Town of Plymouth

Department of Public Works

80 Main Street
Terryville, Connecticut 06786

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Minutes
Public Works Board
Regular Meeting - August 25, 2026
Assembly Room – 80 Main St., Terryville, CT

1. Call Meeting to Order
The Regular Meeting of the Public Works Board of the Town of Plymouth was called to order on Tuesday, August 25, 2026, at 6:45 PM, at 80 Main Street, Plymouth, CT 06786.

2. Roll Call
Present: Chairman Nate Brown, Joseph Carey, Peter Gianesini, Mark Lewandoski, Joseph Sopczneski-Director of Public Works, Aaron Heller-Highway Superintendent.

3. Fire Exit Notification
Chairman Brown provided fire exit instructions to those in attendance, identifying the available exit routes from the meeting room.

4. Pledge of Allegiance
Chairman Brown led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.

5. Acceptance of Minutes of Previous Meetings
Regular Meeting – 07/28/2026
Members confirmed they had reviewed the minutes from the previous meeting.
Motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of July 28, 2026, as written, was made by Member Carey and seconded by Member Gianesini. The motion carried unanimously.

6. Monthly Reports
Director's Report – Joseph Sopczneski
Director Sopczneski presented the monthly report, covering several administrative and operational topics.
Noise Monitoring Program (C-34): A department-wide baseline audiogram and accompanying training were completed for all employees. Planning for a department fire drill at Town Hall is ongoing for the fall.
Industrial Stormwater Permit: The PDP and SWIFT update have been completed.
Interdepartmental Facility Policy Review: Director Sopczneski described an initiative to formalize written agreements between the Public Works Department and other town departments—including the Police Department, Fire Department, ambulance, library, and Board of Education—covering areas such as building maintenance, fleet management, capital improvements, and budgeting. The goal is to replace informal, word-of-mouth historical arrangements with clear, department-specific

accountability frameworks. Conversations have begun with the Police Department, and Director Sopczneski indicated he would meet with Chief Massey to review historical expectations and budget responsibilities before repeating the process with each remaining department.

Truck Route and Traffic Safety Proposal: In response to citizen requests and identified safety concerns, Director Sopczneski is developing a truck route and traffic safety proposal for submission to the Local Traffic Authority and Police Commission. The proposal would establish a designated truck route to and from the industrial park, reducing heavy traffic on deteriorating roadways such as Commerce Avenue. Additionally, the proposal would address inadequate signage and ongoing collision issues at the intersection of Preston Road and Route 72, potentially including flashing intersection lights. Director Sopczneski noted that no final plan exists yet and invited Board input as the proposal is developed.

Highway – North Street Paving: Grading, shimming, drainage, and road preparation work along the full length of North Street is complete. Paving by the contractor, Cocchiola, has proven difficult to schedule. As of the meeting date, paving extends from Route 6 up to the first eight feet from the middle school. A traffic incident on last Friday caused a brief shutdown of asphalt trucking. Paving of the remaining section is being coordinated, with possible dates of Thursday or Friday of this week, or into September, taking into account the start of the school year. Director Sopczneski noted he has been in daily communication with the contractor and has been coordinating with the school superintendent and bus company regarding safe access during the ongoing work. The department has applied cold patch to catch basins and manholes at elevation changes as a precautionary measure.

South Eagle, Tumblebrook, Fountainhead, Oakdale: Chip seal, catch basin, and shim work are underway or complete on these roads. South Eagle paving is planned to follow North Street.

Todd Rd Bridge: Easements have been secured and filed, and we are awaiting the bid package from the Engineering consultant.

Transfer Station: A cylinder collection program has been put in place at no cost to the town for pickup of pressurized cylinders under a specified pound size. We have also signed an agreement with the Connecticut Tire Stewardship Program, a similar no-cost program, which is currently being put in place.

Facilities – Police Department Patrol Room Upgrades: Major and temporary relocations are complete. Painting of the detective room is complete, with floors to be polished the weekend of August 29. The patrol room floor is complete, with painting to be finished that same weekend.

Torey Crossing: The application is nearly complete and is expected to be submitted to the state shortly.

Member Carey asked whether road projects remain within the budgets established in the bond package. Director Sopczneski confirmed that costs are generally in line, noting some minor unplanned drainage expenses, but that the overall list of roads identified in the bond remains on target. He emphasized the importance of monitoring spending to ensure all identified streets can be completed without requiring additional capital funding.

Member Carey also noted that residents had commented positively on the appearance of the chip-sealed roads, noting they were less dusty and messy than in previous years. Highway Superintendent Aaron Heller explained that the department is now using a stone treated with a rubberized emulsion, which bonds more quickly and more effectively than the older method of loose stone application, resulting in a better finished surface that the public has responded to favorably.

Director Sopczneski confirmed that a contract has been signed for the transfer station compactor, with a deposit received and installation anticipated before Christmas.

Highway Superintendent's Report – Superintendent Aaron Heller
The Highway Superintendent reported that all six maintainer positions are filled. Road damage repair was completed at Lake Plymouth, and base repairs were conducted on Lake Plymouth Beach and two locations on North Street.

