Service Area Meetings

Currently, Service areas can hold Zoom only OR in-person AND Zoom meetings. This allows all residents the opportunity to attend via their preferred method of communication. All meeting times will still need to be confirmed with Xena as a staff member will need to be available to host the Zoom meeting. Contact Xena at 459-1223 or Xena.Saunders@fnsb.gov to schedule a meeting or with any questions.

Routine Maintenance and Public Construction

What is the difference between routine maintenance and public construction on a service area road? These two unique work types are worth defining and offering examples to identify their qualifiers; operating funds, prevailing wages and appropriation requirement.

**ROUTINE MAINTENANCE** is road work that is exempt from payment of prevailing wages under state law. Routine maintenance work does not have limits on the cost, keeping it under the contract value, which in most cases is $99,999. Read more in the Service Area Commissioner Handbook-2018 in Appendix E, Standard Specifications for Local Road Maintenance-2012, pages 36-47, for some examples of the 800-category routine maintenance which include:

- Blade road to remove potholes/washboards
- Blade road to restore crown
- Brushing roadsides
- Cleaning ditches and culverts
- Grading an existing surface
- Periodic roadside brush clearing
- Replacing old or damages signs and posts
- Roadway sanding
- Snowplowing and hard pack removal
- Shaping of shoulders

**PUBLIC CONSTRUCTION** is road work for which state law defines "public construction" or "public works" as “the on-site field surveying, erection, rehabilitation, alteration, extension or repair, including painting or redecorating of buildings, highways or other improvements to real property under contract for the state, a political subdivision of the state, or a regional school board.”

Repair, in the above definition, includes fixing sinkholes and potholes, placing additional material in the road, grading the new material, or the correction or replacement of damaged culverts or guardrail. Generally, if material is being added, the work is construction and requires the payment of prevailing wages.

Pay items in Division 800 Maintenance are exempt from the provisions of AS 36.05. All other work pay items are Public Construction Work. The total amount paid for Public Construction Work shall not exceed $25,000.00 per fiscal year. Most annual maintenance contracts have a $25,000 limit, so if the commission would like to have any public construction work performed over the $25,000 limit, the borough can issue a separate small project contract by using a Request for Quote (RFQ) up to $50,000 for that work. If the cost of the work is more than $50,000 an invitation for Bid (IFB) will be issued. Contact Rural Services if the service area has construction work of $25,000 or more, to get the best solution that fits the work required.
TAX CAP ELECTION REQUEST

Now is the time to request an election

Once every fiscal year, commissions can vote to hold a tax cap election to increase the service area’s tax cap to bring in more funds. Commission chairs were sent out these notices on July 26th, along with budget information for their specific service area.

Why should a service area consider increasing their tax cap?
• If the service area is unable to adequately provide services to their residents with the current tax cap revenue (e.g. always running out of funds when providing basic maintenance, or unable to provide all necessary maintenance)
• The service area continuously depletes its entire budgeted revenue, with no funds saved for contingencies (e.g. no savings for natural disasters, special projects or higher than average snow/rainfall)
• The commission wishes to start saving funds for a future project and believes a tax cap adjustment is necessary (e.g. road is anticipated to need resurfacing in approx. 5-10 years and will be a substantial expenditure)
• The majority of the service area roads are in poor condition and require more than basic maintenance, but the service area’s budget is not adequate enough for additional spending (e.g. can adequately perform basic maintenance, but will not be able to cover additional costs for road repairs)

What if our service area does not want to raise the tax cap?
• Should commissions be content with the current tax cap of their service area, NO ACTION IS REQUIRED. This process is voluntary and only needs to be addressed if the commission feels there is a valid reason to request a change.

Help! We plan to have some work done in the future and will need funds; do we need to raise the tax cap?
• Every service area is different. If you are unsure whether a tax cap election would be necessary, give Michael or Jamie a call to prepare specific information to your service area.

We need a tax cap election, but I don’t know where to begin!
• Call Jamie at 459-1222 for any questions, concerns or assistance you may need!

