



**TOWN OF BEDFORD  
HIGHWAY SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING  
MINUTES**

**August 23, 2022**

A meeting of the Bedford Highway Safety Committee (HSC) was held on Tuesday, August 23, 2022, in the Bedford Meeting Room, 10 Meetinghouse Road (BCTV). Present were John J. Bryfonski (Chief of Police/Chair), Scott Hunter (Fire Chief/Vice Chair), Lori Radke (Town Council), Bill Jean (Resident), Ted Kitsis (Resident), Jerry Gagne (Alternate Resident), and Jeanne Walker (Town Engineer). Absent were Ken Peterson (Resident), Jeff Foote (Director Department of Public Works) and Phil Greazzo (Alternate Town Council).

- I. Call to Order: 7:15 A.M.**
- II. Quorum Count: 7**
- III. Approval of Minutes – July 26, 2022**

**MOTION by Mr. Gagne to accept the April 26, 2022, meeting minutes.  
Seconded by Mr. Jean. Vote taken – Motion Passed.**

- IV. Correspondence/Communications: None.**
- V. Sub Committee Reports: None.**
- VI. Unfinished Business:**

Chief Bryfonski stated at a prior meeting there was a request for cautionary signage for a blind driveway at 65 Meetinghouse Road. DPW was still in the process of working on getting that sign installed.

Chief Bryfonski stated that also from a previous meeting, there was a request for a 30 MPH speed reduction on Liberty Hill Road from Edinburgh to the 4-way stop at Meetinghouse Road. That correspondence has been provided to the Town Manager and is pending a public hearing before the Town Council for an ordinance change.

Chief Bryfonski stated that also from a previous meeting, there was a request for a 4-way stop sign on Birkdale Road at Cambridge Road. That has also been presented to the Town Manager and is pending a public hearing before the Town Council for an ordinance change.

**VII. New Business**

- 1. Request for a 3-Way Stop Sign at the intersection of Cricket Hill Road/County Road**

Chief Bryfonski stated that on July 31, 2022, Mr. Rabin of 25 Cricket Hill Road sent an

email to the Highway Safety Committee to request a 3-way stop at the intersection of Cricket Hill Road and County Road. Mr. Rabin indicated that he recently moved to 25 Cricket Hill Road and the intersection of Cricket Hill Road and County Road had very poor visibility and vehicles drive above the speed limit on County Road. He also indicated that he often had difficulty observing vehicles approaching the intersection and when looking to the left from Cricket Hill Road. He also indicated that the conditions he described would get worse in the fall and winter when there was more school related traffic and teenage drivers noting the proximity of the intersection to McKelvie, Bedford High School, and Lurgio Middle School. Mr. Rabin stated that he believes a 3-way stop at the intersection of Cricket Hill Road and County Road would reduce the speed on County Road and reduce the likelihood of accidents at the intersection.

Chief Bryfonski stated that Bedford Police FTO Shannon Gardner inspected the intersection in connection to this request and provided the following information:

- The section of County Road between Liberty Hill Road and Nashua Road carries a significant volume of motor vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic, especially when school was in session due to the proximity of the schools.
- That section of County Road is used by School track, tennis, and band members so they often see a number of pedestrians using that section of the road.
- Cricket Hill Road itself is a cul-de-sac with a limited number of residents. The speed limit on County Road is posted at 30 MPH on both ends of County Road and the intersection is T-shaped with a single stop sign facing southbound traffic for Cricket Hill Road. There is a single sidewalk on the southern half of the intersection that runs east/west and vehicles on Cricket Hill Road have to come all the way towards the intersection on Cricket Hill Road and slightly past the posted stop sign in order to get appropriate sight distance and visual of the traffic on both directions on Cricket Hill Road due to vegetation and growth.
- There is no stop line or stop bar on the pavement at Cricket Hill Road.

Chief Bryfonski opened it up for comments.

Greg Rabin, 25 Cricket Hill Road, stated that he submitted the request for the stop sign on the intersection of Cricket Hill and County due to poor visibility, particularly when looking to the left due to the change in elevation and the vegetation. He was unable to have two seconds of view of the traffic approaching from the left-hand side. As a result, it makes it likely that he or another driver coming from Cricket Hill would be in an accident at that intersection. He had some pictures on his phone.

Chief Bryfonski stated that they have some images that of their officers took and the Committee members have them. He stated that the images show that there is some vegetation that obscures the sight distance. He thought depending on where that vegetation was in the right-of-way, it may be appropriate before they take any official measures to have DPW go down there and take a look at that vegetation to see if they could remediate some of that to improve the sight distance.

