

January 2022 Public Works Report

Roads

- Over the period of 1/11 through 1/13, Pete artfully sculpted the shoreline shove ice at the Griggs approach and the O'Brien approach with the Town's JD 120 excavator.
- Over the course of mid-January, Town and Windsleds Inc. crew worked together to flood the approaches in Bayfield, and on the Island. Heavy winds on 1/26 caused everything to shift and the ice shoved again along the island, delaying a safe road.
- There were over a dozen worthy snow plowing days during the month. Some were just lake effect fluff, but needed to be plowed off regardless, and some were worthy of winging back the banks with the grader. Pete, Joe, Marty, and Evan Sr. deserve a big thanks for holding down the road maintenance tasks for most of the month as Evan Jr., Ray, and myself were gone for extended periods of time.
- A multi-department snow removal test mission ensued 1/26 – 1/28. With the Roads JD444 wheel loader, the MRF's Roll-off truck with a 40 yd. open box, and the Airport's TV145 tractor with snowblower, we were able to relocate roughly 2,000 compacted cubic yards of snow from Main Street, sidewalks, and the ESB. This was a NEW calculated attempt to see what could be done when the banks encroach and narrow Main Street, hindering parking options and effectively burying sidewalks. Forming snow windrows to be blown into an open box and then dumped elsewhere widened the street, as opposed to winging and pushing back the banks again and again with the grader. This also eliminated the risks of blowing snow onto personal property.

Parks

- A big thank you to those who organized and participated in the Harry Nelson Memorial Rec Center tailgate fundraiser, as well as additional donors to the project. Every amount helps, and the project continues to move forward. Thanks!
- Big Bay Town Park has seen a handful of determined winter campers so far this season. The reservations continue for the summer months and the Park is on track, as expected to bring in substantial revenue. I am looking forward to achieving our new playground area goals this summer with the use of designated funds, mainly from visitor donations.

Misc./Shop/Admin.

- Various maintenance tasks, repairs, and/or upgrades continue on equipment and vehicles as time allows.
- Tim Gagner from Wendel will be visiting the ESB with Ray and myself before the 1-year warranty expires. There are some issues that we are still working towards resolving.
- I will be spending time in Feb. examining the Town's options regarding expected Federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding and look into what we can realistically apply for while these funds are available to Towns, which was not always the case.

Be safe on the ice,
Respectfully submitted,
Ben Schram, Public Works Director

February 2022 Public Works Report

Roads/Equipment

- Full services, fluids, filters, greasing, etc. were done on 102 and 220, the primary snow plowing trucks.
- The Town crew continued to work with the Windsleds Inc. crew regarding flooding both the Griggs and O'Brien approaches. I think many people rejoiced when the O'Brien approach opened on 2/3 and the ice road was in great shape. Unfortunately, wind and currents caused the crack to heave again and the road closed 2/6. The Town's JD120C excavator remained at the Griggs approach to smash down the heave and smooth out the width of the hopeful road. Eventually the crack at Griggs healed enough to allow full opening, and the road continues to be in great shape.
- With the ice road open, Evan and Joe made multiple runs with fuel cells in pick-ups to make sure that the Town's supply of gasoline and diesel was topped off, along with all trucks and equipment.
- The new MRF truck had its starter replaced and is currently waiting on a high-pressure oil pump. This is good timing as it is not hauling season.
- The crew continued to push back snow piles, clear guardrails and intersections, and wing back the banks in preparation for more snow, and thankfully all was done before the week of the President's Day mega-blizzard. We had some long days, but all roads were kept open and passable by 2/23. The only exception was temporarily closing the northernmost section of North Shore Road overnight, as the 5-foot drifts were simply not worth pushing through until the wind subsided. Clean up efforts and preemptive ditch cleaning will continue for weeks as we prepare for a big culvert steaming season.

