

9. Public Works

The Public Works Department (PWD), headquartered in the public works building, is responsible for operating the landfill, maintaining city sewers and storm drains, maintaining and snowplowing roads and sidewalks, designing construction projects and overseeing contractual construction projects. The PWD maintains all City vehicles and equipment, undertakes equipment reconditioning to save the City money, and contracts with the Water Department and Environmental Services Department for projects.

The PWD maintains and operates the fueling facility for the City, School Department and the Brewer Housing Authority, using a MEMS database and fuel key system to track fuel use. The PWD works with the City of Bangor where feasible on the purchase of rock salt, painting, materials and parts.

Safety is an important component of the Department's mission and is supported by an in-house safety committee and approximately 50 policies on safety. On-going training through conferences and workshops takes place on topics such as traffic control, storm water technologies and stream barriers.

Staff

The Department has a total staff of 19 people (down from a total of 26 in 1995). The staff includes a Director, Office Manager, Purchasing Agent, Shop Foreman, two Mechanics, two Sewer technicians (who work under the Environmental Services Department), a Recycling Coordinator, a Landfill Operator, and nine staff members who work on the outside crew. The PWD utilizes a summer crew for projects such as painting crosswalks (the number of intersections to be painted has doubled over the years).

Responsibilities

The Department performs a wide range of functions to help the City of Brewer and its departments serve its residents and businesses. These include:

Winter plowing. Plowing, sanding and salting streets and sidewalks (63 miles of road including 14 miles of state and state aid road, 49 miles of local roads, 41 miles of sidewalks). Keeping roads clear and passable is a major priority of the PWD.

Street and sidewalk maintenance. Maintenance, repair and minor construction of roads, crosswalk painting, street sweeping.

City vehicle and equipment maintenance: maintenance of all city vehicles and heavy equipment (about 100 units). The Department keeps detailed records on each vehicle and reminds other departments when required maintenance is due.

Fuel facility. Maintaining and operating the fuel facility for all City vehicles.

Purchasing: purchase of supplies and equipment.

Landfill: operation of the landfill and recycling center.

Signs: maintenance, repair and replacement of all signs.

Sewer lines: maintenance of sanitary sewer lines and the storm water system.

Construction: minor construction projects for all city departments on projects that can be completed in six weeks to two months);

Trees and brush: maintenance of street trees, removal of brush and storm debris on City property.

Traffic control: coordination with Public Safety on traffic control projects.

Special projects: deployment of crews for spring clean-up, leaf collection, Christmas tree recycling, and misc. projects such as tearing down old buildings for City projects and assisting in railroad crossing work).

Equipment. Utilization, maintenance and reconditioning a wide range of equipment to meet its responsibilities. Major pieces of equipment include:

- Dump trucks with plows (7)
- 1-ton trucks (3)
- Double axle truck (1)
- Pick-up trucks (7)
- Street sweeper (2)
- Storm water truck
- Vacter sewer flusher truck (belongs to Environmental Services Department)
- Tractor trailer with low bed trailer plus 25-yard dump trailer and tanker trailer
- Front end loader (2)
- Skid steers (2)
- Backhoe loader
- Bulldozer
- Grader
- Excavator
- Trash compactor
- Trackless sidewalk plows (2)
- Bombardier sidewalk plow

Challenges

- Department responsibilities have continued to increase without an increase in staff;
- The Department relies on summer staff to fulfill responsibilities such as painting intersections, but funding these part-time positions is a challenge.