Jeanne Walker, DPW, stated that it's poison sumac. She stated that they could take a look at that vegetation. They did look at the sight distance and they have over 1,000 feet of sight distance to the left, so there is a large sight distance coming from the left. It meets the AASHTO requirements for the intersection. It's the same for the other side, which was even longer. They could look into installing a stop bar if that would help. They could do some clearing although that is not limiting the sight distance.

Councilor Radke wanted to know what a stop bar was. Ms. Walker stated that it's the line that's painted and should be immediately adjacent to the stop sign. It tells the car where to stop instead of just the sign. Councilor Radke clarified that the stop bar would be on Cricket Hill Road. Ms. Walker stated the report mentions there was no stop bar.

Ted Kitsis cautioned them on the stop bar. If they put it too far back where it belongs per the AASHTO manual, they might be actually compromising sight distance. Ms. Walker stated that they don't have to put one in; it's just something else they could do.

Chief Bryfonski stated that it wasn't required. As a point of edification, judges will often times ask an officer, if someone contests a motor vehicle summons for a stop sign or a stop light traffic violation, if there was a stop bar present, and how many feet before or after the vehicle stopped or the signal changed.

Jerry Gagne stated that in Bedford, having 1,000 feet of sight distance was great, because there are a lot of roads that have 200 or 300 feet of sight distance. Despite the fact that this was a road to the school, 1,000 feet of sight distance gives you plenty of time to get into both northbound and southbound lanes.

Chief Bryfonski agreed that was correct; 1,000 feet at most intersections was not achievable in Bedford. It's all a matter of feet per second and people traveling at the appropriate speed based on the sight distances for the road. In this case, there is ample sight distance. They can have DPW take a look at the vegetation and see if there was any required remediation for that. As far as speed goes, which was an often discussed topic at this meeting, speed is often a complaint from most of the residents. In the 11 years he's been here, it's the number one complaint that they get from the residents at the Police Department. It's a constant effort they have to address excessive speed on all the roads and streets in Bedford. The problem was endemic, not only in our town, but everywhere else in the state. The Police Department is focusing on speed enforcement all the time. There is additional increased traffic on County Road, particularly when the school is in session, but often times during pick up and drop off times, the road is congested to the point where speed is not a factor, because traffic is backed up.

Chief Bryfonski stated that someone could make a motion, but they could make a recommendation to have DPW look at the vegetation. Councilor Radke thought that was the prudent way to go right now. Have them look at that and see if they can cut that down a little bit and if that would help with the sight distance on the left-hand side. She thought that was the best move at this point. The Committee members agreed.

Chief Bryfonski stated that they didn't need a formal motion. DPW was there and could take that recommendation. He thanked Mr. Rabin for coming.

## **2. Request for a 4-Way Stop Sign at the intersection of County/Back River Rd.**

Chief Bryfonski stated that on July 31, 2022, Pete and Pam Boorum, 79 Sebbins Pond Drive, sent an email to the Town Manager regarding their concerns relative to the intersection of County Road and Back River Road. The Boorum's indicated that they've resided on Sebbins Pond Drive since 1989. They recommended that the intersection of Back River Road and County Road, where Peter Woodbury Elementary School was located, become a 4-way stop to protect children and other pedestrians who transit and cross the road at Back River Road. They indicated that parents park on both County Road and Back River Road for drop-off and pick-up for their children and noted visibility from County Road to the left down Back River Road was poor. They also noted that traffic on Back River Road has increased in recent years in terms of volume. The Boorum's recommended that DPW and Bedford Police study the intersection.

Chief Bryfonski stated that the Highway Safety Committee recommended a Road Safety Audit (RSA) be conducted at the intersection, which was completed and the final report was issued on March 22, 2017. The RSA made a number of suggested modifications and strategies:

- 1) Communicate sight distance issues to the school regarding the school bus that was typically parked on County Road – *Done*
- 2) Monitor parking along Back River Road, particularly for special events and communicate those concerns with the school as needed – *Done and often times during special events the school now hires detail police officers to ensure that traffic and parking was controlled.*
- 3) Consider installing advanced warning signs with supplemental street sign on Back River Road – *Not installed as they were inconsistent with other intersections.*
- 4) Consider installing supplemental 'Cross traffic does not stop' plaques underneath the stop signs at County Road – *Not installed as they were inconsistent with other intersections.*
- 5) Consider installing oversized stop signs on County Road and raising the mounting height on the eastbound approach – *Done.*
- 6) Consider realigning the pavement markings on County Road – *Done.*
- 7) Continue to target speed enforcement – *Ongoing.*
- 8) Consider public service announcements, PSA's, and media messages regarding speed – *Bedford Police Department social media sites.*
- 9) Consider enhancing lighting – *LED light installed.*