Parks

- As we neared the end of the blizzard's main clean-up, Big Bay Town Park was plowed out with 220. Pete and I assisted the State Park by plowing and winging Haines Road and Wilderness Road, just in time for a busy, sunny Saturday with a lot of visitors and hikers enjoying both Parks.
- I will be posting all the Parks maintenance jobs by the 2nd Town Board meeting in March. With the return of large-scale events, an upgraded Rec Center bathroom facility, and a full campground once again, we're looking at a busy summer ahead.

Misc./Admin

- The entire crew will be participating in various training in March, including recycling conferences for the MRF crew and MSHA refresher training for the Roads crew. Weather dependent, I hope we can collectively attain OSHA 10 training as well.

Respectfully submitted,
Ben Schram
Public Works Director

March 2022 Public Works Report

Roads/Equipment

- Snow clean-up continued throughout the month as temperatures fluctuated. Banks were pushed back with the grader wing, corners and intersections with the loader buckets as needed, and ditches scooped out in preparation for culvert steaming.
- As of this report, the crew has either successfully unclogged or steamed approx. 53 culverts around the island with the new diesel powered Landa power washer purchased in early 2021. This set-up, along with the 900-gallon water carrying capacity on the Town's tilt trailer, has proven to be the most efficient method of culvert maintenance this time of year.
- Michael and I met with Matt Erickson at the Ashland County shop to discuss BIL funding options. We intend to apply for 80/20 funds (80% Federal cost/20% Town cost) to reconstruct by way of mill and overlay or pulverize and overlay three Town paved roads. Those on the list include Mondamin Trail, Hagen Road, and South Shore Road in the next few years. These are applications only, but the best hope for road repair funding I have seen since working for the Town. LRIP and TRID funding through the State will also be pursued in 2023 if necessary, and when the Town's debt service is in better shape.
- Plows were taken off the pick-ups and 2-ton sanding truck but were re-mounted for a day of slush plowing on 3/30. Despite being a wet, heavy, (but temporary) mess, I think most were glad that it wasn't the blizzard conditions predicted originally.

Parks

- Big Bay Town Park is on track for another full season, with 1,368 reservations made to-date.
- The ice road has been both beneficial and sometimes frustrating for progress on the Rec Center remodel, but much progress has been made. We are still on schedule to open the new bathrooms by June.
- All six seasonal Parks positions are posted and open.

Misc./Admin

- The crew completed the annual MSHA refresher class, and we look forward to more work in the County pit this season. We will be installing some used gates and additional safety signage as visitor traffic out there has increased in past summers. I don't want any rogue mopeders gone motocross (or anybody else) to put themselves in harm's way without a warning.
- As I mentioned in the last report, we are ramping up preparations with Roads, Parks, and MRF as this season is expected to be quite busy with the return of events after two years. I hope to improve our non-reflective signage, keep the intersections and bike accommodation lanes cleared of gravel, and get the dock and downtown striping done as soon as the weather allows.

Respectfully submitted,
Ben Schram
Public Works Director

April 2022 Public Works Report

Roads/Equipment

- With the use of donated personal snowmobiles, Town crew cut down the ice road trees on 4/5. It was a good driving season out on the ice.
- The snowplows remained on the primary plow trucks, and the crew and I had to plow slush and ice on 4/7-4/8.
- On 4/10 the Coast Guard cutter Hollyhock came through the channel and was a welcome sight to many. The Town crew cleaned up the dock as best we could with frozen conditions and MIFL resumed operations on 4/11.
- The seasonal weight limits on the paved roads meant more shop time, summer season planning, and equipment maintenance.
- The MRF roll-off trucks, "Beast" and "Woodstock" had their annual DOT inspections and Woodstock had suspension blocks replaced prior to what is expected to be a very busy hauling season.
- Kron-Dahlin Road suffered two major washouts with the snowmelt and rain days, but Pete and Evan patched it up the best they could with weather conditions.
- There are many culvert replacements planned for the year, with the first one taking place on Chippewa Trail May 2nd.

