

Chapter 6

Community Facilities & Services



Chapter 6

Community Facilities & Services

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter identifies the facilities and services that support Bridgewater’s residents and visitors. Growth in population, and residential and commercial development often result in an increase in the demand placed on municipal services and infrastructure. Careful planning for this growth is important in order to ensure that an adequate level of service is provided to all at a manageable cost level.

2.0 ROADWAY MAINTENANCE

The Highway Department is composed of a full-time staff that include the Road Agent and two assistants. The staff is assisted at times by contract employees in response to damaging storms, or in support of special projects. The Town Garage contains four bays for vehicle storage and repairs, and an additional bay needs to be added to the structure in the future. The town sheds include a storage building and a salt shed. A sand shed will be added. The area surrounding the town sheds is used to store sand, aggregate, and building materials such as culverts.

The town's road equipment includes a number of trucks: a new Mac 10-wheeler, a 1997 4WD 6-wheeler, a summer only 6-wheel GMC, a new Straightline plow/truck, and/ a 1982 Ford Louisville 6-wheeler for summer work. Two backhoes with buckets are 1990 and 1994 models. A 1988 Caterpillar grader acquires about 400 hours per year. A one-ton F350 plow truck, rounds out the list. In addition, there are three hydraulic sanders. The Town will replace the “Louisville” summer truck in 2008 with a low mileage used vehicle. A backhoe will be traded in for replacement by 2009.



Over the next several years, the Town will continue to maintain existing roads and transportation facilities with a complement of personnel and machinery similar to that described above, and with some assistance from private contractors.

3.0 PUBLIC SAFETY

The Town would like to develop a Public Safety Department with staff members trained to meet numerous needs within the areas of police, fire, and ambulance services. This initiative is part of the Town's long term plan, and would result in a more efficient delivery of public safety services to the community.



3.1 Police Department

The Police Department currently includes one full-time police chief and three part-time officers. The Police Station occupies space at the north end of the Public Safety Building on Mayhew Turnpike (NH Route 3A). All apparatus is also centered at the police station in the Public Safety Building.

A 4WD cruiser and one patrol/fire vehicle comprise the public safety fleet for the Police Department. A new police vehicle will be purchased in 2007. In the future some staff consolidation may be explored with one or more nearby towns in an effort to improve response time and safety coverage.

3.2 Ambulance and EMS

The Town of Bridgewater now maintains and staffs an ambulance of its own with a 1.5 full time equivalent staff. The ambulance is housed at the Public Safety Building on Mayhew Turnpike (NH Route 3A). This change provides an opportunity to independently meet ambulance and EMS demand in Bridgewater and improve response time.

3.3 Fire Department

Currently the Chief and all fire personnel are volunteers who train regularly and meet standards set by the State. The Public Safety Building lies to the north of the Town Hall on Mayhew Turnpike (NH Route 3A). There are four bays for as many vehicles. Rolling stock includes a 1983 attack truck, a portable hydrant with one mile of hose able to reach water throughout the town, a large 4WD truck, and a ladder truck, as well as a forestry response truck for wildfires. A new fire truck will be purchased in 2006.

The Town currently depends on an effective team of volunteer firefighters, and expects to further support them with appropriate staff and equipment. Moreover, some combination of roles played by police and emergency medical staff may in the future assist firefighting services.

4.0 HEBRON-BRIDGEWATER REFUSE DISPOSAL DISTRICT

The Hebron-Bridgewater Refuse Disposal District lies on Dick Brown Road, adjacent to the Town Garage. The Refuse Disposal District employs its own staff, and extends its services to the member towns.

In 1975, the towns of Bridgewater and Hebron, NH proposed to form a refuse district for the purpose of constructing an incinerator on a 12-acre site in Bridgewater. Their old “dumps” would be closed and the solid waste from each community would be brought to this facility. At the time, they felt disposing of



waste by burying it was unsound. The new site included two on-site disposal areas (unlined landfills) for ash disposal and other material such as construction and demolition material, tires, steel, ceramic products, and other similar materials. The voters agreed to fund the proposal and the facility opened in 1978.

