

# FIRST SELECTMAN'S OFFICE

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Dear Bethel Residents:

Thank you for your recent inquiry regarding road repairs. I agree with you, something needs to be done! The good news is the Board of Selectmen is currently considering a comprehensive renewal plan.

Let me provide you with a little background information before I explain my solution. Based on the amount of roadways and work needed, this account has not been funded at a level that would allow us to accomplish the necessary repairs. In order to have properly addressed our roadway repairs, the town should have been funding the road construction account at higher levels than what has been provided; this has led to the state of disrepair that our roads are now in. Bethel has over 83 miles of road; of this 31 miles are in need of extensive repair. Road construction is expensive and depending on the extent and depth of work needed, the cost to repave one mile of road ranges from \$150,000 to \$350,000. Of course, there are varying degrees to road repairs, some roads are worse than others; some require drainage or other costly work. Historically, only about \$500,000 is budgeted for road repairs, so as you can see, it would take many years to repair/replace our entire roadway system and, at this level of funding, some roads would never get the attention that our residents deserve.

I am proposing to the Boards of Selectmen and Finance, who will hopefully give the voters the opportunity to express their feelings at a referendum (machine vote), a Road Renewal Plan which sets forth a plan to quickly repave 31 miles of our most severely damaged roads and parking areas over a four year period.

Because of the historic low interest rates and Bethel's strong solid bond rating, the Town of Bethel can bond \$9,000,000 which would allow us to fix the majority of our roads over a four year period and, the best part of this is, that our debt will continue to decrease over time. The annual cost for this added debt will not cause a raise in budgetary numbers as we will be gradually replacing old debt that is scheduled to retire with this new debt in smaller amounts and at more favorable interest rates.

The Board of Selectmen will be presenting this road renewal plan at a Public Information Session on Wednesday, July 14<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. in Meeting Room "A" of the CJH Municipal Center. At this meeting, representatives will be available to answer your questions; you can view the list of roads scheduled to be repaired and learn about the financial aspects of this plan.

*Matthew S. Knickerbocker, First Selectman*