Parks

- The Rec Center remodel is back on track with the boats running and I hope we will be able schedule an inspection in early May.
- The Town's porta-potties were opened 4/29, Joni's snow fence was taken down, benches put out, we've begun the task of straightening signs and fixing other scars of the plow season, and spring is slowly happening.
- We have hired what I believe will be a great Parks crew for the season, and I'm looking forward to working with all of them.

Misc./Admin

- I was very glad that the Town Board has blessed Michael and I to begin contract negotiations with SEH Engineering of Chippewa Falls, to assist with BIL Funding as we move forward with applications regarding future pulverizing and repaving of Hagen Road, Mondamin Trail, and South Shore Road. The federal funding is a huge opportunity for some major work to get done and working with a local firm that has relevant experience in Bayfield and Ashland County makes laying the groundwork even better.

Respectfully submitted,
Ben Schram
Public Works Director

May 2022 Public Works Report

Roads

- The Roads crew replaced two failing culverts on Chippewa Trail on 5/2 and 5/3.
- Pete took the grader out for the first run of 2022 on 5/4 and graded the downtown gravel roads, and with County permission, Evan hauled gravel as needed to help build up and repair the worst of the worst spots. Later in the month all gravel roads were graded, and gravel spread in the needed stretches of North Shore Road and Snowplace Lane.
- 20 tons of flake Magnesium Chloride was delivered to the Town Shop straight from a mine in Alberta, Canada, and unloaded by the crew. The Town crew will apply this effective dust abatement product to the gravel road network via grading, watering with the Town tanker attachment, and spreading with the 2020 Westernstar's sand spreader in early June.
- The Roads crew replaced two failing culverts on North Shore Road on 5/17. Two in one day, nice job Pete and Evan!

Parks

- All the Parks public water systems were flushed, and all public restrooms opened by mid-May.
- I am excited to have some new Parks crew and a new Camp Host this season, we are off to a fantastic start to what is sure to be an eventful year.
- Big Bay Town Park had a very busy opening weekend (thanks to MI Marathon, which was a big success), and an even busier Memorial Day weekend.
- The Rec Center remodel is now behind schedule due to material availability, travel logistics, and other factors, but work is progressing and our new target opening date is the July 4th weekend.

Misc./Admin

- Thank you to Mr. Dick Hardie for many years of dedication and loyalty to the island's entire Park system, as well as the MRF and the Roads. The crew today knows you have 'the history' and appreciate all the extra information you have passed down from experience, including uses for a putty knife. Best wishes in your retirement!
- Thank you to Mr. Joe Abhold for signing on to the MRF (and staying) at exactly the right time. You were the Recycling Specialist and experienced driver that the Town needed at that moment, and the MRF transformation couldn't have taken place without your invaluable help and expertise. Best wishes in your next driving adventure!

Be safe and be nice,
Respectfully submitted,
Ben Schram, Public Works Director

June 2022 Public Works Report

Roads and Dock

- Throughout the month, the Roads crew picked and chose various days based on grading opportunities, weather, and traffic to successfully apply seventeen tons of flake magnesium chloride to the island gravel road network. We were able to cover seven miles of North Shore Road in one afternoon/evening immediately following a gentle but strong enough rainfall for adhesion. I believe the product is working very well regarding dust abatement.
- The passenger shelter was installed between the sawtooth ferry landings on the south side of the Town dock. The location was decided by MIFL management, Town staff, electrical needs, and building inspector approval. The door will remain off for the summer but will be remounted this fall, in addition a ceiling mounted heater will be installed. The Town crew will eventually be adding polycarbonate panels for protection from the Lake.
- Pete spent the better part of a week in the TV145 tractor and had all the main ditches mowed in time for the July 4th weekend. County H had a double pass in some areas and the guardrails were also cleaned up in time for a very high traffic weekend. Watch out for deer, bears, turtles, and cranes on the move.