The Superintendent confirmed the status of paving on North Street, consistent with Director Sopczneski's report, and noted that paving will resume as soon as an updated schedule is received from the contractor. Road preparation for South Eagle St. is underway, with additional road signs and painted manhole covers being placed to mitigate travel hazards during the ongoing work.

Installation of new catch basin tops on parts of Fountainhead Rd and Oakdale are underway. Road grading and preparation for asphalt is substantially complete, pending final grading after paving. Approximately 1,400 linear feet of Wolcott Road is to be finished with rubberized chipseal, with work expected to begin the following day and conclude by the first September.

Joe Carey asked for a follow-up on the truck lease program cost comparison. The Superintendent explained that the lease-to-purchase program is considered cost-effective, as vehicles are purchased at the conclusion of the seven-year lease term rather than returned. The program allows for a rolling cycle of fleet renewal, retiring the oldest vehicles at the fourteen-to-fifteen-year mark. The Superintendent noted, however, that the fleet is currently strained, with no backup trucks available across tandem, single axle, and one-ton categories, and that the town is approximately two and a half years out from the next scheduled purchase.

Member Carey asked whether the department has sufficient staff to cover all plow routes this winter without outside sub-drivers. The Superintendent confirmed that all primary routes can be covered with current staff, plus one regular contractor who has his own assigned plow route, and the two mechanics. Sub-drivers are not expected to be needed under normal conditions. The Superintendent also noted that the salt supply account has been established and a purchase order is being processed to restore inventory ahead of winter.

Chairman Nate Brown raised the question of "children at play" signage at the Farms neighborhood, noting it had previously been discussed and referred to the Police Commission. The Superintendent confirmed awareness of the request and a prior engagement with the community contact. The matter had been awaiting coordination, and the Superintendent indicated it would be addressed.

Chairman Brown also asked about the previously discussed hoop house or covered structure to extend salt and sand storage capacity. The Superintendent indicated it remains under consideration and would need to be budgeted, noting the estimated cost was approximately $16,000. No final decision was made.

7. Old Business

Discussion under Old Business addressed the scheduling challenges with contractor Cocchiola. Chairman Brown noted that in recent years, the town had experienced repeated mobilization charges due to roads not being ready on time, and emphasized that the situation has reversed—the town is now ready, and it is the contractor who must perform. The Superintendent confirmed this point, noting that all graded and reclaimed roads are now the contractor's responsibility to maintain; any washout requiring re-grading or additional material will be at the contractor's cost, a point made clear to the contractor's representative. The Board discussed the option of engaging an alternate contractor, such as A&J Contractors, through the proper procurement process if Cocchiola continues to delay.

Discussion also touched on a bridge project for which the bid package is expected soon. The intent is to proceed with excavation, prep work, and concrete pouring to replace the road surface and bearing structure, while retaining the existing archway. Melaine Church, 328 Main Street raised a concern about the contractor's historical practice of performing work and subsequently adding costs, and cautioned the Board to be vigilant. Chairman Brown acknowledged the concern, attributing past mobilization overruns largely to the town's prior lack of readiness.

8. New Business

Melanie Church, 328 Main St, Terryville, CT asked about streetscape work currently being performed by contractor Schultz near the library on Main Street. Director Sopczneski confirmed that this work is an add-on to the prior Main Street improvement project, extending improvements—including stamped concrete in lieu of brick pavers—up to Prospect Street near the library. A sample pour is scheduled for that Thursday for public viewing. Chairman Brown also noted that this additional work, valued at approximately $2.5 million, was provided by the state as a remediation for issues with a prior contractor's work on the original project extension.

Director Sopczneski provided an update on the South Main Street infrastructure project, noting that water main work is substantially complete. Milling of Main Street itself is planned for spring. Temporary traffic signal setups will be installed in advance of permanent signal changes, with the full project completion anticipated in the fall of 2027.

9. Public Comment

Melanie Church, 328 Main St., Terryville, CT addressed the Board regarding the contractor's historical pattern of performing work and then adding charges after the fact, advising the Board to monitor this practice closely with the current paving contractor. Chairman Brown acknowledged the comment and corroborated it based on his own observation of the pattern over the preceding three to four years.

10. EXECUTIVE SESSION – Personnel Matters – if needed

Executive Session was not convened.

11. Administrative

No administrative items were raised.

12. Chairman's Report

Chairman Brown commended the department staff for their hard work throughout the season, acknowledging the volume of activity and the challenges posed by heavy rainfall causing road erosion and washouts. He noted that the crew has been proactive in staying ahead of problems across all active projects.

13. Commission Member Comments

Member Mark Lewandoski remarked that having lived in Plymouth for 35 to 36 years, he believes the town's roads and public works infrastructure look better now than at any point in that time. He cited responsiveness—such as potholes being filled the day after he notices them—and the overall quality of work as evidence of a meaningful improvement in departmental performance, attributing much of it to newer staff who are highly motivated.

