

Below is a list of questions regarding the current and any future plans for the maintenance and improvements of the dirt roads throughout Chichester for Craig Sykes Chichester Road Agent.

The residents of Chichester have compiled this list of questions to be addressed by the Road Agent/Selectmen at the Selectmen Meeting on Tuesday May 2, 2023.

We understand that some questions may require additional time to evaluate, discuss, implement, and plan. We furthermore are aware that some discussions/actions are not solely in the authority of the boards and/or the executives and may require review and approval by the residents of the town.

Though we have many questions and differences of opinions on maintenance, grading, paving etc., one common goal is to improve the communication between the Highway Department and the residence of Chichester.

Thank you.

1. Questions specific to grading:
  - a. How long does it take to grade the roads? (hrs/manpower)?  
**Depends on what the road needs- As example Hutchinson and Paradise 8:30 am to 3:30 pm**
  - b. Does it require all employees of the highway department? I.e., one in the grader, one delivering materials.  
**There is a total of three employees at the Highway Department, including the Road Agent. Depending on the specific road, the condition of the road, and levels of traffic; this work can require the Grader, a truck, and a ground person for traffic and to watch for wires which can be all employees of the department.**
  - c. How do you determine which roads get graded first?  
**Which ones are in poorest condition and/or busiest.**
  - d. Can a dirt road grading schedule be implemented and posted on the website?  
**Unknown when needed. However, this information can be posted on the website when doing it.**
  - e. How often is the road checked for maintenance requirements, or is maintenance and repairs based on residents calling about the conditions of their road?  
**Patrols of the roads are weekly- should call or come in and it is checked and addressed asap.**
  - f. When residents do report excessive potholes, drainage issues, etc what is the average response time for repairs?  
**When there is a pothole issue, the Department strives to fix within a couple of days or that day if available.**
  - g. A resident that resides on Shortfalls has expressed concern that Lovers Lane (which only has 4 homes) was graded 4times last year, while Shortfalls only once and large potholes were filled in by residents. Does the number of homes located on a specific road have any implications to how often or when it is graded.  
**Lovers' lane was not graded 4 times. However, spot repairs were probably made. I believe they were graded 2 to 3 less than the busy roads.**

- h. There are 6 inches to 1 1/2-foot rows of dirt piled along some of the roads. Will that product be pulled back onto the roads? Then will it be rolled so it does not just run off, especially on the hilly roads?

As much material is pulled back into the road as possible. If that material is contaminated with sticks and leaves, it cannot be used. Looking into the use of roller next time.

- i. Will ditches then be opened back up for the water to run in so that the road does not erode? Where water is a problem, ditches are adjusted or a relief cut is made.

(per the selectman at 04/18/23 meeting): It was indicated by the road agent (unsure if that was current or past) that it takes 1 full day to grade 1 mile of road.)

That is correct that is the goal sometimes it is more and sometimes not, dependent on condition.

- 2. What is the current operating budget of the Highway department, and how much of this is delegated to the maintenance and repair of the dirt roads? Town Report. Can be found online or copies at the Town Hall.
  - a. How many miles of gravel/dirt roads does Chichester currently maintain? (It was noted that this information may be found in the town report) Approximately 14 miles.
- 3. What is the current operation/maintenance cost of the grader and what does the road agent feel the “life” expectancy of the current grader? What is the average cost to replace the grader? Maybe 2025- Some items are obsolete- so between now and 2025. The cost as of October 2022 was \$445, 250. The Grader is 2002 and was used. Maintenance cost for 2022 was \$6693.28.
- 4. In recent years (example last 5), has any traffic analysis been conducted on any of the dirt roads that provide access to other pave roads, or communities/town i.e., “Cut throughout roads” Smith Sanborn, Hutchinson, etc.) Yes
- 5. What steps do the Selectmen, Road Agent and Residents need to complete to form a Dirt Road Advisory Committee? Cost? Road Engineer?

We have RAC for paved roads. I was advised the responsibility was for paved road due to push pull of people wanting them paved and people who don't.

- 6. What is the average cost to pave a mile of road? Would getting bids from local contractors be something the town could do to help determine cost implications of paving vs. maintaining dirt roads.

The cost using a formula is approximately \$237, 480 – 1 Mile x 22 feet wide. This number includes base coat, top coat, tack coat, and shoulder gravel. This dollar amount does not include road gravel base, ditch lines, drainage, tree work, or ledge work that may be required.
- 7. Many of the dirt roads are beyond simple grading and require tons of material to reform the roadway, slope, drainage etc. Are you just “bandaiding” the current issue. Many don't want the roads paved, but what can you /town do to determine the cost to bring the roads better standards?

Gravel road is a gravel road. Many of the gravel road bases are not what the current Highway Department feels they should be and continues to work on improvements. Highway Department in 2022 added 3300 tons of gravel because not much base to work with. Department continues to add gravel to get to a working thickness. Building a base.

- a. Will the town consider putting down proper albeit more expensive products on the roads, especially hilly roads? (ties into the above question) **Could look for other products would depend on availability, cost and effectiveness.**
8. Does the town consider the environmental impact of their road run off into fields, woods and local streams? **Yes, Highway Department pays attention to environmental impacts.**
9. Does the highway department budget include roadside clean up?  
**No – get prisoners if available. If there is a bad area, we clean it up.**
10. Would it be more cost effective and time saving for the town to sub out the grading as they have done in the past?  
**No, not necessary. When I started the Town Administration set up the contract for grading – only had \$5,000.00 and all of the roads were not done. Had to wait for the contractor’s availability.**
11. (for the selectmen) How do we return the position of Road Agent to an elected position?  
**A citizens petition warrant article would need to be submitted to the selectmen meeting all of the requirements. This would need to be given to the selectmen between December and 1<sup>st</sup> week in February.**
12. Has anyone ever determined/research if there are grants/bonds from the state to help maintain or improve town infrastructure including roadways?  
**Grant and/or receive extra funds when available. The town can bond if voted in.**
  - a. Does the town utilize the state fuel bid? **Yes**
  - b. Does the town utilize the state salt bid? **Yes**

**Suggestions for a change in grading practices (unsure if this type of equipment is already own by the town)**

1. Instead of only grading with the expensive grader has the town considered augmenting grading with occasional use of a trailer York rake. These can include a grader blade and can be angled to crown the road for proper drainage. This type of equipment can loosen and distribute material to fill depressions in a single pass. Mounted on a trailer with wheels behind the rake allows it to be pulled with a heavy-duty pickup truck and operated from the cab. It can be easily moved to the site and the surface can be driven on immediately.

This if it would work would only be if there was semi-loose material when surface is compacted, it needs to have something to cut in to surface and loosen dirt/gravel depressions aka potholes need to be cut to the depth of the hole. Filling depressions is not going to be effective because material used is not compacted like the material around the depression. York ranks raise small rocks to the surface. The cracks are now below the rock on the surface, which contributes to surface deterioration as well traffic and weather.

**Additional Concerns/questions based on specific roads:**

Why is Towle Rd, which is a scenic, historic road being widen every time the road agents try to maintain it? Some spots it's right out to the telephone poles, trees and stone walls?

It is not. The road is graded to what is there. The road continually gets more narrow to end of the maintained portion.