Parks

- The Rec Center remodel has suffered some very frustrating delays, but thanks to Island Septic, we still have restroom options for public use. Ray and the Parks crew have done a tremendous job keeping the Town's share of the project on schedule, and the finished result will be worth the wait. In the meantime, some additional work on the Rec Center playground was accomplished.
- Big Bay Town Park is full as expected, but the month of June saw some positive changes in daily operations, such as less sandy mess in the shower building, now that the foot wash at the pit toilets is operational once again, after well pump replacement. Those little things make a huge difference in the 'behind the scenes' of the janitorial world.
- Two new memorial benches were installed in Russell Park, behind the new Gateway Sculpture. It is nice to have a central green space remain in the center of downtown for all to enjoy.

Misc. /Admin.

- I would like to commend the entire Roads, Parks, and MRF crews for a great job this past month. We all had very full schedules with the quick spring season, return of large Island events, and internal staff changes. Everybody pulled their weight and did a great job getting all departments ready for what is sure to be a few very busy months ahead.
- Welcome Dave Cook of Bayfield to the MRF – Dave will be driving the Town's roll-off truck 'Woodstock', and brings many years of driving, equipment operating, and experience in city government to the Town. We are all glad to have him on the team, and you'll be sure to see him working at the MRF, driving a Town truck, or hauling on the ferry.

Be nice, be safe, and drive slower,
Respectfully submitted,
Ben Schram
Public Works Director

July 2022 Public Works Report

Roads

- Early July consisted of minor road maintenance as the network was in pretty good shape leading up to the holiday. Pete spent a few days grading gravel roads as needed as the month progressed and traffic (and average rate of speed) increased.
- Like many products, we have been patiently waiting for months on a shipment of brushes for the John Deere 444 loader broom attachment. Hopefully they will arrive the first week of August and we will be able to sweep the bike accommodation lanes, busy corners, and intersections.
- The TV145's disc cutter is awaiting parts, but we plan to mow the shoulders one more time next month.

Parks

- The July 4th holiday took a minor toll on the downtown park system due to inclement weather.
- Two memorial benches were installed at Big Bay Town Park, a final bench at the lagoon outlet overlook, and another near the picnic shelter overlooking the lagoon.
- The Gateway Sculpture at Russell Park had a dedication ceremony at the end of July which was a success. Thanks to the Public Arts Committee for all their efforts.
- The Town completed their obligations regarding the Rec Center remodel, and we are currently waiting on subcontractors. I understand the frustrations of many community members, and have many of my own, but it will be worth the wait once finally completed.

Misc./Admin

- I will be working on the current budget and presenting some alternatives to the Town Board in August, as we are very over budget in some necessary areas, such as fuel, but also drastically under budget in other areas. Some reprioritizing is in order after thorough review, as we navigate through the busy season.

Drive safely,
Respectfully submitted,
Ben Schram
Public Works Director

August 2022 Public Works Report

Roads

- All shoulders on the County and Town roads were mowed once more with the airport tractor's disc cutter.
- Pete graded North Shore Road whenever possible, as the month was dry and traffic counts were very high.
- We continued to work on replacing non reflective signage and/or fix and replace crooked signposts. It is tedious and time consuming, but very necessary. My goal is to finally have North Shore and South Shore completed by the end of October.
- A gate was installed at the beginning of the private cut-off road in between the ESB and Winter Transportation Building. This was part of the land swap agreement between the Town and Evan Erickson Sr., which took place a year and a half ago. The intention was to deter summertime traffic cutting through the western ESB parking lot to Voyager Lane.

Parks

- The new Rec Center bathrooms are open to the public after three years. Thanks to the crew, especially Ray and Evans, who did a fantastic job on the Town end of the project. Thanks to the independent donors, Carl Brooks for his drywall lift, Island Septic for three years of potty maintenance, Arnie's cookout, and the Chamber for a generous donation. Thanks to neighboring business owners who had to field questions or complaints from people needing a restroom. Your patience isn't overlooked or forgotten. I hope the remodeled building serves the public and community for another 40 years.
- The ballfield was thoroughly turned over with a skid steer as we tried to surgically remove the infield weeds with equipment. Time will tell. The team benches were straightened out and re-set in new concrete.
- Big Bay Town Park had a very busy month, but overall, the physical infrastructure fared well, and the crew has done a great job keeping up on the constant trash hauling and bathroom maintenance.

