

**TOWN OF
BROOKLINE, NEW HAMPSHIRE**



Telephone (603) 249-1746
www.brooklinenh.us

**Brookline Public Works
Transfer Station
Cemeteries**

**P.O. BOX 360 (mailing)
42 North Mason Rd. (physical)
BROOKLINE, NH 03033**

What unanticipated challenges came up for Brookline in the planning and execution phases?

- EVERYONE knows something and wants their input to be included. This input can be conflicting so finding a balance can be challenging.
- Not sure exactly where this fits but a challenge that was not seen was a lot of legalities not having been followed in the past, especially about trees. We have learned and implemented so much. RSA236:13VI is a good one to know regarding driveways and then the myriad of legalities about trees. Read through the book, A Hard Road to Travel as it is an incredible resource.
- People thought all the necessary infrastructure work was being done, and it certainly wasn't. Once you have someone in the position full-time looking out for the town, a lot of work needing to be done is going to become apparent. This isn't necessarily the fault of the current road agent(s) but they are juggling town work and the interests of their own business.

Was the all / snow contractor route ever viable? (I.E., did they find willing contractors)?

- Yes, we had a road agent until 2018 who did most of the work with his own company and then contracted out what little was left. He had warned the town for years that he would be ending this service, but the town didn't do much to prepare.

How do the in-house costs compare to contractors?

- It does cost more in-house HOWEVER, you're getting people whose job is 100% Brookline focused, not split between running a business and working on the town and the town is building an arsenal of assets of their own instead of growing a private business.

What was their search / hiring process like for the PW Director and workers?

- Eddie can speak for the director search as he was on the selectboard for that process.
- For workers, I come from the private sector of excavation, landscaping, and truck & equipment mechanics so I have had a short list of people to hire as we have grown making it very easy to get great help. Towns around us with open hiring positions aren't as fortunate to fill them.

What was the public's reaction to the change?

- The MASS majority is very positive. They really didn't have a choice. The existing road agent was no longer offering to do it anymore and no one else was stepping up to take the place. Even if someone put their name in to be a contender, the town was considering it the time to make this change anyway.
- Initially there were perceptions from some who thought the previous road-agent was using town owned equipment so we would have that to start with...not the case!
- Another perception is/was that "well we have a PW dept now, why isn't this stuff getting done?"...unfortunately this isn't magic! Town Meeting where the change is voted on is only the beginning, not a one-and-done action.
- Five years goes by fast, ten probably will too! Set the expectation early that there is A LOT to invest in to build the department correctly. Try to project out as far as possible and aim high so numbers can hopefully be brought down vs. added onto.
- Propose the right solution, not the one that'll surely pass! Answer every perceivable question in some sort of presentation or handout ahead of time leaving little to question. The reasonable person will understand the need and want to invest in their community.

Any advice on facilities design?

- Utilize EVERY opportunity to have building and site plans reviewed by a new person. The smallest change order can be felt in the contingency fund of the project. Prevent contingency fund hits without effecting value of the project. The earlier the fund is hit, the more likely necessary items of the project will be cut later on!
- When reviewing the site plans, follow the water from the highest point to its lowest, destination to ensure all should work appropriately! Public Works should be the last ones having an in-house water problem to their building or surrounding infrastructure! Those problems discovered during the building process can lead to early, and expensive, change orders!
- Dig test pits not only for septic system viability but also ground condition make-up.
- Put every desired and necessary aspect into the first run at the design and cut back from there. It is so much easier to cut back than to add throughout the process. For example, we didn't realize until well into the design process that a fire suppression system would be required, costing \$250k...that hurt! Fortunately, it was well before any bond presentations.
- The public works study committee put a \$350k+ number to the project in 2017, our building committee started with the expectation of a \$1mil cap, and we wound up at \$2.65mil...it's amazing how much things cost when starting from scratch!
- Scrutinize design aspects with common sense...the rigid foam insulation under our floor carried a ridiculous rating and cost that was unnecessary.
- Radiant floor heat is a must. It is by far the most efficient way to heat. It can be perceived as a luxury due to how it is used in some homes but in a garage, it is done for efficiency.
- Run conduit ANYWHERE/EVERYWHERE it is perceived to be utilized later. Also run empty chase-ways from utility room down through the floor and foundation to outside for the possibility of running water lines to other buildings if that is deemed possible
- Ease of access to air and water lines throughout the facility are a necessity, not a desire. The easier it is made to care for trucks and equipment the more likely those tasks are done AND done in an efficient manner. Would you rather pay someone to drag hoses

around and put them away or have them spend more time out doing value-based infrastructure work?

