

## January 2024 Public Works Report

### Roads/Equipment/Airport

- The JD 772 grader wing was remounted once again due to snow forecast in the beginning of the month. The wing was dismantled in mid-November so grading could take place, after being put on for the Halloween snowfall.
- Plows were ready to go, and the crew had a medium crusty and icy plowing day on 1/6. The ground seemed to be freezing up well, and the dock, corners, and intersections were thoroughly sanded.
- The week of 1/8 was dry, and the crew spent considerable time on the northeast corner of the airport cleaning up and removing the downed trees from last summer's BOA required right-of-way clearing. This type of work can take place only when ground conditions are favorable, as most of the airport runway right-of-way is always very wet.
- The JD 410 loader backhoe was due for tires and had new road tires installed, as opposed to replacing the dirt tires that have always been on the machine. This makes the most sense, since the Town's JD 444 wheel loader does most of the dirt and gravel work, and the 410 drives all over the island roads for many varying tasks.
- Saturday 1/13 had high winds and blizzard conditions predicted. The entire crew was prepared and out plowing, but it wasn't a real blizzard after all. Thankfully, the winds did not cause any damage or power outages.
- Pete began working on a full brake repair job for the 1998 Ford Louisville dump truck. This will likely evolve into other repairs, as the truck has not been in the shop to have some real maintenance done for many years.

### Parks

- The Rec Center bathrooms were finally closed for the season due to the cold temperatures, but the main rec room and utility room remained heated in hopes of a skating rink. Fire Department members flooded the rink area multiple times, the building was prepared to be used as a warming room, and a new LED floodlight was installed. Unfortunately, as this report is being written, it is sunny and 34 degrees, and the entire flooding process will likely have to take place again if there is to be a rink this season.
- Ray and I rehabbed the BBTP office, which has never been done, and was overdue for new paint and some furniture upgrades. This includes a few chairs and tables for the noticeable increase in certain campers working remotely around the office area while using the Park's wi-fi.

### Misc./Admin

- County road load limits went into effect 1/26, which is unheard of in January.
- The entire crew spent multiple days thoroughly cleaning the Roads shop and SRE building.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ben Schram,  
Public Works Director

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## February 2024 Public Works Report

### Roads/Equipment/Airport

- The 1998 Ford Louisville (298) had both original steering gears replaced, along with a new windshield and full brake job. This took a few weeks (thanks Pete), but the truck is an important link in the Town fleet, and it is now driving better than ever.
- The week of 2/12 saw tree trimming continue along Main Street as the crew took down limbs that hit the mirrors of taller vehicles.
- Dead standing trees along main roads (we know there are many) will continue to be dropped as time allows. It is a good quiet time to accomplish this, as it is dangerous and makes a mess.
- 2/23 and 2/28 were worthy snow plowing days, and the entire crew was out early cleaning up the snowfall, which of course did not last.
- The first week of February worked out to be the best time to clear the BOA required perimeter of the airport's AWOS weather station. Thanks, Evan, for days spent clearing tag alders!
- The Town will be seeking a fire# sign installer, this seasonal job will be open to applicants mid-March.

### Parks

- The new/used playground at Joni's Beach had edging installed along two sides of it to help retain the sand.
- The regular seasonal Parks jobs will be posted in mid-March. I anticipate at least three open positions for 2024.
- BBTP had additional hazardous trees dropped, cleared, and stumps ground. The beavers in the lodge near the picnic shelter seemed to have stopped dropping trees in the nearby tent sites, for now.
- Despite very little snow, the now annual Snow Snake event held at Joni's Beach on 2/24 seemed to be a success.

### Misc./Admin

- The lack of snow and extreme fluctuation in temperature made February one of the most bizarre months I've experienced while working for the Town. Despite the minimal snow plowing days, the crew kept busy with much overdue maintenance and projects, including painting the roads shop, continuing to insulate the MRF ceiling, helping organize and clean accumulated items at MRF, repairing other Town vehicles as needed, and hauling vehicles brought to MRF.

