Service Area Meetings

Many commissions have inquired or expressed concern about the need to hold a service area meeting. At this time, the borough is not sponsoring service area meetings. Commissioners may still interact with each other regarding service area concerns, however holding a public meeting is not advised at this time.

While much of the world has shifted to electronic forms of communication such as Zoom or GoogleMeet, borough code has not been modified to allow alternative meeting platforms for service area commission public meetings.

All service area meetings are to be postponed until further notice.

If commissions wish to inform their residents of information or would like to send out a flyer or post card, please contact our office to discuss the options available to commissions.

If a commission feels there is a pressing matter that requires a commission vote, please contact Michael Brodie to discuss options.

We understand that this can be an inconvenience to both commissioners and residents. Please bear with us as we navigate through the pandemic and the obstacles that go along with it.

Rural Services & Covid-19

As we near the end of the summer season and inch even closer to the end of 2020, we would like to update our commissioners on the operating status of the Rural Services division and how it affects our commissioners and residents.

Since March, our office has been closed to the public, including commissioners. Staff members were directed to stay at home to mitigate and slow the spread of the coronavirus. This put our division in an “essential functions only” status, and significantly reduced the amount of services that our office could provide.

We are happy to announce that most of our staff members are back to regular hours and are available to assist with most services! We appreciate all of the patience and understanding that our commissioners have granted our staff as we trudged through the difficulties that arose due to the change in our office status.

While our staff members have all returned to work and we are able to offer most services again, our office is still considered closed to the public.

Because our office is located in the School District Admin building on 5th Ave, we are required to follow their covid mitigation plan as well as the boroughs. This can present extra steps or requirements for reaching our office.

At this time, we are on an appointment only basis, which are reserved for issues or services that cannot be addressed via phone, email or fax.

If you do find yourself in need on an in person appointment with our staff, be aware that you must wear a face covering and practice social distancing at all times while in the building and interacting with staff. Face coverings will be provided to those who do not have access to one.

Our operating status can change day by day, so be sure to call the office ahead of time to avoid any unnecessary trips! Chances are we can assist you over the phone or via email.

If you have any questions regarding these policies and procedures, or would like to discuss them in more detail, please give our office a call at 459-1223.
Commissioner Responsibilities Refresher

One of the many changes that covid has brought to our division is the suspension of our monthly commissioner training sessions that we held here in our office. This, along with the fact that since February we have acquired many new volunteers who have not been presented with the opportunity to attend training, has prompted us to include a quick “refresher” on commission duties and responsibilities.

Please note that all power point training presentations are available on our website under the “Service Area Commissioner Resources” heading. The Service Area Commissioner Handbook is also available on this page and is a wonderful resource for all commissioners, new or experienced. Physical copies of this handbook are available upon request.

What does it mean to be a commissioner?

- Commissioners act on behalf of the borough to supervise and manage the affairs of the service area, to implement policies and programs, to protect the safety of the public, and preserve the service area’s capital assets in a fiscally prudent manner.
- Encourage participation and communication with residents and property owners within the service area with respect to service area functions.
- Be the contact for complaints, questions, or suggestions regarding the operation of the service area.

How do we order work? How do we pay the contractor?

- The commission coordinates and oversees all work performed on the roads within the service area. Work is on an as requested basis.
- The service area chair is typically the primary contact for the contractor.
- The contractor will invoice the commission with a copy provided to Rural Services, once requested work is complete.
- The commission will inspect the work performed and approve the invoice for payment.

What does the Rural Services office do?

- Assist the 105 service areas in providing cost effective maintenance for over 493 miles of service area roads. The division also supports one street light and one sewer service area.
- The division provides supervision and operational support services, including assistance with procurement, finances, engineering, contract coordination, service area boundary adjustments, dissolutions, tax cap adjustments, and mediation.

I need more information, where do I go for help?

- Always feel free to call our office for assistance. The staff at Rural Services are available M-F 8-5 to assist with questions or concerns.
- The Service Area Commissioner Handbook is highly recommended to all commissioners. It can be found on our website or picked up at our office.
- The Standard Specification for Local Road Maintenance is available online.

School Bus Safety Tips

Another school year has begun! Even though kids are remote learning, service areas need to make sure their bus routes are clear and safe for kids and busses.

We recommend driving the bus routes and inspecting the roads for any safety concerns. Make sure the brush is cleared off the shoulder to improve visibility and allow for proper snow storage, that street signs and stop signs are all correct, in place and in good condition. Ensure that overhanging branches are cut to minimize damage to bus mirrors, windows and beacons. Installing “School Bus Stop Ahead” sign where hills crest and curve visibility can increase the safety of students and drivers.

Lastly, make sure your contractor knows where your bus routes are. These roads will be in need of prompt and frequent plowing.

If you have questions or are unsure whether an area is safe for bus traffic, contact our office for assistance.

Photo courtesy of Explore Fairbanks.
Winter Safety

Vigilance is key in the goal of winter safety. Conditions constantly change from day to day which requires constant observation of service area roads. Below are some of the potential hazards to keep a watchful eye on:

**Snow Berms** – Snow berms at intersections and curves obstruct sign distance for drivers. Make sure snow is pushed back for improved safety.

