

January 2021 Public Works Report

Roads/Equipment

- We had a few decent plowing days with no major equipment issues, and the current plowing crew has a good system in place.
- There are more people living on the island this winter season, and while statistics indicate this for a variety of reasons, the roads are seeing an increase in average daily traffic. For this reason, we have purchased an additional 8 tons of salt from Ashland County, and the crew mixed 160 yards of salt sand. This is in addition to our usual varied amount. The Town will pay 75% of this cost, the County 25%. As an annual reminder for those who complain about slippery roads – The Ashland County Winter Road Maintenance Policy does not encourage attempts to either ‘bare pavement’ or spread salt sand beyond intersections and curves on County H. With that in mind, and for safety above all else, the Roads crew is making extra efforts this year to sand more than usual, and the grader will scrape slush off pavement when temps allow.
- The last few weeks of this month had the crew, along with Windsled Inc. crew, using the flood pumps to build up the approaches in Bayfield and the Griggs Approach on the island. If the wind and snow are cooperative, ideal conditions for ice could cause MIFL to shut down ferry service sooner than later.

Parks

- BBTP is filling up on summer weekends as expected, with 742 reservations as of 1/31/21. It is projected to be another busy season, despite Covid-19. The staff and I are planning to keep all safety precautions, cleaning schedules, and PPE regulations in place.
- With a lot of help from the Fire Dept., a skating rink at the Rec Center has been established for the first time in a few years. It’s nice to see it being used!
- C&S Design completed the new Rec Center bathroom plans, and the crew and I will spend a few days continuing to demo the interior and do some additional clean-up. I hope to have bid documents for the complete interior remodel ready in March.

MRF

- Scrap prices were way up in December 2020 and early January 2021, and the Town and MRF crew crushed and hauled 15 junk vehicles off the island. For the foreseeable future, the MRF will continue to accept your junk vehicle free of charge, so long as you can self-haul to the industrial zone. Inquire at the MRF office for more information, and to fill out a form ceding your junk vehicle to the Town for scrap.
- Projects at the facility have begun, including office remodeling/painting, and installation of new polystyrene ceiling. These are the first steps in a multi-year project to create more efficiency and continue to make the facility safer on all fronts.

Misc./Admin

- Ray Hakola joined the team as our new Facilities Manager, who will be overseeing building and grounds maintenance. There is a lot to update, and a lot to maintain. Ray brings years of relevant experience and we are very happy to have him.
- The ESB crew continues to do a fantastic job, and I can say with confidence that everybody in a Fire/EMS/Police role (as well as the road crew) is looking forward to completion, which is closer by the day.
- Drive safely and be nice,

Respectfully submitted,
Ben Schram, Public Works Director

February 2021 Public Works Report

Roads/Equipment

- There were a few mornings requiring the full plowing crew, but a real blizzard never occurred all month long.
- The 2020 Westernstar (220) and 2005 Sterling (102) had a thorough servicing including fluids, filters, minor repairs, grease, hoses/fittings as needed, etc., and both have served the roads well as primary plow trucks all season.
- The JD444 Loader with quick attach plow has been a very efficient tool for pushing back snow in intersections, clearing ditches, and making quick work of a few inches of snowfall in parking lots. Nice job Evan.
- Wisconsin Steam Cleaner delivered our new Landa diesel powered pressure washer directly to the Roads Dept. shop and we all had a thorough training with an experienced rep who deals exclusively with city crews and municipalities. This incredible machine replaces and drastically upgrades the propane fired modified tar heater which was used to steam frozen culverts on the island for decades.
- As expected during the long and very cold weekend mid-month, we experienced multiple issues such as frozen fuel filters, cold batteries, and brittle connections leading to other problems on trucks and equipment. Everything took turns thawing out and we are all looking forward to warm space once again for the Roads equipment.
- MIFL ceased operations on 2/5 and Windsleds Inc. began operations 2/6. Evan Sr. and I put up the line of trees on 2/9. On 2/11 the Town crew along with Arnie and Windsleds Inc. crew spent the morning flooding the Bayfield side and some areas of a crack in the middle of the channel. The Ice Road officially opened to traffic on 2/17 and lasted 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ days until the pressure crack heaved on the Bayfield side, making vehicle passage extremely unsafe. The 2nd best thing (if you have use of a vehicle on both sides), known as the 'crack lot' is still happening as I write this.