- 10) Consider installing street name signs for Back River Road and consider relocating and increasing the size of that sign for County Road – *Street sign is there.*
- 11) Remove trees, trim vegetation, and cut the embankment to improve the intersection sight distance – *Done.*
- 12) Consider installing a 4-way stop
- 13) Consider removing unnecessary pavement on the westbound approach on County Road – *Done.*
- 14) Consider installing raised splitter islands on the approaches of County Road – *Not done.*
- 15) Consider installing a roundabout – *Seeking grant funding in the future if it ever becomes available.*
- 16) Consider conducting a formal traffic study and signal warrant analysis – *Not done.*

Chief Bryfonski stated that the RSA presented the following information regarding a proposed 4-way stop:

- 1) A preliminary warrant analysis was done – *By averaging the number of vehicles per hour and turning movements over an 8 hour period, it met the established average criteria for a 4-way stop.*

Chief Bryfonski stated that the Committee took up the RSA during its meeting on April 25<sup>th</sup> and there was a motion passed, which included by priority that DPW would address any vegetation and trimming, improve the lighting, install oversized stop signs, remove the pavement and correct the alignment of the intersection. All of the items in the motion were implemented and completed.

Chief Bryfonski opened it up to the Committee for any further action.

Councilor Radke wanted to know if the traffic accidents in that area has increased since the accident report from five years ago.

Chief Bryfonski stated that there was no remarkable traffic accident history. It was a matter of concern due to the location of Peter Woodbury at that intersection. Often times there is backup and traffic congestion as a result of pick-up and drop-off. They have worked with the school since the traffic study was done. The school rearranged and reengineered its parking to increase the number of cars and parking and stacking they could accept on the property, which alleviated much of the traffic congestion. The bus was told not to park there anymore, so that was a help. They monitor the reduction in speed limit from 35 to 25 mph when the school zone lights are operating in the morning and afternoon. Back River Road carries around 6,000 cars on an average day; it's a moderate volume road. Because there is a change in elevation and some curves on Back River Road, that intersection is one where people need to pay attention. If speeds

are what they should be, there is ample sight distance (it meets the engineering standards) to allow enough time for an operator see and avoid a conflict.

Mr. Gagne stated that when school was open, the flashing reduction in speed drops to 25 mph, which should make things a little bit easier to get into the line of traffic on Back River Road. To invest \$300k in a roundabout, that's a lot of money.

Chief Bryfonski stated that for those members of the Committee that hadn't been on it for a number of years, Mr. Gagne was their longest serving member, there had been other concerns brought by other residents over the years particularly with respect to traffic congestion, which was mostly alleviated by the work that the school did to increase stacking on the property. There's also always been a concern for speed based on the pedestrians that cross there to get to Peter Woodbury School.

Mr. Kitsis stated that he drives through that intersection several times a day as he lives in that neighborhood and he hasn't noticed any significant accidents. He recognizes the congestion; it's a commuter route. A lot of Merrimack residents use it to get to their homes. He noted that the report said there was limited sight distance. He assumed it was on Back River Road, because of those two curves. If you start introducing stop signs on Back River Road, they were going to have the tendency of having to backup that traffic. Back River Road on a snowy day, those curves are hard to negotiate; sometimes you get a little slippage, so that concerns him a little bit with the proximity of those curves if they did have to stop that traffic. He agreed with Chief Bryfonski that since the school had made those changes, a lot of that congestion seems to have improved. He stated that if they thought the roundabout was only going to cost \$300k, they were fooling themselves. The right-of-way impacts on the two corners opposite the school alone would exceed \$300k. As you are careful driving through there, you could safely negotiate the intersection. His only concern was if they introduce something that folks that don't drive it all the time, that's going to surprise and that could lead to some rear-end accidents, which would defeat the purpose of what they were trying to achieve.

Chief Bryfonski believed that the \$300k cost was just for construction, and that is outdated five years, so that's probably 25% lower than today's cost. It's probably closer to a \$500k project ultimately.