**Missing Signs** – Missing signs or those covered with snow or frost make travel risky and hinder emergency vehicles, delivery trucks and visitors in finding their destination.

**Slippery Roads** – Slippery roads and intersections make stopping and controlling vehicles difficult. Sanding of steep grades and intersections whenever road conditions demand is key to providing service area safety.

**Unplowed cul-de-sacs** – Unplowed cul-de-sacs prohibit safe access and/or turning around for emergency vehicles, delivery trucks, and residents. Check your service area maps and work with your contractor to plow all cul-de-sacs completely.

**Trees and brush** – Trees and brush hanging over the road obstruct driver visibility and make snow plowing difficult. Remove all trees and brush that obstruct visibility.

**Ruts and wash boarding** – Ruts and wash boarding make it difficult to control vehicles. Blade the surface with a road grader to remove irregularities or hard pack.

**Narrowing of roads** – Narrowing of roads caused by incomplete or infrequent snow plowing, or snow pushed from driveways by residents can create safety concerns. Make sure snow is removed from shoulder to shoulder during plowing. Notify residents that it is unlawful to put snow into the right-of-way, these are also known as encroachments.

**Other** – Snow machines, dog mushing or cross-country ski trails that enter onto roads can be dangerous for everyone. Clear snow berms and hard pack to improve sight distance for drivers and trail users.

Sanding Roadways

Winter is fast approaching, which means it is time to anticipate the mix of rain, snow and ice. Sanding of roadways in service areas during the winter months is vital to the health and safety of your neighborhoods. Emergency vehicles need good traction at intersections and on hillsides to provide quick response to emergencies, and school busses must be able to provide safe transportation to school aged children. Communicating with your contractor to provide good sanding practices and maintaining those safe road conditions is critical for these services. Here are some road standards to help you in requesting services:

**804-3.01 SANDING REQUIREMENTS.**
Response time is 4 hours from the time of Commissioner call-out, unless otherwise directed.

1. Use a mechanical spreader that distributes a uniform layer. Spread material from shoulder to shoulder. Make as many passes as needed for complete coverage.

2. Provide sand for service areas with sanding boxes.

**804-4.01 METHOD OF MEASUREMENT.**
Sanding of roadways will be measured by the ton. Sanding material, hauling, spreading, and labor shall be considered incidental to this pay item. Providing sand for service area sanding boxes will be measured by the ton and loaded into the boxes.

**804-4.02 MINIMUM CALL-OUT AMOUNTS.**
Sanding for roadways shall have a minimum call-out amount of 2 tons. The Contractor and Commission shall negotiate a price for work less than the minimum call-out amount following procedures described in Section 106 Work Orders.
Work Order Requirements for Public Construction

As summer ends, so does the bulk of the work that must be performed in the summer months. As things wind down we would like to take this time to revisit the requirements for work orders as listed in the Standard Specifications.

As per sec 106 (pg. 8) in the Standard Specifications for Local Road Maintenance, all public construction work requires a written and signed work order before work can begin. Public construction work can be considered anything non-routine, or not an 800 item number on the bid tab. Work orders are important in that it provides written documentation of the work requested by the commission and the price provided by the contractor. The contractor cannot perform any of this work without the completed work order. The contractor is required to attach a copy of the work order with the final invoice. The Borough will not pay work performed without a completed work order.

There were many instances this summer where invoices did not include a corresponding work order for public construction work. We would like to remind commissions that this is a requirement per contract. Please do not hesitate to call if you are unsure whether you need a work order!

106-3.01 WORK ORDER REQUIREMENTS

1) This specification is not intended to replace the contract unit prices for routine maintenance work covered by other specifications.
2) Work Orders document how the work is ordered by the Commission.
3) The following procedure applies to Work Order quotes UNDER $10,000.00:
   a) The Commission will provide the Contractor with the WO form. The form will provide the specification pay item number of the work required, the locations of the work limits, and the date the work is requested to be completed.
   b) The Contractor shall provide a quote including a breakdown of materials, labor, equipment, all other items required to estimate the cost of work, and proposed work schedule.
   c) The Contractor shall respond with a signed quote to the Commission within 5 working days.
   d) If the quote is accepted by the Commission, a Commissioner will sign and return a copy of the WO to the Contractor.
   e) WO’s signed by the Contractor and then the Commission provide authorization to proceed with the work. Without this authorization, the work will not be paid for under this Contract.
   f) Quotes may be rejected at the discretion of the Commission and the Engineer.
4) For WO Quotes for $10,000 or GREATER:
   a) The Commission shall provide the WO, signed and accepted by both Commission and Contractor to the Engineer for written approval.
   b) The Engineer will provide copies of the approved WO to the Contractor as authorization to proceed with the work.
   c) Without this approval, the work is not authorized and will not be paid for under this contract.
   d) If the WO is not approved, the Engineer will notify the Commission and the Contractor.

WINTER

Winter Encroachments

Encroachments within the right-of-way during the winter can affect not only snow removal, but also impact the drainage system in the spring.