Misc./MRF

- Marty will have details in his report, but the glass crusher move at the MRF was a monumental, decades in the making, successful multi-department team effort. Great job to everyone involved in making the facility safer.

Happy September,
Respectfully submitted,
Ben Schram
Public Works Director

September 2022 Public Works Report

Roads

- With some nice stretches of cool, dry weather, road improvements on North Shore Road in the Steamboat Point area took place and included two culvert replacements and substantial ditching. Ditching will continue along Schoolhouse Road if the weather allows, and more culvert replacements are planned on Chippewa Trail, and further south on North Shore Road. The crew is very grateful to have Dave Cook assisting and/or driving dump trucks as the MRF season slows down and road work picks up.
- The Town did not receive BIL funding for repaving South Shore and Mondamin, but WAS awarded Hagen Road. I am bummed and at the same time very thankful, as 80/20 funding for any paving at all is a tremendous opportunity. We look forward to more information from the DOT regarding an actual timeline. I hope to use the engineering plans for the south end roads in the next LRIP funding cycle through the State.
- The Road crew assisted Ashland County Hwy. Dept. a few times this month, due to increased beaver activity causing culvert blockages towards the north end. We will continue to monitor, as ripping out their efforts has helped water flow, but the beavers will likely need to be relocated.

Parks

- Next month, Michael, Ray, and I will meet with Cooper Engineering at Big Bay Town Park to go over ideas regarding beach access and a wider bridge over the lagoon outlet. This is not the first time, but the increase in Park visitors in the past five years is going to make some degree of improved access inevitable.
- The projected date for shutting down BBTP is Monday, October 24th.
- Thankfully the Rec Center bathrooms are fully open, yet the building's systems are not yet fully operational. I am doing all that I can do with the General Contractor, who is frustrated as well.

Misc./Admin.

- Ray and Evans assembled the MI Library's outdoor classroom and did a fantastic job. It will be a great addition to the learning campus around the school/library area.
- The MRF received its brand-new recycling dedicated Kubota skidsteer!
- I have spent most of the end of September working on the various Public Works budgets. The entire crew has done a tremendous job completing multiple projects this year, and I am happy to announce NO capital improvement projects for 2023, as we will focus on taking care of what we have.

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

October 2022 Public Works Report

Roads/Equipment

- Two additional culverts were replaced on North Shore Road near Island's End, along with considerable ditching on Schoolhouse Road heading south towards the end of County H. Pete, Evan and Dave spent many, many hours in cabs and did a great job. Commence the drainage, way to go Pete!
- Three completely rotted culverts on the north/south stretch of Chippewa Trail were replaced with plastic pipes on 10/19.
- A new cross culvert was added within the flattest area of North Shore Road, south of Benjamin Blvd., along with ditching the south side. This has always been a big problem area during the springtime melt, and we hope these efforts will mitigate the road base saturation and avoid the slushy mess.
- I would like to commend Evan Jr. for all his efforts and time put into the Public Works Dept.'s first large equipment auction through Wisconsin Surplus, which brought in approx. \$19,000. Nice job Evan!
- Dave from the MRF holds this year's 'first snow plowing recognition' on 10/14. A band of snow and cold temps came across the middle of the island and an inch of slippery accumulation stuck to County H within a ¼ mile stretch south of Big Bay Town Park. This was causing vehicles to slide around so we mounted a plow, Dave scraped it off, and the rest burned off later that afternoon.