Parks

- Postings for all the seasonal Parks positions will be available by March 10th. Some large annual events have been canceled again. I have every intention of following Governor orders and County Health Department mandates, and a busy summer season is expected once again despite lingering Covid-19. For now we are planning to keep signage posted and continue precautionary measures for everyone's safety.

MRF

- The Roads and MRF crew had a very productive planning meeting this month where all aspects of current MRF operations were examined and thoroughly analyzed. There are many ideas to implement as La Pointe moves closer to another busy summer. Research on a newer used roll-off truck continues.

Misc./Admin.

- Roads and MRF crew will be taking an online class to obtain OSHA 10 certification cards next month.

Respectfully submitted,
Ben Schram
Public Works Director

March 2021 Public Works Report

Roads/Equipment

- The first week of March saw temperatures in the 40's and the roads and ditches began to melt quickly.
- The seasonal load limits went into effect just as the ice road and 'crack lot' officially closed on March 8th.
- The newly purchased hot water pressure washer and steam cleaner was used periodically throughout a three-week period to clear frozen and plugged culverts. I believe our culvert clearing efficiency has increased by about 300%. This machine has proved to be the best we could possibly hope for with this application. One afternoon alone Evan and Pete steamed 4 culverts on the north end in a 3-hour period, which has never been possible before.
- There are many failed or failing culverts around the island that the crew and I are very aware of. We will be replacing the worst of the worst as soon as the frost allows.
- Plows were taken off the pick-ups and the 2-ton sander was put up for the season.
- The crew spent the better part of a day cutting back extensive and dangerous hanging limbs from the cottonwood trees lining Mission Hill. There are still many more, but we made a good effort getting the ones most likely to fall onto the road and clip truck mirrors.

Parks

- Park related activity for March included planning for big projects, completing inventory, staff hiring and planning, and continued repairs when possible. Next month will be very active as we ready the Park system for a busy season.

MRF

- The MRF continues to move forward with improvements, including partnering with St. Johns to open 'The Island Closet' in the old firehall garage, the likelihood of purchasing a rust-free hook lift truck from a southern state, and continued upgrades to the infrastructure and site.

Misc.

- Joe and Evan did a fantastic job cleaning up the extensive stump and brush piles at the entrance to Ashland County's north end pit. That job has been on our list for at least 2 years, and the temps and snow cover allowed for an overdue clean-up operation.

Happy Spring,
Respectfully submitted,
Ben Schram, Public Works Director

April 2021 Public Works Report

Roads

- Warmer temps earlier in the month allowed for some groundwork to take place, despite the seasonal load limits in effect.
- The bottom of Miller Farm Road began to erode from a false ditch and was repaired as soon as possible with minor hauling and shoulder shaping with the Town's New Holland skid steer.
- Bike lanes, Intersections, most of Main Street, and the Town dock were swept with the JD 444 broom attachment. There was a lot of sand to clean up and we will continue on the curbs and sidewalks next month. As we get closer to one year of completion, the Town dock expansion was washed off with our ice road approach pump prior to the Town, MIFL, Wren Works and Smithgroup inspection of dock project.
- The dock approach was patched with gravel when the weather allowed, and Northwoods Paving is planning to pave the area in early June. Culvert replacement patches from last year were also touched up with gravel and continue to be monitored until paving time.
- The wetland culvert between Penny Lane and Old Fort Road began to collapse to a point where it became dangerous to motorists and was replaced with plastic pipe. We expanded the shoulder to the south with DNR approval and the project was completed with minimal swamp disturbance. Rental equipment, in this case a mini excavator with rubber tracks, was used so that the job could be completed and roadway opened by 3 p.m., with no blacktop damage.
- Pete ended the month with a few big days in the grader and did a great job shaping up the worst areas on the gravel roads. We will continue to spread gravel as needed and proactively ditch when possible throughout this summer.