By the year 2000, the useful life of the site and the older equipment was at an end. The Commissioners were convinced from the years of experience that it was possible to build a modern incinerator and process the waste on site and be friendly to the neighbors, the Town, and the environment. It became evident, that reduction, re-use, recycling, composting and disposal (ash) had to be partners to the idea of incineration.

One major problem identified early was the storage of recyclables. The Board decided to construct a new 34 x 40 foot steel storage building to collect and bundle recyclable products. They also created a site for containers which can accommodate a number of 40 cubic yard storage bins for the materials that are not useable. (construction and demolition materials, low grade plastics, sheetrock, etc.) The site included a delivery ramp for trucks to be loaded. Also, new rules for mandatory recycling were adopted to be phased in between 2000 and 2004.

In 2002, the site for the storage bins was completed. It allowed for the public to drive up next to the container and drop in their non-recyclable material. Unfortunately, the amount of construction waste wood (which used to be buried on-site) was significant. Source reduction was necessary. The Board researched and purchased another compacting device and a grinder for waste wood. The wood would be ground up into two inch chips and composted or burned on-site. As a result fewer dumpsters were shipped and costs were lowered.

Fees for certain products were introduced. This discouraged “friends” from other towns from bringing their waste to the facility. It was also an incentive to use alternative disposal methods. For example, a \$2.00 per tire disposal charge is cheaper than bringing them to the “dump” which charges \$3.00 per tire. In 2004, a new building was completed, and new incineration equipment

and pollution control facilities were installed. The new recycling combined with incineration was fully operational late in 2004.

From 2005 – 2010 the District anticipates that continued improvement of recycling programs and cost management of the facility is necessary. The old ash landfill needs to be covered in 2006-2007. Existing monitoring wells need to be evaluated each year, and the district needs to renew its solid waste and recycling licenses. By 2007, new regulations (EPA) will need to be addressed and air permits will need to be renewed. Sulfur Dioxide (SO₂) monitoring will be required by that time. Some consideration should be given to installing an outside compactor to reduce the number of dumpster transfers and their related costs.



State and Federal requirements are increasing each year. As a result solid waste costs for all municipalities will see significant cost increases in the future due to lack of landfill space in New Hampshire, rising energy costs, and increased legislation.

5.0 PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Bridgewater-Hebron School, located on Mayhew Turnpike opposite Dick Brown Road is a relatively new facility. The Bridgewater-Hebron School District owns and operates this facility. The school is staffed by the Newfound District. Currently a kindergarten-through-fifth-grade facility, the school enrolls about 140 students from Groton, Bridgewater, Hebron, and Bristol, some of whom are tuitioned by their communities. A total of 149 Bridgewater students travel to the Bridgewater-Hebron and other Newfound Schools.



The School offers ten classrooms, with prospective space for as many as six additional rooms. The school is currently being operated as a kindergarten through fifth grade facility, but has been designed to accommodate kindergarten through eighth grade. There is strong interest from parents in using the school for kindergarten through eighth grade, and the Town will be working with the School Administrative Unit to move toward this change.

A playground and athletic area lies on east side of the campus, serving school and community needs. A library and media center are also part of the School, and are open to the community during non-school hours. This allows the School to also operate as a community-center. The School's current enrollment is expected to generally hold constant in the near future.

6.0 PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Town Library is situated in the old school on River Road. This facility also offers meeting rooms, and the office of the Town Clerk, in a venerable landmark of the community. This structure is also used for meetings of the Bridgewater Historical Society, the Girl Scouts, and the Boy Scouts, as well as other local groups. The library is staffed by volunteers. The library collection is predominantly a selection from contributed items, and those acquired through a modest annual budget. The old River Road School and its library collection are expected to continue serving the broad interests of the community in the future.

7.0 RECREATION

Two Town owned properties provide recreational opportunities in Bridgewater beyond those available at the School. The Bridgewater Town Forest on Dick Brown Road, one half mile east of the intersection with Clement Road, is now complete. This 68-acre property provides walking trails, an improved snowmobile lane, and flora identification markers, as well as picnic and parking areas. On River Road, Sawhegenet Park offers access to the Pemigewasset River and the Sawhegenet Falls. Currently, old structures in the park are being removed in a campaign to naturalize the area, and promote a carry-in/carry-out refuse policy.