- Up Front Necessities:
 - Loading ramp for materials
 - Place for material spreaders to go for spring/summer/fall
 - Material bins (you can't use what you don't have!)
 - Pave the parking lot, you don't need more to contend with
 - Pressure washer
 - Stand-by generator
 - Place for bulk material, fill, rocks, etc. (we don't have room for this!)
 - Key fob access system for accountability
 - Cameras, AT LEAST run CAT5 all over for the future addition of them
- Go as big as you can, you'll outgrow it SO fast. 5 years in and ours is basically full and we made a promise to not expand until the 20-year bond was paid off. We will honor that promise but the growth in the meantime will pack this place. This was the biggest we could have gone that we felt would be acceptable and serve the life of the bond.
- Put garage door tracks up as high as they can go! Maximize ceiling space for putting dump bodies, loader arms, and backhoes up in the air.
- The minimum garage door size should be 16ft x 16ft. Ours are 16ft wide by 14ft tall...I'm sure the excavator or backhoe will eventually strike the top of the door opening. Or a dump truck in the middle of the night after just offloading the remainder of their road salt.
- Larger, cohesive, space is more flexible than segmented add-ons later. Whatever add-ons are perceived, plan for them by running conduit(s) in the floor for heat/water loops from the utility room.
- Build for the life of the building, not the cheapest solution today.
- Wherever you choose to build, think about those decades later to leave room for expansion.

Any advice on equipment needs and acquisition?

- EVERY town should have a wheeled excavator with a tilt rotate coupler on it. There are no other pieces of equipment that serve this field with as much value and ability! We will be looking to purchase a second one in 2025. What we can accomplish during a tree-threatening storm cannot be matched and Eversource loves working with us as we can typically negate having to wait for tree crews.
- I believe in purchasing, refurbishing, and well-caring for used trucks vs buying new ones. It helps ease the financial sting of building the department from nothing and I believe they are built better than new ones anyway. It takes the right set of employees to understand and be proud to utilize that concept and not just want a brandy new truck.

- I do believe in purchasing new equipment as their technological advances truly provide value in the efficiency, quality, and safety of the work they can perform.
- 6-wheelers are the hardest vehicles to find from sub-contractors. Most dirt work companies are running larger trucks that are too big for rural streets (ten wheelers/tri-axles). The few that have 6-wheelers are typically scooped up by the DOT for state routes.
- I do not believe in having a 6-wheeler without a wing plow. Without a wing, you might as well use an F550 as it'll be more nimble, far cheaper, and more people can drive it.
- Anything less than an F450/F550 dump truck is not suited for this work, the components WILL wear out faster and you'll be overweight more often than not.
- We have two vehicle lifts in our garage- one two post 16k lb. lift for the smaller trucks and cars throughout town, and we have a set of 4-mobile column lifts that pick up the big PW trucks and fire trucks, 75k lb. capacity.
- Investing in equipment also means simultaneously investing in the equipment to properly care for it.

What are the PW responsibilities ... what tasks are in house vs contract ... any in house consolidation (i.e, building and grounds becomes part of PW), etc.?

- We hire out- regular mowing of town buildings (we do our own and the transfer station though), paving, large tree removals, roadside mowing (for now), catch basin cleaning, line striping, work requiring a NH Applicators license (Knotweed program),

How many employees? Full / Part Time?

- We currently have the director and two other full-time employees. We are proposing to hire 2 more next year and another 4 in the following 3 years.

How much / what level of equipment maintenance is accomplished in-house? What special skills may be required (eg., welding)?

- There isn't much we can't do in-house. One of our employees is an extremely skilled and well-rounded mechanic and I have a lot of mechanical background as well. We have done cab-off restorations of 6-wheelers and internal motor work. We also service all town vehicles (police, fire, EMS, building inspector, emergency management).
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