

Cumberland County Public Works Directors Meeting
June 8, 2011
9:00 A.M.

Present: Bob Malley (Cape Elizabeth), Tom Eldridge (Westbrook), Arty Ledoux (Westbrook), Mike Shaw (Scarborough), John Foster (Brunswick), Roger Mosley (Standish), Erik Street (Yarmouth), Shawn Bennett (Pownal)

Staff/guests: Eben Marsh (GPCOG), Lynne Powers (GPCOG)

1. Welcome

Mike Shaw started the meeting and greeted all in attendance at 9:07 A.M.

2. Acceptance of minutes from April 13

Roger Mosley pointed out that in the attendance section of the minutes from the April 13, 2011 Public Works Directors Meeting minutes, he was incorrectly listed as the public works director from Pownal instead of Standish. With that correction made, ***Bob Malley made a motion to approve the minutes and Roger seconded it. The motion passed unanimously.***

4. Review of Cumberland County Roadeo (item taken out of order)

The Cumberland County Snow Plow Roadeo went off without a hitch this year, and public works directors in attendance were asked for feedback and ideas of what to do differently in the future. Bob said that some of the teams sped through the course, and the judges raised penalties for excessive speed and for hitting the car. Arty Ledoux suggested that when directors are talking about the event with their crews next year, they stress that they are representing their town and profession and are expected to take it seriously.

Next year's event will be on May 3, with a simplified course to make it easy to judge and quicker to run through. Bob has spoken to Kevin Noyes in Skowhegan about next year's format and they will discuss it in depth in January, when it comes to two employees in the truck vs. one, blade vs. wing, and other potential changes along those lines.

5. Review of Maine Public Works Congress (item taken out of order)

Bob said that there was a decent turnout from vendors. The raffles were done in a way that required signatures from vendors in order to get people circulating, which was appreciated. He suggested having a discussion with the vendors to evaluate whether the setting and format still works for them, and if so, to keep going with it. The opportunities to test and demonstrate equipment have lessened greatly over the years, and there was some interest in bringing the snow plow roadeo back and associating it with the show again.

3. Presentation on the SHAPE program (item taken out of order)

Arty Ledoux, the deputy director for public services in Westbrook, gave a presentation on the SHAPE program. He handed out the program's compliance directive for the public works directors to look over. He said that the inspectors for the program are very thorough, going through the list of written programs and required training and/or education, and inspecting the facility. Documentation and proof are key, along with employee involvement.

Mike asked about Westbrook's experience with crew and staff buy-in to the program. Arty replied that when the department earned its first SHAPE award, 15 members of the crew dressed up and went to accept it with the city council and the mayor. He recommended first

creating an environment that promotes safety, getting an idea of what the crew wants for safety measures. Westbrook has an active safety committee that meets quarterly and works on projects. He said that there will be nay-sayers, but that those aren't generally the people he deals with. Erik said that in Yarmouth, he has found that consistency is vital, along with follow-through, providing ways to report unsafe behavior and see it dealt with.

Arty said that the OSHA 300 log is part of the inspection as well. Westbrook crew members were recording injuries in the logs that did not need to be recorded. For example, if someone was unable to rake leaves for a day and it is a miniscule part of their job, it does not need to be logged. Arty handed out a list of the violations from the department's first inspection, which included the administrative assistant signing the OSHA 300 logs when they were supposed to be signed by the director. He cautioned that the biggest subject that the inspectors tackle tends to be the written programs. There had to be proof for everything. With the award, the department is now exempt from surprise inspections for two years. It was tough to get the award, but Arty thought that maintaining it was even more difficult. Bob said that hazard assessment is one of the first things that they look for, and he cautioned the public works directors that if they aren't going to be around, they should make sure that their staff knows what's what.

There is a networking meeting at Acadia Insurance in Westbrook on June 22. Arty is on the board of directors for the New England chapter of the National Safety Council, and his subcommittee is networking. He originally set up after-hour activities with safety advocates from businesses around the area, but that approach did not yield high results. The different direction this time lies in having a SafetyWorks! program about the SHAPE/SHARP award. David Henderson, the executive director of the Safety Council of Northern New England, and Dave Wacker of SafetyWorks! will be the speakers.

John said that he had been asked for his fleet policy, in regards to annual checks of driver licenses and accident investigation, and he asked if anyone in the group had one. Tom Eldridge said that in Westbrook, it's done as a city, not on a departmental basis. Bob suggested a particular program that is run out of a mobile classroom.

Shawn asked if group members had policies on crew wearing shorts. Bob said that Cape Elizabeth allows it for special events, but not during the work day; Mike supplies uniforms, which don't include shorts. Tom said that in Westbrook, it is allowed but it has to be a hemmed pair of shorts, it can't be cut-offs, and it has to be task appropriate.

6. Update on Bid Status

Eben Marsh said that the road salt bid would come out toward the end of June. He has been talking with distributors, and prices could hold; it will depend on fuel costs. The estimated needs are coming in. Last year, the aggregate amount used was just under 100,000 tons. The diesel and gas bids are due on June 15. With 1.6 million gallons out to bid, it is generating a great deal of interest from distributors. Some pending bids include signs, culverts, and cutting edges.

When the estimated needs came in for catch basins, there were 7000. Eben awarded the bid to the company that had the lowest per-basin price rather than the lowest hourly price, as there was a smaller amount of interest in paying on an hourly basis. The company that bid lower on an hourly basis has contacted several towns, offering a price that will undercut the winning company. Eben stressed the importance of solidarity and maintaining the cooperative bid

process. He is not withholding information (and can provide all prices quoted by bidders), but is trying to uphold the integrity of the program and keep it from being used to unfair advantage.

Mike commented that it becomes more of a challenge in a cooperative bidding process, as, if he was putting out a bid independently, he would offer alternates for choice. That sort of format becomes difficult when cooperatively bidding. Bob suggested that in the estimated needs paperwork, Eben provide a space for the town to check whether they're requesting an hourly price or a per-basin price, and then GPCOG can make two awards: one per-basin and one hourly. Shawn said that it would be difficult for him to go to the Pownal town council and justify going forward with the bid process when he received a call from someone who could provide the services or product at a lower price. Others felt that tactics like that would hurt the integrity of the bid, and that giving contractors the run-around could come back to haunt municipalities in the future. John Foster pointed out that in the paving bid, Crooker left out the night paving bid number, and he would like to see a note made in the future that including that number is mandatory.

7. Round table discussion: MaineDOT paving projects

This item was skipped due to time constraints.

8. Announcements

There were no announcements.

9. Other business / future meeting topics

Erik mentioned that in September, he would like to follow up with the National Public Works Week process, bringing together the folks who were involved in the original committee and getting things started early for next year.

10. Next meeting

July's meeting will be skipped, so the next public works meeting will be on Wednesday, August 10.

11. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 A.M.