Mr. Jean stated that in the audit, he believed the recommended cost, the burden cost for that was over \$700k, five years ago. He imagined it would be close to \$1m now. He stated that in the audit there were two other recommendations that were not implemented. He didn't know if there was any need to revisit those, but those are the 'advanced warning' and the 'cross traffic' signs. He thought all of the other items had been implemented and there had been a lot of improvement done over there. He agreed with Mr. Kitsis that they may create a problem that doesn't exist by installing those 4-way stop signs. The only thing in his mind was do they revisit those two items and see if there was any value to recommend anything regarding those.

Councilor Radke added that perhaps they still research any grants available to improve that intersection. She thought a roundabout was the way to go, so she wouldn't want to take that off the table. If there were grants that they could pursue to help with that funding they should continue to look for those.

Chief Bryfonski stated that he would communicate that to the Town Manager, so that he was on record being noticed by the Committee that they recommended that there be continued study for grant funding.

Councilor Radke stated that she noticed the TAP grant was coming up; it's every two years. She wasn't sure if this would qualify; it's for traffic safety. It comes up around January.

Chief Bryfonski stated that there were other things that could be considered:

- Signal Warrant Study – Whether or not it meets the engineering criteria would yet to be known.
- Flashing signal – Yellow flashing for Back River Road and a flashing red for County Road.
- Pedestrian crosswalk – Expensive and would entail a cost study. Would need to install at least a partial sidewalk and some other features including electronic signalization.

Chief Bryfonski stated that the options were all costly, unless they wanted to take up the warning signage. He stated that there was no remarkable traffic accident history at that intersection. Do they do something to prevent an accident or do they say there has been no accidents so there's nothing further to be done.

Chief Hunter stated that the engineering study that was done for the all-way stop analysis, and he wanted to confirm that the only data that supported the all-way stop was the volume of traffic.

Chief Bryfonski stated that that was the engineering criteria. There was typically in the MUTCD (Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices) to caution against using stops for speed enforcement. He believed that ultimately, VHB determined that there was a significant amount of traffic to qualify for a 4-way stop if the Town wanted to install one. It was a commuter route and carries quite a bit of volume of traffic in the morning and afternoon from folks commuting to and from Merrimack and Bedford residents that live along Back River Road and adjoining roads and streets. It's not that far from the intersection of South River Road and Back River Road where there was already traffic that stops, so you would be stopping traffic again probably with several hundred feet between that intersection and County Road.

Chief Hunter stated that the engineering study didn't analyze things like unintended consequences of installing that 4-way stop.

Ms. Walker stated that that intersection had not fallen off of their radar even though they did the recommendations from the previous meeting. At DPW, they were looking at the possibility of installing a splitter island that was mentioned in the report on County Road in front of Peter Woodbury, not on Back River Road. They put some monies aside in the roads program to take a look at that and potentially install a splitter island in the middle of that to allow people to get better sight distance because of the curvature of the road. The problem becomes they've realigned the intersection so that the center lines match. In order to do that, they would then be offsetting something, so it needs further review on DPW's part. That's where they were before it came back to the Committee. She wanted them to be aware of that. It's something they could continue to look at or the Committee could tell them they weren't interested in that or tell them to keep going.

Chief Bryfonski stated that from a law enforcement perspective, the number one concern that was raised by these residents and others in the past was pedestrians, particularly children, crossing that road to and from school. That was the paramount danger at that intersection. The elementary schools, with the exception of Riddlebrook, but Memorial in particular, have a significant amount of pedestrian traffic crossing to and from those schools on those roads where they are located. It was incumbent on the motoring public to heed the traffic speed reduction when school was in session and those signals are operating. If people heed that speed reduction, there was ample sight distance to be able to see, stop and avoid even a pedestrian that's in the middle of the road, if they were travelling at 25 mph, which is the speed reduction on Back River Road, and 20 mph, which was the speed reduction on County Road. The speed reduction is 10 mph below the posted speed limit. Bedford Police would be out there this week when school starts again to ensure that the speeds are reduced in front of all the schools, particularly the elementary schools where there is crossing traffic.

Chief Bryfonski stated that if there was anything he thought the Committee should do, it would be to recommend that Bedford Police continue speed enforcement, monitor the intersection for any additional motor vehicle accident history, and if anything, look at whether or not there needs to be some protection or equipment installed to facilitate pedestrians crossing the road as opposed to a 4-way intersection.

Mr. Gagne stated that in all the years he has driven that intersection, he didn't think he had ever seen anyone, a pedestrian, going to the school or a parent taking a child across the road.

Mr. Kitsis stated that the only pedestrians he had ever seen were people going to their mailboxes, which are across the road.