- Odds and ends include –
  - 2/6 – citizen request – could the Town mow the ballfield?
  - 2/6 – citizen concern – will the MRF truck be able to haul island garbage through the Washburn detour this upcoming summer?  
(Answer – yes)
  - 2/7 – citizen complaint - the melted skating rink at the Rec Center is smelly, what will the Town do about it?

Respectfully submitted,  
Ben Schram  
Public Works Director

## March 2024 Public Works Report

### Roads/Equip.

- On March 3<sup>rd</sup>, the island had a decent overnight thunderstorm, which thankfully resulted in minimal tree clean-up.
- Throughout the first week of March, the crew worked on additional ditch clean-up and tree trimming, as much as the partially frozen ground allowed.
- The 1994 F-250 pick-up truck was donated to the Roads Dept. from the Fire Dept., re-outfitted, and will be seen around the island this summer as the dedicated new fire-number-sign installation vehicle.
- On 3/13, the TV145 sweeper broom was mounted. Over the week, Main Street, downtown intersections, and the dock were swept off. This is earlier than usual, but downtown was very sandy and dirty. There will be less to clean up when mud season is over.
- The week of 3/25 (school spring break) saw substantial wet and heavy blizzard conditions, which made a mess out of all the roads. Thanks to Pete, Evan Jr., Gary B., and Evan Sr. for all their efforts and the very long days of keeping the roads open. No power outages or downed trees, minimal ferry service cancellations, and the snow will melt soon.

### Parks

- Throughout the month, the entire crew worked on and off repairing two rotted sections of the BBTP beach boardwalk, which were buried in wet sand in fall storms of 2018-'19. The job was completed on 3/20. Tripping hazards hopefully are mitigated for another 10 years.
- We plan to open the Rec Center bathrooms in mid-April, after a thorough cleaning and County Health Department inspection.
- The Parks #1 and Parks #2 positions remain open until filled.

### Misc.

- Woodstock, the MRF hauling truck, had its tarping arms modified and a new tarp installed.
- Correction from last month's report: Despite my best efforts to convince WISDOT to grant an exemption to the 20-ton limit, for the foreseeable future the MRF truck will have to haul solid waste one-way around the STH 13 truck detour and return through Washburn empty.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ben Schram, Public Works Director

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## April 2024 Public Works Report

### Roads/Equipment

- The month began with a significant windstorm on 4/3, which resulted in ferry service cancellations but no serious downed trees or power outages.
- Seasonal weight restrictions were lifted by Ashland County Hwy. Dept. on 4/8, which is about a month earlier than usual.
- The sander was removed from the 2-ton truck and the 2019 Western Star (220), the grader wing was removed, and all snowplows were taken off trucks during the second week of the month. Significant savings in fuel and material will help as we get into the busy summer season; this spring, we used only a fraction of the salt sand (the pile will remain covered at the shop), did not wear off cut edges or grader blades, didn't need to use tire chains at all, and ZERO culverts were steamed.
- More heavy winds and rain days on 4/16-17 brought down some trees in ditches and shoulders and broke the flagpole at the Town Hall. A replacement is planned next month.
- Two of the six culverts on Hagen Road were replaced on 4/22-23. Our intention is to do at least two more before Memorial Day weekend. We will know more details about the repaving project timeline next month.

### Parks

- BBTP had multiple spring maintenance projects completed the week of 4/15, including improved signage, bench repair on the stairway, site clean-up, hazardous tree removal, grading the old loop and parking lot, and preparations for opening the bathrooms by May 1<sup>st</sup>.
- The Rec Center bathrooms were opened for the season on 4/12. The Rec Center playground had two broken picnic tables removed, and two outdoor plastic-dipped picnic tables added.
- The two seasonal Parks jobs remain open until filled, as the crew from last year is not returning this summer. I will continue to advertise online.

Drive safe.