Parks

- Many tall and injured oak trees around the Big Bay Town Park office were dropped by Bruce's Tree Service with Evan Jr.'s assistance. Joe, Evan, and I spent a day cleaning up the aftermath. The new MRF truck with a 40 yd. box made very quick work of the considerable debris clean-up.
- Joni's Beach, the RV Dump Station, and the Whitefish Street bathrooms were opened to the public as demand was high. This is much earlier than usual, and I waited until the (hopefully) last nights in the upper 20's and lower 30's were over for the season.

Misc.

- The crew worked on the annual MSHA refresher course in anticipation of the upcoming hauling season, and for good 'safe practices' reminders in the workplace.
- See other MRF report for details on the new MRF roll-off truck and the new "Island Closet" collaboration between the Town and St. Johns.

Respectfully submitted,
Ben Schram
Public Works Director

June 2021 Public Works Report

Roads/Equipment

- June began with 1 ½ days of the Northwoods paving crew laying hot mix asphalt on the Town dock approach, the 2nd layer of the ESB parking lot, and several culvert patches on the South end of the island. The Town crew assisted as needed with prep work, cutting, rough grading, signage, and traffic control. It was very satisfying to have this work finally complete.
- The first few weeks of June saw the crew painting curbs and crosswalks, striping the busiest downtown roads as needed, and painting the dock lanes and approach area. With the new dock expansion in full use, this was done in an effort to guide the flow of Ferry customers in the safest and most practical way.
- The JD 444K Loader had the 500-hour service done by a McCoy service technician.
- At the request of Ashland County, the shoulders on H were cut with the Airport's TV145 New Holland tractor, along with the Town Roads. There was an outcry over the milkweed, but there is still a lot of milkweed in other areas. Cutting the shoulders gives the motorist a potential ½ second of reaction time in an emergency braking situation which could involve running fawns or other wildlife, inexperienced moped riders, or bicyclists of all ages. This seasonal task must be done, especially on Big Bay Road/H where there is very little shoulder to accommodate other users of the busy road.
- Dust abatement was a hot topic at the 6/22 Town Board meeting, and the TB approved the Road Crew's plan to fabricate a water truck with material we already have, with the intent to have ability to apply biodegradable dust abatement product on gravel roads as needed during the dry summer months. This is an exciting development, and another efficient and cost saving approach between departments working together to tackle an issue which affects many residents, as well as the integrity of gravel roads. It has thus far been a terrific team effort, with great fabrication work by Pete and Evan. The crew will be spreading a generous mixture of VP Racing dust deterrent on gravel roads with the new water tank set-up, mounted on the MRF hook-lift truck (Woodstock) on a recycled scrap metal box frame (retired from MRF) in early July. In the meantime, Ashland County spread a mixture of salt brine, magnesium chloride, and beet juice on Miller Farm Road, Sunny Slope Road, Voyager Lane, and Snowplace Road. We will be monitoring how well this application holds up on medium ADT areas for research and possible future budgeting. The water tank project will also allow for grading to be much more effective during the driest periods by having the ability to simply water down a road and add moisture beforehand.

Parks

- Big Bay Town Park and all downtown Parks and green spaces were mowed and cleaned up in anticipation of the holiday weekend.
- The Rec Center bathroom remodel project is finally out for bids.

Watch out for pedestrians, pets, kids, bikers, mopeds, rogue deer, etc. and slow down.

