



TOWN OF BERLIN

Public Works/Engineering Department

240 Kensington Road • Berlin, CT 06037

Office (860) 828-7022 • Fax (860) 828-7180

To: Highway and Parks and Grounds Staff
From: Michael S. Ahern, P.E., Public Works Director/Town Engineer
Date: December 7, 2021
Re: Departmental Reorganization

In July 2017, the Parks & Grounds Department was merged with the Highway Department with both reporting directly to one Superintendent. Over the last two years, we have experienced a variety of situations that we believe could have been better served under the former dual leadership model. After much discussion with the leaders in both departments, we have decided to re-organize the reporting relationships and return to the former organizational structure. I am happy to announce, effective Monday, September 16, 2019, the Highway, Parks & Grounds Department will change as follows:

- The Superintendent of Parks and Grounds position will be re-instated. Steve Wood has been appointed to fill that position.
- The Superintendent of Highways position will be re-instated (without management responsibility for the Parks & Grounds Department). Steve Karp has been appointed to fill that position.
- Both Superintendents will manage their own departments and will continue to work in coordination with each other, with both reporting directly to the Director of Public Works.
- Subsequent vacancies within Parks & Grounds will be filled in accordance with the appropriate collective bargaining agreements.

This re-organization was accomplished through coordination with Human Resources, the Interim Town Manager, and the Middle Management Association. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was executed on September 10, 2019, which clearly outlines the full agreement by both parties related to these changes.

We are hopeful this change will streamline decision making and subsequent action plans for the departments. It is expected that the on-going coordination between Highways and Parks & Grounds will continue to be strong and effective. By the very nature of operations of these departments, there will always be a need for shared services. This includes additional assistance or equipment on specific projects, as well as a coordination-of-services approach on larger projects. One recent example of these consolidated work efforts is the re-paving at Griswold School of the front parking lot and rear playground. I was impressed with the level of departmental coordination (including Facilities staff) that resulted in such a successful outcome. Keep up the good work!

If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to discuss with your Superintendent or give me a call.

cc: Arosha Jayawickrema, Interim Town Manager
Denise Parsons, Human Resources
Matt Odishoo, Deputy Fire Marshal - Union
Billy Deblasio, Union
Jen Ochoa, Parks and Recreation