Respectfully submitted,

Ben Schram, Public Works Director

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## May 2024 Public Works Report

### Roads

- The second week of May saw the entire Town crew working on the annual downtown clean-up tasks, such as sweeping Main Street with the TV145 broom and cleaning debris from curbs and gutters.
- Three additional culverts of Hagen Road were replaced, on 5/13, 5/29, and 5/30. The sixth and final replacement will take place in early June due to rainy weather and no Parks staff yet.
- The intersections around the downtown area were swept with the JD 444 broom, removing much less salt sand and pebbles from previous years.
- Pete was out in the grader as the weather allowed, and other than the need for gravel lift and additional ditching on every gravel road, the road network is in pretty good shape after the mild winter. Additional ditching on North Shore, Schoolhouse, and other problem areas will continue this season.

### Parks

- All downtown bathrooms were open to the public by 5/3. Big Bay Town Park officially opened for the season 5/6, with all bathrooms and showers open.
- The first mowing of the season was 5/6. We anticipate May to be a busy mowing month, and I am hoping to hire a seasonal Parks crew very soon.
- The veteran BBTP all-star crew of Rand, Fern, and Bill are back, and the Park is on track to break records again, currently with 6,025 registered campers through the fall.
- The running Marathon took place 5/18 and I believe it was a huge success with no major issues whatsoever.
- The Solar arrays were adjusted to the summer position at the school parking lot and the Town Hall on 5/21.

### Misc.

- The Town crew did a great job throughout the month while being short staffed, having multiple rain days, and having the MRF hauling truck out of service for major repairs. Many of the usual annual tasks were completed by Memorial Day weekend, but some were not and everything crucial to public transportation and the standard of recreation was functional. We'll have more help in June, and it's going to be a busy summer.

Drive safely,  
Respectfully submitted,  
Ben Schram, Public Works Director

## June 2024 Public Works Report

### Roads

- The last Hagen Road culvert was replaced on 6/10. Specific utility poles on Hagen are scheduled to be moved and/or replaced early July.
- The road shoulders were cut earlier than usual this year with the disc mower, as the grass is now growing very quickly.
- We will be renting a tractor with a boom mower from Lulich Implement for the month of July, with the goal of cutting back the foliage in every ditch backslope and intersection as much as possible.
- The roads crew cut back the County guardrails on 6/11 and met with the County's USDA contracted trapper regarding the large beaver dam within the State Park, which is keeping Black Shanty Road completely saturated and almost underwater in the lowest areas.
- The night of 6/18 saw a significant storm system pass over the north end of the island, dropping multiple inches of rainfall in a matter of hours. While we didn't get hit as badly as parts of Bayfield County or Northern Minnesota, it was still enough to cause multiple washouts on Big Bay Road, Schoolhouse Road, Kron-Dahlin, and North Shore Road. The Ashland County Hwy. crew came over right away on 6/19 to work on Big Bay Road, while the Town crew cleared trees and went to work on washout repair. This continued for a few days and depleted the Town's gravel stockpile. Thanks to Pete and Evan Jr. for a long night monitoring washouts and putting up barricades.

### Parks

- BBTP and all the downtown Parks are in full busy season mode, and the Town crew has been keeping up the best that they can on regular maintenance such as trash and bathrooms and mowing, without a seasonal Parks crew. I think everyone did a great job throughout June, and we have two new people starting the 1<sup>st</sup> week of July.

### Misc.

- Woodstock, the MRF hauling truck, returned from its overhaul just in time for the busiest time at MRF.
- I met with Northwoods Paving reps mid-June, and the Town crew will assist them in moving material in July as they prep for mobile asphalt plant set-up. At that time, we will work together to establish a new Town gravel stockpile.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ben Schram, Public Works Director

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## July 2024 Public Works Report

### Roads

- The third cross culvert on North Shore Road heading north began to collapse during the first week of the month. It was not ideal with the increased holiday traffic, but the culvert was replaced by the crew on 7/3.
- From 7/9-7/11, the roads crew graded, watered, and spread 20 tons of flake magnesium chloride on the stretches of gravel roads with the most average daily traffic. The product worked well initially, but as expected, excessive speed and increased number of vehicles are problematic factors when the roads are in good shape, and by the time this report is being written, areas have become wash boarded and somewhat dusty again. Rain days have helped, as the product is still active in the road material, but I will be recommending twice the amount of mag chloride for next year.
- Anderson Lane was repaired, and material added to the east shoulder. The rains of 6/18 poured out of the woods and overwhelmed the 4-foot culvert, resulting in water flowing over the road.
- Boom mowing of the ditch backslopes ended the third week of July.
- The USDA contractor blasted beaver dams within the State Park on 7/17, which resulted in Black Shanty Road being closed for an afternoon for safety.
- The new fire # sign installers have been doing an excellent job.
- The new street signs will begin to be installed in early August.