No topic comes up more frequently at Town planning sessions than the addition of a Town Beach. The problem is that virtually all land along the Bridgewater shore of Newfound Lake is either occupied, or lacking in the required parking area. Moreover, the success of a Town Beach must depend on the cooperation of users and the good will of abutters, conditions that may require some flexibility. The search goes on.

The Bristol Community Center offers a range of summer sports and games for school age children. Bridgewater is situated in a four-season location, with attractions that can be relished year-round. The Town seeks to improve its recreational resources for healthful activities enjoyed by citizens and visitors of all ages year-round. A special goal is to provide safe enjoyment not only for walkers, runners, and bicyclists on the roads of the town, but also for hikers, skiers, and snowmobilers on the back roads and rustic paths of the community.

8.0 GENERAL GOVERNMENT

The Town of Bridgewater employs part-time staff to perform the duties of Town Clerk, Tax Collector, and Selectmen's Secretary. The Town Hall, located on Mayhew Turnpike (NH Route 3A), is of recent vintage and provides offices for the selectmen and secretary, the police station,

a conference room for local boards and agencies, and a large hall where the annual Town Meeting is held. The hall, seating 150 persons, is also available for private gatherings such as weddings and receptions.

The Town Clerk's Office is located in the old River Road School. Among other services, the Town Clerk's Office arranges for car registration and renewals in the portion of the building also occupied by the Town Library. Located on Bridgewater Hill Road, the old Town House dates from the turn of the 19th Century and has been restored with new granite sills and a poured basement. This facility is the heart of a community historical area and is used for community gatherings, including the celebration of *Old Home Day* each summer.

In the future the development of an online system for conveniently providing access to Town services will be pursued. This system would use a Wide Area Network (WAN) to allow residents and property owners to have access to the existing Town offices using the internet, and as a result be able to access available information and services at the time of day that is most convenient for them. Services and information available online could include assessment cards, tax map information, online motor vehicle registrations, online permitting, and many other items of interest. In addition, the WAN provides an opportunity for part-time staff to complete their work from home, improving their motivation to remain part-time. They can fit town business into their personal schedule, and avoid unnecessary travel.

The Town will continue to keep and manage its long term debt. This includes paying down long term debt at H-B Refuse District, and the bond for the public safety building.

LAND USE IMPLICATIONS AND POLICY ACTIONS

Land Use Implications

Bridgewater's community facilities and services aim to efficiently meet the needs of area residents and visitors. The community would like to continue to provide this level of service to the growing and changing population. Here are a few items to consider related to the community facilities and services in Bridgewater.

- 1) The Highway Department will play a critical role in the implementation of many of the recommendations in the Transportation Chapter of this plan.
- 2) Communication with fellow townspeople and providing access to municipal departments is considered extremely important for a town whose topography works against easy access. The people of Bridgewater consider ease of communication as vital for further development of a unifying cohesiveness within the community.
- 3) Bristol, Plymouth and Laconia newspapers should each be encouraged to publish news from the entire Town of Bridgewater with local correspondents submitting their reports to both papers. The Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, and Conservation Commission should strive for effective and regular communication with the citizens of the Town.

Potential Actions

There are an array of possible actions the Town may want to consider pursuing as it evaluates and improves the existing community facilities and services in Bridgewater. This section will be used to identify the specific actions for Bridgewater to take upon completion of the master plan.

- 1) Involve the Highway Department in the preservation of a hierarchy of streets in Bridgewater.
- 2) Pursue the consolidation of public safety staff.
- 3) Continue the writing and circulation of the Selectmen's newsletter.
- 4) Continue the use of public communication by public officials using newspapers that have local distribution.
- 5) Develop a Wide Area Network which would include upgrading the Town website, and would allow residents and property owners to have access to the existing Town offices using the internet.
- 6) Schedule Planning Board informational sessions twice each year to discuss Board actions and to gather input for annually updating the Master Plan, Capital Improvement Program, and Land Use Regulations.
- 7) Promote education and enforcement initiatives in Bridgewater related to Town and State regulations.
- 8) Continue to keep and manage the Town's long term debt.