



Selectmen's Meeting
Tuesday, February 7, 2023
5:00 pm

Board: R. Gil Rand, Charyl Reardon, Scott Rice

Staff: Judy Welch, Cathy Riley (Zoom), Kevin Millar, John Mackay

In-Person Public: Bill Lambert, Steve Kenney, Ellie & Rob Harvey, Ernie Holtzman, Cheri Caulder, Mark Sellingham, Bill Waterhouse, Dave Tauber, Jackie Wilson, Brian Klaus

Zoom Public: None

Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 5:01 pm by Charyl

NHDOT/Bill Lambert/Eastside Road

Bill Lambert, NHDOT, handed out reference pages to the slide show presentation. The presentation was to address the curve on Route 175/Eastside Road near the Water Wheel Hill and Harvey residence where there have been many crashes or near crashes. There have been concerns that the chevrons that were once there, have been removed. He explained the federal manual on signs changed in 2009, and the criteria for curb warning signs changed, and they had 10 years to comply with that change. Curb warning signs were based on the difference between the posted speed limit and the measured advisory speed. The state looked at all the curves in the state over the last 5 or 6 years, and engineered them based on the current standards so they would be in compliance.

Bill then went into a formal introduction of his position with NHDOT. He stated that he has been a State Traffic Engineer since 2000, and in 2013 has had the Commissioner's delegated authority to determine speed zones on state highways. He has also been invited to serve as a panelist, and technical advisory committee on speed management, currently chairing a national cooperative highway research program project on integrating strategies to maintaining high travel speeds.

Bill explained how he is tied to by the legislature and what the statutes say. He also explained how it is important to set speed limits that are credible and how they collect speed data in the past and in the present and talk about the relationship between speed limits and curb warning signs and address the issue on route 175.

Bill referred to the NH Speed Limit Statute **RSA 265:60** regarding **Basic Rule and Maximum Limits**, which establishes the "reasonable and prudent" standard which states that " no person shall drive a vehicle on a way at a speed greater than is

reasonable and prudent under the conditions and having regard to the actual and potential hazards then existing."

"In every event, speed shall be so controlled as may be necessary to avoid colliding with any person, vehicle, or other conveyance on or entering the way, in compliance with the legal requirements and the duty of all persons to use due care".

The statutes then define the speed limits starting with the school zone speed limit, 30 mph for business or urban residence district, 35 mph for rural residence district and Class V highways (a.k.a. town roads), 65 mph for interstates, turnpikes, and other multi-lane divided highways, except I-93 north of Concord (70 mph) (this is a "per se" value), 55 mph in other locations.

He explained that the NHDOT has the speed limit authority (**RSA 236:7** and **RSA 265:62**) was assigned to "commissioner of transportation" which is his position. Prior to August 2013 it was delegated to Highway Maintenance District Engineers and Turnpike Administrator and is currently delegated to the State Traffic Engineer.

RSA 265:62 - Establishment of State Speed Zones (RSA 265:63 for towns/cities) -if prima facie speed limit is greater than or less than is reasonable and same *on the basis of an engineering and traffic investigation*. Commissioner of transportation may determine and declare a reasonable and safe prima facie speed limit.

Bill then went on to explain the process of setting credible speed limits. He explained that individual drivers control their speed according to perceived and actual road conditions, and most (85% +/- are "reasonable and prudent". Posted speed limits indicate the maximum legal speed for a specific roadway segment and should ideally be self-enforcing. He stated that unreasonable low speed limits are not respected by drivers, law enforcement, or the courts. Other elements, including curve warning signs and passing zones, are determined based on the posted speed limit.

Bill explained that elements of an "engineering and traffic investigation" were speed studies, highway geometrics including the roadside, traffic volumes, the presence of parking, bicycles and pedestrians. Also crash history is a factor.

Bill then brought up the 85th percentile speed and speed limits. Based on research done by the US Bureau of Public Roads (now FHWA), they determined the 85th percentile, by comparing the relationship between speed and collision rates of autos. The 85th percentile speed is generally regarded as the "reasonable and prudent" standard regarding speed limits.

Bill then proceeded to show a bell curve graph on the 85th percentile speed limits. He explained that the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices notes that "When a speed limit within a speed zone is posted, it should be within the 5 mph of the 85th percentile speed of free-flowing traffic".

Bill explained the ways that speed data was collected in the past, and now, which includes all the previous ways of collecting data, as well as currently using vehicle probe data for all roads, including archived data for several years. He also went over the steps now using data that only includes 10-15% of all vehicles, includes the data along the entire segment and includes archived data that can be evaluated in numerous ways at any time.

Next in the slide show was the subject of **Speed Limits and Curve Signing**. In order to determine the advisory speed, they also attach a slope meter on the passenger vehicle dashboard and measures vehicle deflection through curves. He also showed the sign selection determined by the horizontal alignment at different speeds, and pictures of the signs and plaques determined by the advisory speeds.