Parks

- Thank you to Ciara Wiggins and Evans Mealman for a fantastic season on the parks crew! We were able to accomplish many projects this year and couldn't have done it without them. Thank you to veteran camp hosts Rand and Fern for another great year at BBTP!
- Big Bay Town Park was busier than usual on Applefest weekend and there have been many day visitors throughout the month enjoying the great weather. The Park was winterized on 10/24.

Misc./Admin

- On 10/7, Evan Jr., Evans, and myself met with reps from the WIDNR and Northwoods Cooperative Weed Management to battle the outbreak of non-native phragmites at the gravel and materials storage area near the airport hangers. Within a day we had applied the recommended amount glyphosate to the entire area to DNR satisfaction. With the guidance of these organizations, we will continue to monitor and treat this incredibly invasive plant until eradication.
- See Marty's report for info on the fruition and state level commendation of a multi-year, interdepartmental TEAM effort at the MRF.

Respectfully submitted,
Ben Schram
Public Works Director

November 2022 Public Works Report

Roads/Equip./Parks/Misc.

- The crew and I spent much of November working on misc. winter prep tasks, including truck washing and cleaning, sander prep, checking over the snowplows, etc.
- 11/18 was the first official plow worthy day, resulting in slippery roads as the temps warmed after the snow. A good reminder as always, to start retraining your brain for cold season driving conditions.
- Snow fence at Joni's Beach was put up right before the first snow.
- We made a new 100 yards of 5% salt sand between the carpentry shop and the parks garage.
- The first real plowing day with a full crew was 11/30, but everything turned to slush. We have scraped the gravel roads the best we can with hopes of them freezing up before a real blizzard.
- On 11/15 we had four trucks on the road hauling gravel from Nelson Construction's pile, which was mixed with 5/8 gravel and crushed red rock purchased from Ashland County. This new bindable mix will give us a great start in 2023 from a road rehab perspective. In addition to more culvert replacements, we have many stretches of gravel roads scheduled for additional ditching, shoulder sculpting, and adding new material in 2023.
- A holiday tree was placed at the gazebo fountain. We decided to take a modest approach this year and it's considerably smaller than other Bay Area decorations. However, it hasn't blown over, yet.
- The Town Hall and Winter Transportation building are scheduled to have new boilers installed in early December, as well as a water conditioning system at the ESB.

Drive safe and have a good holiday season,
Respectfully submitted,
Ben Schram, Public Works Director

December 2022 Public Works Report

Roads/Equipment

- Early December consisted of plow truck maintenance, shop clean-up, as well as sanding intersections and the dock as needed.
- 12/14-12/15 brought a wet and nasty snowfall that resulted in multiple downed power lines, fallen trees, and icy roads. The crew did their best getting the dock cleared off, all roads open and scraped off, and all Town buildings accessible. The subsequent cold temps froze everything into a heavy crust, which was not ideal, except for solidifying the gravel roads. Despite this, we still witnessed water running in multiple ditches around the island for days afterward.
- The 2005 Sterling (102) is scheduled to have both reverse cylinders on the front plow replaced next month.
- The JD 444 wheel loader was outfitted with tire chains, which helped expedite plowing side roads and icy areas immensely.

Holiday Weekend Weather

- The blizzard and windy conditions throughout the Xmas holiday weekend kept the crew very busy. I commend and thank them all for the long days and many hours away from families to keep the island road network open. Special thanks to Pete and Evan Jr. for working Christmas morning to clear thick ice from the Town dock, and just in time for an ambulance run no less. We will continue to work on the dock as the temperatures allow. This includes the completely ice encrusted passenger shelter, which I have heard much discussion about. Ultimately sunny skies and warmer temps will decide the outcome, but we will keep monitoring and intervening when it makes the most sense.

Misc./Admin

- All Public Works Departments have NO major capital improvement projects planned for 2023, which is a nice change, especially for the budget. 2022 saw multiple projects completed, some years in the making, and the entire crew exhibited a great team effort in achieving these goals. We are collectively looking forward to working with what we have and improving efficiency in every area that we can.

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