does an enormous amount for the town, keeping us up to date on our expenses and many other things.

IV. 5-YEAR ROAD PLAN (LISTED ON WEBSITE) & BUDGET

We have begun an outline for a 5-year road plan for the town. Each year we will continue looking ahead, doing our best to prioritise the work according to the areas that get the most use. We also intend to be flexible enough to seize an opportunity if it is practical and can save costs.

Discussion in the context of the “Town of Stow 5-Year Road Plan” (listed on the website):

Grading Cost - As we pave more roads, we will spend less on grading and moving the grader to all areas of dirt on each road.

Chatham Road (113B) - priority for 2026

- Similar length and projected cost as S. Chatham Road project
- Grind, culvert repair, smooth it out, base coat paving

3-Part Road Budget - Capital Projects, Maintenance, Plowing

- Last year we asked for 174K in the budget for capital projects
- We currently have 73K that we will be carrying forward into 2026 for capital projects.
- The plan is to move money from other areas of the budget (from deferred maintenance fund & Equipment fund) to increase the capital project budget to 200K.
- We are not looking to raise taxes this year.
- All of this will be discussed and voted on at town meeting on March 21st

Meadow Road - needs repair in a number of ways that we cannot address all at once

- We haven't heard back from MaineDOT re: the bridge repair (not in state 5-year plan)
- First we need to fix around the bridge - hot box

Grants - We have concluded that the best approach is to look for grant opportunities ourselves, and reach out for assistance in writing the grant once we have one in mind.

- We have the 15K set aside from last year for grant writing
- We did advertise and consult with other grant writers
- There is a potential grant coming up on wetland culverts (surprisingly expensive)
- We have some people in mind that we will call to help write it for us

Bond - our Treasurer Nancy Boros looked into bond figures for the town.

- To do all of the roads we would pay 124K in interest each year for 10 years
- This is not based on the traditional one million per mile estimate
- We do not advise this approach for several reasons
 - Too much to manage all at one time - would need to hire a Project Manager
 - We believe that 124K could be better spent directly on our roads
 - We believe we can accomplish our goals with the proposed 200K annual budget
- Reach out to our senators and congress for funds - unlikely, but possible!

V. QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q: Can we ask our plow guy to get the ice off the bridge near the store?

A: Yes. Even though 113 is a state road, it is part of our plow contract and we will be asking about that.

Q: On Lake Road, can we get the phone lines out of the ground and up on poles?

A: Yes, we will look into it.

Q: What about the buried phone lines on Union Hill? It has been really hard to get the paperwork on this

A: Yes, this is an issue. Even Dig Safe doesn't always get it right. We don't know how deep the lines go. Apparently the lines have been buried since the 70s & 80s. We think Sebago Technics could help us

Q: Will the 5-Year Road Plan keep being updated each year or so?

A: Yes. And Sebago Technics can help us - they work with towns on this sort of thing. The service contract we have with them is at no cost, but if we need their services, we get priority, at an hourly rate. We will need to adjust the plans as we encounter unknowns, which may affect costs, such as repairs on some of the culverts on Union Hill Road

Q: How will the roads hold up? Longevity? Quality?

A: Select Board has several suggestions:

- Keep speed down, especially on newly graded roads

- Let the SB know if heavy loads are on the roads and they will report it

- We graded right before the roads froze this year for better winter roads & plowing

- There is always Spring damage from frost heaves etc...

- We won't be putting calcium on the roads - more frequent grading is bringing up plenty

Q: Will Lake Road remain dirt?

A: Yes. This is the recommendation of MaineDOT

Q: What about the Long Meadow Brook culvert on Lake Road

A: Yes, we have our eye on this. A box culvert is recommended, which is surprisingly expensive as it requires engineering design as well as the work. We don't have it in our budget to fix it, but it is a good candidate for the upcoming grant, which covers the engineering costs (not true of many grants)

Q: What about the failing culverts on Union Hill Road?

A: Troy explained the washout. SB will take a look. Once the snow is gone we will do a comprehensive culvert inventory in our new software program w/GPS coordinates

Q: What is the long term plan for Union Hill Road

A: Refer to the 5-year plan

Q: Will Union Hill road be paved?

A: Yes, once the road is prepped we plan to pave all at once

Q: What is the quality of the gravel in the pit?

A: We won't know until we go further down. We have been sifting for sand. Once the gravel is high enough we will have someone come in and crush it and grade. Meanwhile, we have 30-40 years worth of sand. This will save the town lots of money.

Q: Someone noted that the sand shed was low after last ice storm

A: Yes, everyone was grabbing sand after that storm and we couldn't replenish fast enough. There should be plenty of material there now, but it will depend on storm usage.

Q: Matt says there are huge ruts in front of his house on Union. Can we hot box?

A: We will look at it and get a price. We may be there next year with the grinder.

Q: Can we ask Lovell for 3% funds to help maintain Lake Road?

A: Yes, we can ask about that.

Meeting adjourned 10:40am

Respectfully submitted,
Isabelle Stafford, Road Committee