After explaining the sign determinations, Bill discussed the background of a similar discussion with the town of Thornton that led to a speed limit change from 35 mph to 40 mph based on an engineering and traffic investigation in 2017. The current discussion was prompted by concerns with run-off the road crashes, specifically at Mountain Park Drive, where previous chevrons were removed during the statewide curve signing project. Bill showed the audience a map of the current area of concern, which is a measured advisory speed of 30 mph, and explained the summary of speed data in that area of a speed limit of 35 mph, the 85th percentile was at 46.77 mph, compared to Thornton's speed limit of 40 mph, in which 85th percentile was 47.25 mph. The speed data was collected using a TomTom device.

Bill explained the recommendations for that area which were completed using engineering and traffic investigations that includes crash data and other relevant criteria. He suggested that those who live in the vicinity record and report all crashes that happen.

Bill also recommended that they determine the recommended speed limit, which would likely be 40 mph, as well as increasing signage, most likely the chevrons. He noted that the passing zone would probably be gone if the speed changes. Also, a recommendation of installing curve warning signing as appropriate, and evaluate passing zone vs. the revised speed limit.

A question was asked by Ellie Harvey who happened to be one of the owners of the property near the site of concern, about what a chevron was. Bill explained that it was the yellow sign with a single arrow-like shape in black, seen in multiples on some very sharp corners.

Another near-by resident, Steve Kenney, asked when the chevrons were pulled, as he did not remember them

Bill explained that they were pulled between 2015 and 2019.

Mark Sellingham asked a question about the 10 mph over speed limit, and shouldn't a percentage rate be used instead of mph?

Bill replied that it comes down to being able to provide a practitioner with a fixed mph because it is easier to figure out.

Mark also stated that there are more accidents there than anywhere, and suggested a guard rail there; since kids used to be playing in the yard. Mark questioned if the width of the road had been looked, Mark thinks increasing the width would prevent a car that crosses the white line from losing traction.

Bill said that he would share these suggestions with the paving and district personnel and said that area was resurfaced not too long ago, and that they try to address issues during that process, but he will definitely put it on their radar although manpower has been pretty thin.

Steve Kenney thanked Bill and added that it was a miracle that kids have not been hurt yet in that area, and if you look at the crown of the road, it is banked the wrong way, and should be brought out a little bit more.

Bill stated that unfortunately it had just been repaved, so that it would probably be another couple of years before they come back to it but can certainly bring it to the department's attention.

Ellie Harvey, who lives on the subject corner spoke up about the many crashes that have occurred with people winding up on their property after the crashes. She said that there was a spike during Covid times. 8 motorcycle crashes last year, and 3 cars off the road just in January of this year. Ellie then went on with some history of the property and how they used to have a white fence along the yard, and although cars went through the fence, no motorcycles did. She feels that the visual of the fence may have helped keep people on the road. She just wants something done for the safety of the people, and her family members.

Ernie Holtzman made a recommendation against guard rails, due to safety concerns of motorcyclists crashing into them.

Ellie feels there definitely should be something visual.

Bill feels that curve warning signs could be effective.

Fire Chief John Mackay added that maybe the speed limit should be lowered closer to the curve, but Bill feels that it would be hard to get people to follow, but warning yellow signs might be more effective.

Bill recommended that it would make more sense if the advisory speed limit was consistent with the rest of the area at 40 mph and add the chevrons.

Chief Kevin Millar added that he was OK with the 35-mph speed limit, and feels the chevrons would be a helpful addition, but feels the road needs to be repaired since they have responded there many times. It is in an area that is difficult to enforce speed but asks that they do not raise the speed limit on that road.

Ellie said that some of the accidents are not called in, but she is keeping track.

Bill concluded that he could get the chevrons in, but respectfully disagreed with Chief Millar that the speed limit should be kept at 35 mph. He agrees that the curve and shoulder repair should be addressed and will be meeting with the district engineer next month and have them take a look at it.

Charyl thanked him for his time and coming out.

Agenda Items Requested by Residents

Affordable Housing/Grants

Charyl introduced Jackie Wilson who is a resident that requested to speak on the affordable housing issue.

Jackie stated that she was a current teacher at Lin-Wood and was aware of students losing housing due to homes they are renting due to sales. She is very concerned about the housing problem and was asking about regions having to provide their fair share of housing. Jackie had contacted an entity that conducts a survey 3-5 years to analyze in a town meeting its fair share in providing workforce housing. She stated that she is coming to the Board to find out what we as a town are doing about this, and what community members do to support this, as it is a problem for the workers.

Scott explained that the AHEAD project is looking good, but one reason that they have not started already, is that most of the distribution of the housing grants go to the big cities before smaller projects. Scott stated that they are trying to change the formula on how they award the grants so that smaller projects are not knocked out. They are confident that the project can start next Spring.

Jackie added a question about vacant buildings or cottages that are no longer being used whether the town could purchase the buildings and convert to housing. She then introduced Brian Klaus.

Brian stated that he had been working for about 6 months trying to bring businesses in Lincoln together to address workforce housing, and the biggest issue

is land. Lincoln is more of an opportunity zone for tax credits for investors to get on board. He wonders if Woodstock could apply to be part of or not.

Charyl asked whether it requires zoning of any kind, to which Brian replied that the opportunity zones are through the governor's office and they find basically areas that can be improved. The property would have to be improved by at least 50% of the purchase price, and then get a tax credit. Investors all over the US are looking to invest, not just local.