Respectfully submitted,

Ben Schram, Public Works Director

May 2021 Public Works Report

Roads

- Curb clean-up continued early in the month. The Roads and Parks crew did a great job preparing the downtown area for what turned out to be a very busy Memorial Day weekend.
- The Ashland County crew spent a few weeks on H chipping trees and branches in the right-of-way, finishing the crack sealing of the milled culverts, and working on thorough culvert inspections and a new numbering system. Please remember that the numbered reflective posts in the ditches are County property and leave them be.
- Washburn County was contracted by Ashland County for line striping and H was striped before the Holiday weekend, which was very nice to have done. The Town was able to piggyback Hagen Road and Rice Street. The Town crew will work on striping the rest of Main Street, sections of Mondamin Trail, Penny Lane, the Town dock, and downtown curbs, stencils, and crosswalks in mid-June.
- The Roads crew replaced 2 failed culverts this month – one at the end of the Town's side of Kron-Dahlin Lane, and another near the top of Mission Hill, which had collapsed the blacktop.
- Voyager Lane had the shoulder shaped, gravel added, and was graded twice after the follow-up activity by utility crews regarding Xcel Energy's 3-phase installation to the new ESB from Whitefish Street.

Parks

- Big Bay Town Park officially opened for the season on May 10th. Prior to opening day the crew spread some leftover millings in campsites along the old loop, removed additional dead standing trees, and cleaned up as much as possible. The Parks crew did a great job spring cleaning the bathrooms and shower building.
- The Rec Center had new tennis court nets installed, tetherball added to the playground, and we will continue to drag the ballfield when appropriate in an attempt to combat the weeds. The porta-potties were moved to the parking lot behind the tennis courts.

Misc./Admin.

- Public Works is now fully staffed for the summer, with all seasonal positions filled. The island is going to get very busy, very quickly. Please drive safe and be nice.

Respectfully submitted,
Ben Schram
Public Works Director

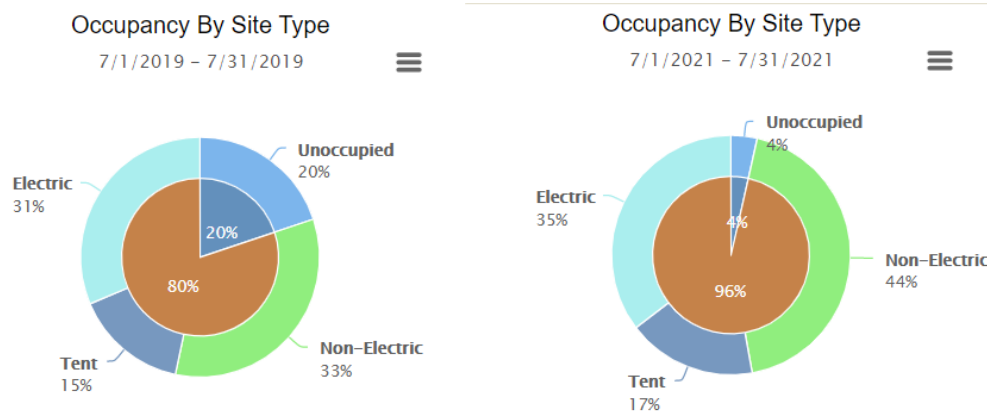
July 2021 Public Works Report

Roads/Dock

- The Wren Works crew sawcut an expansion joint along the north side of the new dock on 7/13. The Town administrator, crew members, and I walked through the repairs and the dock project is now officially completed. We will reexamine the feasibility of a passenger shelter this fall. The crew and I will be monitoring the dock in detail throughout the winter months, and taking on some other misc. maintenance, such as touch-up painting of the railing as needed.
- Evan and the Town's custom water tanker spent some time on gravel roads during the weeks of drought throughout the month, watering in advance of grading. 18,000 gallons of liquid Calcium Chloride is scheduled for the first week of August on the north end.
- A small storm passed through the night of 7/26 which brought much needed rain, but also downed trees, road blockages, and power outages. Xcel was over early in the a.m. to restore power and the Town crew had the roads cleaned up by midday.