There are two types of encroachments to watch out for during the winter
1. Property within the road right of way that impedes snow removal on service area roads. This could be abandoned vehicles, fences or other items placed on the road or in the ditches.

2. Residents who plow snow onto service area roads from private property.

Borough code 12.04 prohibits encroachments on public roads. Please call our office to report an encroachment within your service area.

Photo courtesy of NOAA
STAFF INTRODUCTION

Meet the new members of our team!

Sara Waller, Service Area Tech – Sara joined our team in June and is our new Service Area Tech! She provides technical support to the Rural Services staff in the management of over one hundred road service areas. She manages vehicle encroachments within service areas and facilitates the service area boundary modifications and annexations. Sara can be reached by phone at 459-1217 or email at sara.waller@fnsb.us

Xena Saunders, Admin Assistant III – Xena joined our team in July and is our new Administrative Assistant! She will provide administrative support to Rural Services and our 105 service areas. Xena prepares purchase orders, processes invoice payments, maintains soft ledgers for all service areas, processes and maintains commission applications, as well as also being a Notary for Borough related documents. Xena can be reached by phone at 459-1223 or email at Xena.Saunders@fnsb.gov

Winter Checklist

- Pumping & Thawing PO ready?
- Sand in sand boxes?
- School Bus routes clear?
- Site distance brushing?

Training Update

Due to the pandemic and the need for social distancing, we have been unable to hold our monthly in person training sessions here at Rural Services for our commissioners. At this time, we are unsure when that status will change. We are discussing other options to deliver training materials to our commissioners. Keep an eye out for future announcements regarding training sessions and how you can access this material. Stay tuned!

OFFICE CLOSURES

Rural Services will be closed on the following days:

- Monday, October 19th
- Wednesday, November 11th
- Thursday & Friday, November 26th & 27th
- Thursday & Friday, December 24th & 25th

CONTACT US

520 5th Ave STE D
P: 459-1223 F: 459-1499
ruralservices@fnsb.us
www.fnsb.gov
Invoice Approval Procedure

Commissions have a variety of responsibilities when it comes to overseeing the service area, and approving invoices is one of the central roles of being a commissioner. Because commissions request work directly from the contractor, it is up to the commission to inspect the work performed to ensure it is up to standard, and then examine the invoice to ensure that the work invoiced matches the commissions request. Once the commission has verified that the commission was invoiced properly, they are to submit an Invoice Approval form to Rural Services. Invoices will not be paid without an approval from the commission.

The Invoice Approval form is available on our website or can be emailed upon request. This document can be filled out, signed electronically, and sent to our office via email, mailed via USPS or faxed to our office. Below is the step by step process of paying an invoice:

1. Commission orders work from contractor
2. Contractor performs requested work
3. Contractor sends invoice to commission
4. Commission inspects work and invoice for errors
5. Commission sends an Invoice Approval form to Rural Services
6. Rural Services processes invoice for payment

Below are the payment requirements as listed in the Standard Specifications for Local Road Maintenance

SECTION 109
PAYMENT REQUIREMENTS

109-1.01 DESCRIPTION. The Borough will pay the Contractor for work accomplished by the Contractor and approved by the Commission and the Engineer. The amounts paid shall be for the quantities of work accepted by the Commission or the Engineer at the Contract Unit Price.

109-2.01 INVOICES. The Contractor shall submit all invoices promptly, and no later than 30 days from the day the work was performed. Submit the original invoice with attachments to RS, and a copy of the invoice to the Commission at the address indicated on the PO. Late invoices are considered a deficiency.

Invoices must include the following information:

1. For routine maintenance items of work (specifications in the 800 series):
   A. Name of Contractor, address, telephone and fax numbers.
   B. Invoice number and date.
   C. P.O. number.
   D. Service Area name.
   E. Which roads were maintained and dates of work.
   F. Bid Item number, unit price, units completed, extended price.
   G. Provide a copy of WO (if issued).
2. For public construction work, include the same information as listed above on the invoice, in addition to:
   A. Provide a copy of the WO signed by both the Commission or Engineer and the Contractor with the invoice.
   B. The amount of the invoice cannot exceed the amount of the quote given on the WO.
   C. If materials not included on the bid form were used for the work, provide the purchasing invoice for the material.
   D. If any work was subcontracted, provide an invoice from the subcontractor.
3. For public construction work, requiring prevailing wage, include the same information as listed above on the invoice, in addition to:
   A. Prevailing wage work requires copies of certified payrolls, copies of the Notice of Work, and Notice of Completion sent to DOLWD prior to final payment.

The Contractor shall keep logs of maintenance performed, including road name; hours worked; type of work performed, and date of work. Upon the Engineer’s request within 15 days of receipt by RS of the invoice, the Contractor shall provide such documentation as; employees signed time cards, Contractor’s daily logs, metered equipment hours, and field notes on work progress.

109-3.01 MEASUREMENT AND PAYMENT. Measurement of unit price items will follow the requirements in SSHC Section 109-1.02. A change to the method of measurement in the Contract requires a signed Change Order.

END SECTION