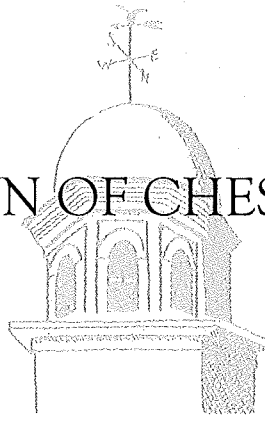


# TOWN OF CHESTER



556 Elm Street  
P.O. Box 370  
Chester, VT 05143

(802) 875-2173  
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February 21, 2019

## Sent via Email & Certified Mail

Selectboard, Town of Grafton  
Post Office Box 180  
Grafton, Vermont 05146

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Stan Mack: [firebarn@vermontel.net](mailto:firebarn@vermontel.net)  
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Cathy Siano-Goodwin: [dini@vermontel.net](mailto:dini@vermontel.net)

Dear Grafton Selectboard:

I watched the video and read the news report of your recent Board meeting in which you were discussing Chester and Route 35. I was disappointed that no one from Grafton would call to find out the facts before discussing the matter at your meeting. That is not how I would expect neighbors to behave.

It was said that Chester did nothing last year regarding Route 35; but let's look at the facts. Chester has worked diligently over the years to maintain the road. It was paved in 2004, paved again in 2009, approximately 300+ feet were repaired following Tropical Storm Irene using Federal Highway funding and there was a 300 foot section repaired in 2017 which included underdrains and bank stabilization. This 300 foot section was the first to be finished with final remediation in mind. There was \$100,000 in approved bond proceeds that paid for the Town's portion of this latter repair.

There was a comment that Chester only budgeted \$60,000 in 2018 but that was only the Town's match for a grant that was received for another 300 foot section to be completed this year. This grant amounted to \$175,000 and may not have been apparent to someone giving our budget a casual look. Not understanding how Chester's budget is structured can lead to these rash assumptions.

Last year the Town also hired Dufresne Group to assess the entire length of our portion of the road. The total length of Chester's portion is two miles and this report breaks it down into sections and identifies the issues related to each section.

The cause of the problems and the solutions were the result of this study. The Board thought it would be foolish to tackle a \$4 million dollar project without first determining the root causes to the problem. Who would build a house without first having a design in hand?

We have been told we have been approved for funding for another 300 foot section to be completed in 2020. Of course it will not show up in any budget yet since we have not started the 2020 budget.

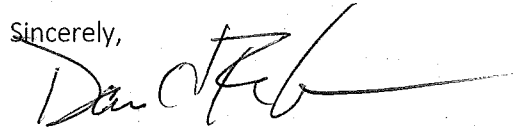
There was further discussion at your Board meeting about the \$300,000 that was allocated to paving in 2019. Statements were made that this amount would be insufficient to complete the job. To present the *real* facts, the Town will be bonding for the money that will be added to another \$175,000 grant. Furthermore, our Public Works Director has spoken with paving companies who gave us these numbers to use for our budget.

While there is a threat of legal action, Chester is confident that it has taken, and will be taking, the necessary steps to remedy the issues at hand. Your insistence that action commence within 72 hours cannot, in reality happen; there are no asphalt plants open in Vermont in February. Furthermore you cannot pave when the temperatures are lower than 40 degrees and in addition the surface must also be dry.

Chester's Selectboard has always taken the position that careful planning of major projects ultimately leads to better results. After spending literally hundreds of thousands of dollars over the past two decades on Route 35 and without solving the problem, they undertook to engage an engineering firm to study the issues and recommend actions that would be of a long-term nature.

This issue could have been handled with some simple common courtesy; a phone call or visit would have answered many of your questions. I am available to discuss the matter further. Town Hall's phone number is 875-2173.

Sincerely,



David Pisha  
Town Manager

Cc: William Kearns, Town Administrator  
Kim Record, Town Clerk