What are the costs associated with a Tax Cap Election?
• Services areas must pay actual costs incurred due to a Tax Cap Election. While it is impossible to give an exact cost, prior tax cap elections have cost service areas around $3,000. This amount will vary.

Keep in mind this is just a request to hold an official election. Increasing taxes takes a vote of the public (in this instance, residents of the service area). As commissioners you will vote to hold an election as well as the dollar amount the tax cap should be increased by.

If your Service Area wishes to participate in the Spring Tax Cap Election, the service area must:
• Hold a public meeting with Tax Cap Election as an agenda item
  - Commission members must vote to approve a tax cap election request
  - Fill out and submit the Tax Cap Election Request form to Rural Services
  - Determine the Tax Cap Increase amount the residents will vote on
  - Submit minutes from meeting to Rural Services
• Return the Tax Cap Election Request form AND minutes from the service area meeting to Rural Services by October 8th, 2021.

Service Area Reporter is LIVE

Fnsb.gov/Roads

The new service area issue reporter is now live and available for the community to use. A link to the reporter is available on the main borough webpage under the community spotlight section or can be found at its permanent home on the Rural Services webpage.

At this time, no action is required by commissioners. Rural Services is managing all submissions and will forward on legitimate reports to commissions as required.

Commissions can view the reporter and see the status of submissions in their service area as well as descriptions, photos and any contact information included with the report by simply going to Fnsb.gov/roads and clicking “Submit a Report” to bring up the live issue reporting map. Rural Services staff will also provide this information when forwarding reports onto commissions.

Maintenance Check

Fall is near, which means it’s time to wrap up any summer projects and make sure that your service area is prepared for winter snow and spring drainage.
• Cut back any overgrown brush
• Remove debris and foliage from ditches
• Clean out culverts
• Repair or replace any damaged culverts
• Repair or create 4% crown
• Install culvert markers
New Commissioner Corner

Over the past few months Rural Services has welcomed a number of new commissioners! Our office is here to assist commissioners with management of their service areas and provide materials and training to help you succeed.

If you have not already, please take a look at the Commissioner Handbook! A PDF copy is available on our website at www.fnsb.gov/228/Rural-Services under “Service Area Commissioner Resources”, OR a physical copy can be picked up at our office at 520 5th Ave STE D!

The Standard Specification for Local Road Maintenance 2012 is also a wonderful reference to commissioners.

This handbook outlines the specifications in which contractors must perform requested work as well as invoicing and other contract requirements. It can also be found on our webpage as well as in the back of the commissioner handbook.

Rural Services also offers in person trainings to commissioners on a wide range of topics. Due to COVID, monthly group trainings have been suspended, however limited, one-on-one trainings are available upon request! Please contact Jamie at 459-1222 or at Jamie.Fleming@fnsb.gov to inquire about training opportunities!

ENCROACHMENTS

Notify Rural Services ASAP

When a resident or a commission member notices an encroachment, please be sure to notify Rural Services as soon as possible.

An encroachment can be:

- Fences
- Abandoned Vehicles
- Debris
- Structures
- Any items that do not belong or is not of a temporary nature

The encroachment notice process varies depending on encroachment type. Structures and various other encroachment types are given a 30-day removal notice and property owners are sent a certified letter explaining the encroachment. For a vehicle to be considered abandoned, it must be in the same spot for 48 hours without movement. The vehicle will be tagged by Rural Services and given 10 days to be removed. All encroachments that are not removed after the given time frame are forwarded on to the boroughs’ Code Enforcement officer for processing.

Encroachment Contact:

Floyd Sheesley – 459-1203/ Floyd.Sheesley@fnsb.gov
  • Fence
  • Debris
  • Snow
  • Structures

Sara Waller – 459-1217/ Sara.Waller@fnsb.gov
  • Abandoned Cars

Rural Services will be closed on the following days:

Monday, September 6th, 2021
Monday, October 18th, 2021