### Parks

- The new Parks crew began the first week of July and they have had a busy month. The mowing will likely slow down by August and the crew will then assist with other projects.
- Big Bay Town Park is completely booked through Labor Day, and the hosts and crew continue to keep up and are doing great as expected.

### Misc.

- Major Gilbert Field began its annual brush cutting and mowing in the last week of July, hopefully with additional brush clearing to the southwest of runway 4 as the dry weather is upon us.
- Northwoods Paving and their subcontractors continue to prepare for the fall paving project(s). I am grateful to the Town Board for granting approval to use unused winter operations funds to take advantage of the opportunity, and we are currently planning paving repairs on various paved roads around the south end of the island.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ben Schram  
Public Works Director



## August 2024 Public Works Report

### Roads

- Ashland Cty. Hwy. Dept. crew came over on 8/1 to assess a failing culvert inlet within the right-of-way just to the west of Anderson Lane. This culvert has been on the radar for years, but the monsoon rains in mid-June caused the inside shoulder to collapse. Repairs took place 8/22.
- Downtown sidewalks, main street, and the dock lanes were swept with the JD 444 loader broom and blown off with backpack blowers in the pre-first boat hours of 8/9. Apparently, some crabby locals were not impressed by the crew's desire to attempt to keep the downtown clear of misc. litter, debris, loose gravel, and broken glass. These tasks can't be completed at any other time of day. I will request that the TB considers the purchase of a street sweeper skid steer attachment for future curb cleaning so the crew can keep up on this, just no longer manually.
- Street signs and Fire # signs continue to be installed in earnest, and I think the crews are doing a great job. Many new signs require utility locates, so if you think you were skipped, it's because installers are being cautious and following safety protocols.
- The culvert on Sunny Slope Road just west of the Griggs Approach was replaced on 8/21 by the Town Crew after it was discovered that the inlet had completely collapsed and there was a void in the road and shoulder.

### Parks

- Big Bay Town Park has slowed down for the season on weekdays, but weekends continue to be full into mid-October.
- Ashland Cty. Health Dept. concluded their beach sampling for the season, (Joni's, Grant's Point, and Big Bay) and pre-Labor Day weekend there was an instance of 'duck itch' at the Town Park. Signs were posted and it has apparently cleared after some decent winds from the north and northeast.

### Misc.

- All Town backup generators were fully serviced by Total Energy Systems (Duluth) on 8/28 and should be good to go for the fall/winter seasons.
- Mathy Construction's asphalt plant is assembled at the airport's empty hangar lots, and the Hagen Road paving project begins 9/8.
- This will be my final report as I am moving on to mainland employment in September. Working for the Town of La Pointe full time since 2016 has been an experience like none other, and I am eternally grateful to all the past and present people who supported me along the journey. I wish for nothing but the best regarding La Pointe's future.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ben Schram

## **September 2024 Public Works Report**

### **Roads**

- The Roads Crew Replaced 2 culverts on south shore, and 1 culvert on Penny Lane.
- The Roads Crew tore out and prepped a large stretch of South Shore Road that was in terrible shape for North Woods Paving. We also tore out and prepped a small stretch of Whitefish Street. Paving was completed in these areas on the week of 9-23, including a small area in front of the Museum.
- North Woods Paving completed Hagen Road paving and shoulder work on 9-21. Line painting is next on their list and should be completed the week of 10-1.
- Ashland County Hwy Dpt. made repairs to several areas of blacktop on Big Bay Road and Black Shanty the week of 9-23.
- Street signs and Fire # signs continue to be installed.