Member Joe Carey asked whether a preliminary budget proposal could be prepared for the Board's review at the end of September, in advance of the Finance Board's October meetings, to allow the Public Works Board to have meaningful input before budget submission. Director Sopczneski also noted the importance of incorporating updated historical maintenance cost records for town buildings—particularly as HVAC, plumbing, and energy management systems in Town Hall are aging and may require significant capital investment. Director Sopczneski referenced the fact that the air conditioning in the meeting room had been uncomfortable the prior evening as an example of these ongoing facility issues.

Member Carey asked for confirmation that the STEEP grant has been re-filed. Director Sopczneski confirmed it has been filed for an additional four-year cycle. Member Carey asked whether, should the grant be awarded for next season, there are additional roads identified and ready to be addressed beyond those already in the bond package. Director Sopczneski confirmed that a pipeline of grant-ready projects is being developed.

Joe Carey commended the proactive hearing protection program and noted that the WPCA recently ordered specialized helmets with integrated ear protection and internal radio communication, at a cost of approximately $7,000, to protect workers operating the new jet truck. He expressed appreciation for the department's proactive approach to employee safety.

14. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Mark Lewandoski and seconded by Joe Carey Sopczneski. The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Respectively,
Pam Pelletier, Recording Secretary

Town of Plymouth
Department of Public Works
Joe Sopczneski Public Works Director
80 Main Street Terryville, CT 06786

Public Works Advisory Board
Directors Report 8/25/2026

Administrative
Safety Report
- Noise Monitoring Program: performed Department wide baseline audiograms and employee training.
- Planning for multi-Dept Fire Drill this Fall.

Industrial Stormwater Permit DEEP / SWPPP Update – Complete.

Inter-Department Facility & Fleet Policy Review –
Developing framework to clearly define responsibilities between Public Works and other Town departments; including the Police Department, Fire Departments, Ambulance, Library and Board of Education, for building maintenance, repairs, capital improvements, fleet management, equipment maintenance, budgeting and in-kind services. The goal is to establish consistent department specific agreements that improve accountability, budgeting and long term management of Town assets.

Truck Route & Traffic Safety Proposal-
Developing proposed designated truck-route network to direct commercial truck traffic along appropriate corridors while limiting through truck traffic on unsuitable local roadways. The proposal also considers supporting traffic-control and safety measures, including truck route signage, No Through Trucks restrictions, speed management, and enhanced intersection signage where warranted. This proposal will be presented to the Police Commission / Local Traffic Authority.

Highway
Terryville Fair and Start of School - Focused work week of 8/24 to prepare traffic routes, mowing, maintenance, signage / notifications on roads under construction

2026 Road Bond Phase I Program
- North St – Grading, shim work, drainage work complete. Paved from US6 to Plymouth Center School 98% complete. Section Barry Rd to N Harwinton to be paved in early September. Working with Paving Contractor, School Officials, and Bus Company to schedule and perform remaining paving.
- S Eagle – road preparation complete, paving planned for early September following North St.
- Tumblebrook, Fountainhead, Oakdale – Grading complete. Catch basin shim work underway.
- Planning for painted roadway markings within construction path.

Todd Bridge – Easements secured and filed, awaiting Bid package from engineering consultant.

Transfer Station
- Cylinder Collective program in place. No cost service to pick up pressurized cylinders under 20lbs size.
- CT Tire Stewardship program – no cost program agreement in process.

Town of Plymouth
Department of Public Works
Aaron Heller Highway Superintendent
80 Main Street Terryville, CT 06786

Public Works Advisory Board
Highway Superintendent Report 8/25/2026

Administrative
Highway Crew
- Maintainer positions are filled with a total of 6 Maintainers

Highway
- Storm Damage 8/2/2026, Trees/ limbs down in road
- Basin repairs conducted: (1) Lake Plymouth, (1) Beach, (2) North St.
- Sweeping, Roadside Mowing, Hot Patching continuously being accomplished based off of personnel attendance, equipment repair, and prioritized road projects
- Phase 1 Chipseal- All roads of the Phase 1 chipseal project have been swept
- North St.: (US 6 – Terryville Middle School) Drainage, CB tops upgrades, and shimming the road in preparation for paving completed 8/11/2026
- North St.: (Barry – N. Harwinton) Drainage, CB tops upgrades, and shimming the road in preparation for paving completed 8/20/2026
- Working on preparations for the Terryville Fair; road prep on S. Eagle, Additional road signs/ Barricades requested by the PD
- Mowing and general maintenance continues
- Maintenance/ Repairs of town vehicles/equipment continue to be completed on a as needed bases

Ongoing Projects
- North St.: Ready for paving (Cocchiola)
- End of S. Eagle near S. Main: Ready for paving (Cocchiola)
- The Farms project: Installation of new CB tops on parts of Fountainhead and Oakdale are underway. Road elevations, grading, and road preparation for asphalt continues.
- Wolcott Rd. - Roughly 1400 LF of Wolcott Rd. From the Wolcott Town line will be top coated with Rubber Chipseal. Date TBD Between 8/26/2026 - 9/1/2026

Transfer Station – N/A
Old Business