Brian added that the governor's office, and that 82% of Lincoln right now is an opportunity zone, but Woodstock is not and wasn't sure why that was.

Gil explained that there is very little actual land available in Woodstock, which is largely made up of National Forest, river, lakes and streams.

Brian also added that the opportunity also allowed for buying run-down homes and then improving them through different projects.

Scott added that it was definitely something they should look at.

Jackie was wondering how we were addressing things like Air BnB.

Charyl replied that the short-term rental issue is definitely on their radar and if it became an ordinance that it would have to come before the town meeting next year. She feels that there may be some legislation this year that might help with housing. Charyl also added that sewer and water may also be an issue.

Mark asked if the root cause to the issue is lack of zoning and maybe having "light zoning" to preserve workforce housing?

Scott stated that the Planning Board may be going through some changes that might make that more possible.

Jackie added that it affects our community health that raises children, and we are facing declining enrollment in our schools.

Approve & Sign Minutes/January 10, 2023

Gil Rand motioned to accept the January 10, 2023 minutes. Scott seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous.

Approve & Sign Workshop Minutes/January 13, 2023

Scott motioned to accept the January 13, 2023 Public Workshop minutes. Gil seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous.

Approve & Sign Non-Public Minutes/January 13, 2023

Gil motioned to approve, sign and seal the January 13, 2023 Non- Public meeting minutes. Scott seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous.

Approve & Sign Non-Public Minutes/January 16, 2023

Gil motioned to approve, sign and seal the January 16, 2023 Non- Public meeting minutes. Scott seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous.

Approve & Sign Non-Public Minutes/January 21, 2023

Gil motioned to approve, sign and seal the January 21, 2023 Non- Public meeting minutes. Scott seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous.

Approve & Sign Workshop Minutes/January 21, 2023

Scott motioned to approve and sign the January 21, 2023 Public Workshop meeting minutes. Gil seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous.

Approve & Sign Non-Public Minutes/January 23, 2023

Scott motioned to approve, sign and seal the January 23, 2023 Non- Public meeting minutes. Gil seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous.

Warrant

Judy went over the final Warrant changes after going through legal and the DRA, for the board to sign to send to the public hearing.

Article 3, the fire truck has been changed to reflect payments being made starting in June 2024 instead of 2025. No changes to the budget amount.

Judy explained that there will be 2 ballots during the day, Article 1 for new officers, and Article 2 for the term of office for tax collector.

Article 4 is the operating budget, which changed from \$4,613,821 is now \$4,575,981. Appropriations remain the same, and pulled out the highway debt and moved it to an individual article.

Article 5 stays the same.

Article 6, after confusion between legal and DRA, the only change is verbiage.

Article 7 was created so that if Article 6 fails, then the money would go into unassigned fund balance. Article 7 is only voted on IF Article 6 fails.

Articles 8-27 are the same.

The single Veterans Article has been separated out into two due to a formality due to legislation. One is for "All Veterans "and one is for the "Optional Veterans Credit".

Article 30-32 stayed the same, but Article 33 language was changed.

Actual budget MS-737 now allows the water/sewer budget showing user-based funds, so you can see the actual capital reserves on the revenues.

The result is a change to estimated revenues and changed the amounts to be raised from taxes from estimated \$3,870,729 to \$3,257,730 with estimated taxes to be raised to \$2,093,466 from the \$3,104,066.

Judy asked that unless there were any questions, that she would take a motion to approve the Warrant and sign to go to the Public Warrant Hearing.

Scott made the motion, Charyl seconded the motion, and the vote was affirmative. The Board proceeded to sign the Warrant.

Budget

Judy presented the actual budget MS-737 that now allows the water/sewer budget showing user-based funds, so you can see the actual capital reserves on the revenues.

The result is a change to estimated revenues and changed the amounts to be raised from taxes from estimated \$3,870,729 to \$3,257,730 with estimated taxes to be raised to \$2,093,466 from the \$3,104,066.

Judy stated that normally this process happens in September on the MS-434 form.

Letter/Executive Council/Cinde Warmington

Charyl read a letter was received by the new Executive Council, Cinde Warmington, stating that she is honored to be able to serve our community in the next couple of years, and her office will be reaching out in a couple of weeks to schedule a time to visit and sit down to discuss any potential projects or assistance that Woodstock might need.

Old/Other Business/Brought forth by the Board

No other old/or other business brought forth by the board.

Public Participation

No other questions were brought up by the public.

Adjournment

Gil motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:18 pm. Scott seconded the motion, and the vote was affirmative.

The public could participate remotely over Zoom by going to www.zoom.us, using the Zoom App on a cellphone, or on a **landline calling 1-646-558-8656 Password: 432845** and entering **Meeting ID: 869 8898 3892 Password: 432845**.

Those wishing to hear the recording of the whole meeting may access it by using this link:
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCxMH7OFC8H3KqBhYHsBr53g>



Charyl Reardon, Chairman

Scott Rice

R. Gil Rand

February 21, 2023
Date