Parks

- The busy holiday weekend took a toll on all of the parks and restrooms, but the crew did a great job keeping up as best they could with cleaning, stocking, and trash collection.
- Northwoods Cooperative Weed Management (based in Bayfield County) received a large grant to remove and treat Japanese knotweed sites in the region, and their crew will be doing just that in a few road right-of-way areas along South Shore Road and Chippewa Trail at no cost to the Town.
- Big Bay Town Park is nearly full every single night. July hit an all-time new record for revenue and occupancy. August is projected to be just as full. The Camp Hosts and Parks crew are doing a good job holding it all together. A big thanks to Island Septic.



Misc./ Admin.

- Thank you to Gary Russell and MIFL for allowing the Town to utilize the M.V. Island Queen for the annual La Pointe Harbor break wall inspection and pre-fireworks clean-up. It was much easier to transport a power washer, water pump, hand tools, safety equipment, and leaf blowers with a truck and trailer rather than a small aluminum boat.

It's the peak of a busy summer season, be safe, be patient, and be nice,
Respectfully submitted,
Ben Schram, Public Works Director

August 2021 Public Works Report

Roads

- As the drought of this summer wore on, so did the efforts of the road crew, who spread water with the tanker built in-house to promote effective grading and keep the gravel road network maintained. However, 8/3 – 8/4 and 8/10 – 8/11 saw nearly 17,000 gallons of liquid calcium chloride applied on the north end roads by a contractor. We will be testing flake magnesium chloride applied directly to specific watered roads next month, in anticipation of cutting costs next year, and looking at alternately using this proven method next season if tests are successful.
- This month I met with the Ashland County Highway Commissioner to discuss our options for mixing the multiple materials on site at the airport with the goal of blending and making dense graded base road gravel. This has been discussed over the past few years and it is time to revisit the possibility, as the Town's stockpile is getting very low.
- The easternmost end of Amundsen Lane had some clearing, ditching, and lifting done to allow access by Fire/EMS, as well as Town snow removal equipment and service providers with tanker trucks. This portion of Town road has not been improved for many years and safe access was getting very limited.

Parks

- The Big Bay Town Park pit toilets have finally received an overdue makeover which included deep cleaning, new fan motors, pest control, new paint, and epoxy floors. They are the only year-round option for public park bathrooms, and that is why they remain. Thanks to Ray for a fantastic job!
- Summer maintenance and cleaning tasks for all the Parks were steady throughout the month due to the influx of visitors, but the Parks crew held it together. Great behind the scenes job by everyone.

Airport

- While Major Gilbert Field 4R5 is not usually mentioned in the PW report, I would like the public to be aware that the Roads crew and myself worked with Airport Manager Paul Wilharm and spent considerable time this month taking advantage of the drought conditions. With the TV145 tractor disc cutter and Evan's Diamond mower attachment, we were able to brush cut and clear large areas, including more effort around the AWOS weather station, that has otherwise been inaccessible for years due to swampy conditions. We will do our best to continue this work while conditions allow. We are not able to mow down tag alder forest in standing water with our equipment.

Misc./Admin

- As we head into the budget season, I look forward to working with other Department Heads to find cost effective ways to reach collective goals. The trends are clear that there are more and more visitors each season, and more year-round residents, and I know we'll do the best we can.

Respectfully submitted,
Ben Schram, Public Works Director

September 2021 Public Works Report

Roads/Dock

- The final dust abatement and gravel road binding test of the year took place with the Road crew spreading a 1/2 ton of flake magnesium chloride on the MRF road via sand spreader, directly after grading and watering, and it has held up even better than anticipated. The Mag Chloride we would like to purchase next year is very high grade, and its hygroscopic qualities draw moisture which eliminates dust and binds the fines of the gravel mix. The crew also spread 1 ½ tons amongst Chippewa Trail, Old Fort Road, Sunny Slope Road, Voyager Lane, and Big Arn's Road.
- Sidewalk repairs took place on Whitefish Street and Michel Cadotte Road while the Roads crew piggybacked on a concrete delivery for the library's outdoor classroom.
- As I worked through the budget, including the Roads and Parks anticipated Capital Equipment Plan through 2030, the crew and I will be suggesting the auction of some larger items and equipment that we either do not have a need for, have become obsolete, or we do not use for any purpose any longer. I hope to set these items up for auction next spring, stay tuned.
- 4 culvert replacements around the island, as well as some spot ditching along areas of North Shore Road are planned for this fall, weather depending.