Chief Bryfonski stated that there was one fatal motor vehicle accident there several years ago. It was at night and lighting may have been a concern. As a result, the victim who had crossed the road to go to the mailbox was struck by a vehicle on Back River Road. It wasn't at that intersection; it was just a bit up from the intersection. He's sat there a number of times just monitoring speed when speed reduction was in effect

during pick-up or drop-off time, and he hasn't seen any pedestrians, but that that's not to say there aren't a few.

Chief Bryfonski didn't know if they needed a formal motion. Perhaps the Committee could, by consensus, table this for further discussion, and allow DPW to continue its analysis and review. Unless they want to take up Mr. Jean's recommendation about additional signage or other measures that were mentioned that had yet to be completed.

Mr. Jean stated that he just brought it up for conversation and to review and if there was any benefit to it then they should consider it.

Councilor Radke stated that she didn't mind waiting to have time to review this, see what DPW does, and come back with any other recommendations or thoughts. She didn't mind tabling it and review it again in six months or so.

Mr. Kitsis stated that the challenges for getting any grant money for the intersection, most of those are predicated on accidents or high accident volume intersections. It all depends on how many accidents and if there are a lot of fatal, and in this particular case they don't have that, so he wasn't quite sure they would qualify, which becomes a challenge for the Town Manager. He agreed with Councilor Radke that the best solution was a roundabout if they could squeeze one in there. It would be traffic calming and also help the school. The issue with the splitter island was it could be an issue with the buses in that area. They don't want to solve one issue and create another. That would concern him, because he sees those buses take some really wide turns.

Ms. Walker appreciated that caution. That was definitely part of the process.

Chief Bryfonski agreed that as a Committee they table this, and continue to study and look at it. Many of the recommendations that made in the Road Safety Audit were completed and the intersection was improved. There was no intersection that was completely 100% safe. Intersections by their very nature present the opportunity for opposing traffic to collide with either other vehicles or pedestrians. That's why speed limits, being vigilant, and not being distracted were important. If they follow the speed limit, pay attention, and are not distracted by their mobile devices, there shouldn't be a problem at that intersection. Speed was a problem and it was endemic and they continue to enforce it as best they can with the resources they have.

Mr. Jean wanted to know if they revisit this in six months, if there was a means they could get some accident data for the last five years since the improvements had been implemented.

Chief Bryfonski stated that they could certainly do that.

Mr. Jean stated that it would be beneficial for them to see if the improvements, in fact, reduced any incidents at the intersection.

Chief Bryfonski stated that they could come back in six months or so with accident data and discuss the situation there. The Committee was all in favor.

**Public Safety Announcements:**

Chief Bryfonski stated that school starts this week, so be extra mindful of parents and children walking to, from or being at bus stops around Town and at the schools, particularly this intersection with Peter Woodbury. Also, make sure to stop for all school buses whenever the red lights and stop bar are activated.

Chief Bryfonski reminded everyone that Bedford Fire and Police Public Safety Open House was September 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Public Safety Complex, 55 Constitution. Come one, come all for a great time.

Mr. Gagne stated that relating to County Road/Back River Road, if they were going to be looking at funding could they also look at funding for Liberty Hill Road/County Road, which was in the same report. They were separate issues, but that was a funding issue and thought they were considering a roundabout at County Road/Liberty Hill Road.

Chief Bryfonski stated that Mr. Gagne was correct. If anyone were to review the minutes of that meeting, there were two Road Safety Audits done. One was at County Road/Back River Road and the other one was at Liberty Hill Road/County Road. That was a recommendation with strong support for a roundabout at Liberty Hill Road and County Road near McKelvie.

Mr. Gagne referred to Mr. Kitsis' issue if there were accidents that would support funding of that intersection more so than Back River Road. If the funding was available they may want to pursue that.

Chief Bryfonski stated he didn't have the data numbers in front of him, several years ago there were a number of traffic accidents. It was a 2-way stop at one point. The Committee recommended that it become a 4-way stop, and secondly recommended that they install LED traffic stop signs there, which were done. Since that occurred, they have had virtually no traffic accidents at that intersection. The work that the Committee did was important, because it did improve safety at that intersection. They did some work to improve safety and it probably reduced the number of accidents to the point where it probably impeded the opportunity to get grant funding.

**MOTION by Councilor Radke to adjourn at 7:52 am. Seconded by Mr. Jean. Vote taken – Motion Passed.**

Respectfully submitted,

Dawn Boufford