

Watertown City Council
Committee on Public Works
Councilor Piccirilli, Chair, Councilor Feltner, Vice Chair, Councilor Palomba, Secretary
Committee Report of November 1, 2022 Meeting

The Committee on Public Works met on Monday, November 1 in the City Council Chambers at 6:30 PM. It was a hybrid meeting so residents could attend the meeting on Zoom. Also, comments could be directed through email to vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov.

The purpose of the meeting was to review and make recommendations on the **2023 Local Road Construction Program**.

Present at the meeting were the three members of the Committee, Councilors Piccirilli, Chair, Councilor Feltner, Vice Chair, Councilor Palomba, Secretary as well as Councilor Gardner and Councilor Bays. Also present were the following employees of the Department of Public Works (DPW), Greg St. Louis, Superintendent, Tom Watkins, Director of Administration and Finance, and Matt Shuman, City Engineer. Members from the Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee included Maria Saiz, Hanna Rokoff, and Andy Campagna. Resident Ed Marcus was also present.

Councilor Piccirilli began that meeting at 6:30 PM and introduced himself and the members of the Committee. He invited Mr. Shuman to give the 2023 Road Program slide presentation. This is available on the DPW website at <http://www.watertowndpw.org/191/Annual-Road-Program>. Additional information on the 2022 sidewalk and street repairs can be found at <https://www.watertowndpw.org/DocumentCenter/View/1774/2022-Work-Completed-To-date?bidId=..> Given the length of the presentation, the Secretary chose to list the highlights and related discussions by the Committee.

1) The City borrows annually for the Road Program, including \$2 million for road reclamation and \$500,000 for sidewalk repairs. Also, starting in FY 21 the City borrows \$1.5 million annually for the long streets and connector program.

2) Boylston, Chester, and Locke Streets, the roads selected in the 2022 Local Road Construction Program, have been or will be completed by the end of the 2022 construction season (April 2022 through November 2022).

3) However the long streets and connector program for the reconstruction of Highland Avenue was delayed and is anticipated to begin in the spring of 2023. Funding for this project is from FY 21. The borrowing for FY 22 and FY 23 for the long streets and connector program has not happened at this time.

4) The anticipated future long streets and connector program include:

Morse Street- FY 22 borrowing – construction spring of 2023

Fifth and Watertown Streets – FY 23 borrowing- construction spring of 2024

Forest and Springfield Streets – FY 24 borrowing – construction spring of 2025

Riverside Street – FY 25 borrowing – construction spring of 2026

5) DPW's priority is to maintain the pavement on all Watertown streets and roads. To that end they employ pavement management techniques including deferred maintenance, crack sealing, mill and overlay, and reclamation. Reclamation is the most expensive and involves the complete excavation of the road, granite curbing, concrete sidewalks, driveway aprons, handicap ramps, and rehabilitation or additions of planting strips.

6) DPW also employs a Pavement Management Index or PCI which is a snap shot of the road conditions throughout the City. Our PCI has declined since 2016 dropping from a PCI of 65 to a PCI of 61 in 2021. The decline is attributed to the significant number of excavation permits. There were 1,700 permits issued between 2016 and 2021 for gas main installations and gas, water, and sewer main replacements. In part this is related to the many new developments being built, all of which access these services.

7) After considering a number of factors including whether upgraded utility services are or will be completed, what streets are in the greatest state of disrepair, the funding that is available, and other factors, DPW has selected the following streets for reclamation in the spring of 2023 – **Bates Road, Bates Road East, Essex Street, Nash Street, Francis Street and Bradshaw Street.**

8) Council Feltner raised the concern that the lack of curbing on streets can lead to the erosion of planting strips and hoped that every effort can be made to install curbing when streets that are not scheduled for reclamation are repaired. Councilor Piccirilli noted the City's ordinance addressing curbing does provide for DPW to install asphalt curbing as well as granite curbing.

9) DPW has funds for sidewalk repairs separate from the funds in the road programs. It also is in the process of developing a sidewalk index. Though it has not been completed, it is used to determine what sections of sidewalks are repaired during a construction season by contractors hired by the DPW.

The following four motions were made by Councilor Feltner, seconded by Councilor Palomba and approved by a 3 – 0 votes.

The Committee recommends that the City Council approve that the Department of Public Works recommendation for the 2023 Road Program as presented using the FY 23 \$2.5 million loan order for Bates Road, Bates Road East, Essex Street, Francis Street, and Bradshaw Street.

The Committee recommends that the City Council approve that the Department of Public Works recommendation to remove Fifth Avenue from the FY 22 long streets and connector program (which includes Morse Street), and use the FY 23 \$1.5 million loan order for the long streets and connector program for the repair of Fifth Avenue and related work on Watertown Street.

The Committee recommends that the City Council approve that the Department of Public Works use of the FY 24 funding for the long streets and connector program for the repair of Forest and Springfield Streets, and to use the FY 25 funding for the long streets and connector program for the repair of Riverside Street.

The Committee recommends that the City Council ask the Administration to increase annual funding for the long streets and connector program in the CIP from \$1.5 million to \$2 million.

Councilor Palomba made a motion to adjourn which was seconded by Councilor Feltner and passed by a 3-0 vote.

The minutes were prepared by Councilor Palomba