Parks

- Nelson Construction crew did a fantastic job with the long awaited and much appreciated Joni's Beach shoreline stabilization project, which essentially saved the memorials from erosion and future Lake Superior wave action.
- After years of work, along with many displeased public bathroom seekers and playground users, I am very happy that the Town has contracted with Angelo Luppino to remodel the Rec Center building. With modern ADA restrooms, a renovated Rec room, and Town crew completing the playground, the Rec Center facility is finally on track to be better than ever by the spring of 2022.
- The solar arrays behind the Clinic and Library were adjusted accordingly after the Autumnal Equinox.
- Big Bay Town Park's steady flow of campers has dropped off, but there was a considerable amount of day trip visitors this month. The lagoon is substantially closed off from the Lake due to the lower Lake levels and lack of rainfall. Overall, the weather has been good and projected Fall shutdown is Monday, October 18th.

Misc./Admin.

- I spent a lot of time working through the MRF, Roads, Parks, Airport and Cemetery budgets this month. Thank you to Barb Nelson's heroic efforts and patience with me. We have a good plan looking forward and I will be lobbying for department specific proposals at the public meetings next month.

Respectfully submitted,
Ben Schram
Public Works Director

October 2021 Public Works Report

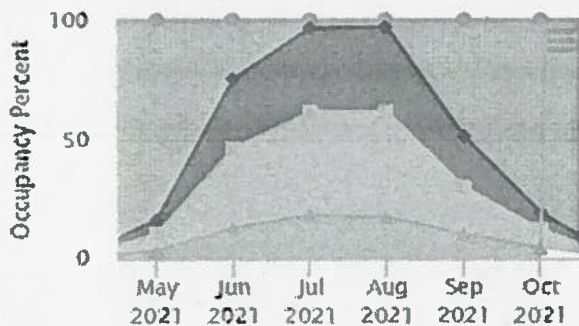
Roads/Dock

- The vaults and catch basins of the downtown storm sewer network were successfully cleaned of sand, leaves, and debris, and the outlets to the Lake inspected. This essential maintenance task has been on the list for about three years and was safely completed by the crew with a rented mobile vacuum excavator system.
- After a few years of discussion and more than a few TB meetings, an enclosed passenger shelter which resembles an urban bus stop has been purchased. This became possible using grant money intended solely for this purpose. Careful consideration was taken to ensure that this shelter will be practical and aesthetically appropriate for the Town dock. The weather will ultimately decide if it can be assembled yet this year, as we will not receive the shelter until December.
- The crew mixed over 100 yards of salt sand in preparation for the inevitable. We will begin assembling plow trucks and going through the long list of misc. winter prep as November approaches.

Parks

- Big Bay Town Park closed out yet another record year of camping reservations and was winterized on 10/18. There are a few November campers scheduled, and October was busier than usual due to favorable weather. We are beginning to see an increase in 'shoulder season' camping.

Occupancy Trend By Site Type



■ Unoccupied ■ Electric ■ Non-Electric
■ Tent

- The crew and I completed a surface rehabilitation project in-house of the multi-use trail which intersects the campground, leading from the main office building and through the electric side of the park. This was made possible by a matching Recreation Grant which the Town was awarded one year ago from the WI DNR specifically for trail improvements.
- All downtown Parks and restrooms were closed for the season by 10/29.