### **Parks**

- Big Bay Town Park has slowed down for the season on weekdays, but weekends continue to be full into mid-October. The park will be winterized the last week of October, weather depending.

### **Misc.**

- The backup generator at the SRE has been hooked up and is operational.
- The 2025 Public Works budget is nearly completed.

Respectfully submitted,

Pete Wiggins

## October 2024 Public Works Report

The public works department has been shorthanded since Ben Schram left the position of Public Works Director mid-September. I stepped in to fill that position, leaving behind the mechanic duties for the Town, and Evan Erickson Jr. has been filling in at the MRF in Marty Curry's absence for the month of October.

On that note I am happy to report that the Town Board approved the hiring of an applicant for the Mechanic/CDL driver position beginning November 8<sup>th</sup> which will bring the Public Works Department's full-time staff back to full capacity just in time for snowplow season.

### Roads

- Grading in the early part of part of October was difficult due to such dry conditions. The North Shore Road network was graded twice this month. Old Fort, Sunny Slope, Brians Road, and the Raymond Road network were each graded once.
- One culvert north of 1412 north Shore Road was replaced by the roads crew due to collapse.
- New Fire number signs and posts will continue to be installed by a part time employee until freeze up.

### Parks

- Big Bay Town Perk facilities have been winterized and the main office is closed for the season. Pit toilets are still open, and camping is still permitted.
- Public restrooms and porta potties at Jonis' Beach, White Fish Street and the Rec Center will be closed and winterized the week of 10/28.

### Equipment

- Minor repairs to three of our pickups, and our 97' dump truck.

### Misc.

- Working with Xcel Energy to grant them an easement along White Fish Street and Sunny Slope to upgrade power lines in anticipation for the new underwater cable to be installed.

Respectfully submitted,  
Pete Wiggins, Public Works Director.

## **November 2024 Public Works Report**

The Public Works Department has a new full-time mechanic! Matt Harriott Jr. started on November 11<sup>th</sup> and has already proven to be an outstanding employee. He is working towards getting his class A CDL within the next month.

As many of you know, Marty Curry has moved on from the MRF and Evan Jr. has stepped in as interim MRF supervisor. We thank Marty for his time and effort at the MRF and wish him the best of luck in his new ventures.

### **Roads**

- We saw lots of rain in the early part of November which made grading difficult. I was able to grade School Hs, Benjamin Blvd, Sunny Slope, Old Fort/Capser Rd, Brians Rd, and most of North Shore Rd before the weather turned.
- Roads crew replaced one culvert on North Shore Road and ditched a small stretch of North Shore Road.
- A few more Fire # signs and posts were replaced by our part time employee but with the current weather conditions the remainder will be installed in the spring.

### **Parks**

- Parks and Public bathrooms are all winterized and closed for the season.

### **Equipment**

- Snow equipment is on trucks and the grader and fully operational.
- Matt has made several repairs to dump trucks and pickup trucks since he started

Respectfully submitted,  
Pete Wiggins, Public Works Director.

## **December 2024 Public Works Report**

December brought us more rain than snow this year and has been the month of building and equipment maintenance. I have assisted matt in a few repairs but have spent most of my time in the office learning how to navigate WISLR (Wisconsin information System for Local roads) preparing to apply for LRIP (Local Road Improvement Program) grants in 2025.

### **Roads**

- We plowed snow a total of 5 times and have spread 20 plus yards of salt sand on gravel roads.
- Cleaned up several trees on the side of CTY H and town roads.

### **Parks**

- Tree removal and clean up at the Town Park.
- Installed the last Memorial Bench for Lori Hinrichsen at Joni's beach.

### **Equipment**

- Repairs and general maintenance are a daily occurrence here.
- Public works purchased a used 2021 Chey 2500 truck to replace our 2008 F-250 which will be put on auction in 2025.

### **Miscellaneous**

- The public Works auction items have been posted and will hopefully bring in some money. Items are listed on [Wisconsinsurplus.com](https://www.wisconsin-surplus.com), go check it out!!

Respectfully submitted,  
Pete Wiggins, Public Works Director.