MRF

- October 5th saw the first official, thorough, and on-site WI DNR inspection of the MRF since 2015. The results speak for themselves, (both on-site and in the revenues) and the crew has had nothing less than a fantastic year. Marty's MRF report will have details.

Respectfully submitted,
Ben Schram
Public Works Director

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November 2021 Public Works Report

Roads

- The first plowable snow fell on 11/14, with the main paved roads getting scraped off. The 2nd worthy snowfall was on 11/27, with paved roads and parking lots getting plowed off. These first light duty plow days are a good start to the season to feel how the equipment is responding while getting worked once again.
- Over the course of the month, three culverts were replaced on Town gravel roads. One on North Shore, one on Snow Place Lane, and one on Sunny Slope Road. Thanks to Evan Sr. and Joe Abhold for their assistance on these replacements.
- The turnaround at the end of Sunny Slope Road was re-sculpted with some gravel added and minor ditching done. We hope to complete extensive ditching in the area next year.

Parks

- The crew and I picked out a nice spruce and set it up at the downtown gazebo fountain for the season's holiday decorating. Thanks to Evan and Evan for donating the use of their Genie lift for assistance, as the tree turned out to be taller than previous years.
- MI Trails and the MI Wilderness Preserve have taken on some large tasks on the Capser Trail. This includes widening the existing trail for multi-use, removing hazardous trees, and finding proactive solutions for the beavers located near the bridge. Thanks to all involved in these endeavors.

Misc.

- The Town crew prepped the area behind the library near the school garden for construction of the library's outdoor classroom, which is scheduled to be used for the Summer Rec program and other activities by June of 2022.
- Joe Abhold has continued to do a great job at the airport moving the stump piles located on the north side of runway 22. This has been an ongoing project since the original clearing took place. Like the drought period earlier this season, the agreeable fall weather has allowed us to access ground areas that were otherwise too wet for equipment.
- The lack of serious snow has allowed the crew and I to take care of additional maintenance needs, continue extra clean-up work and organizing around the shop, tie up some loose ends, and help at MRF when needed.

Happy Holidays,
Respectfully Submitted,
Ben Schram, Public Works Director

December 2021 Public Works Report

Roads/Equipment

- The first real plowing and sanding of island roads took place on 12/5-12/6, where everything was properly broken in for the season.
- The 2005 Sterling 5-yard plow and sanding truck (102) began to struggle when accelerating. Upon further investigation and surgery, the crew discovered that the interior of the truck's diesel tank had been painted, yes painted, at some point in its career and was flaking off so badly that it clogged the fuel line and filter constantly. After more surgery and a great effort by Pete and Evan, 102 is back on the road.
- The JD 772 grader wing was mounted after a long wait on a hydraulic hose.
- The end of the month brought some real snow to plow, and I think the crew and I have been keeping up very well at getting the dock, airport, MRF, and all roads and parking lots cleared in a timely manner.

Parks

- When the crew and I put up the holiday tree at the gazebo, we told ourselves that only a 50-mph wind could take it down. Unfortunately, that's exactly what happened during a substantial windstorm on 12/15-12/16. The large, decorated tree was not salvageable. A new, modest tree was put up by Ray and Evan, and the holiday season was saved. Then another good wind blew over the 2nd tree, which was then buried in snow. We may explore other options for next year.
- Big Bay Town Park is on track for another busy season as expected, with 705 camping reservations for 2022 as of the end of 2021. 2022 weekends during the peak summer months are nearly full.

Misc./Admin

- On 12/15 a new shed for Greenwood Cemetery arrived. It will be great to have some dry storage out there, for both the crew and the sextons.
- I have been helping Barb as much as I can this month with information requested by the Town's new auditing firm. While working on those tasks there was some time to update existing databases, improve office organization, and implement some planning for 2022.
- Looking back on this year, I must say that it was good to be a part of a great team of diverse co-workers with various skill sets and experience. We communicated, listened to each other, and most importantly worked well together.

Happy New Year,
Respectfully submitted,
Ben Schram, Public Works Director