

Changes to Bancroft winter road maintenance to cut costs

By Jim Eadie

Bancroft's manager of public works says changes to town snow removal and road maintenance mean savings.

Area locals may have noticed a change in the town's road maintenance schedule. In particular, public works manager Perry Kelly says, from snowplows being out during the day instead of at night.

"It is all about timing and budget restraints, and trying to work within normal working hours," said Kelly in response to questions from Deputy Mayor Charles Mullett at council's Feb. 13 meeting. Council members said they'd been receiving complaints regarding snow removal in the town following changes in road maintenance to find cost efficiencies.

"Staff are tasked to work within our boundaries, to look at minimum maintenance standards, and make sure we comply, he said.

"Staff used to remove snow on the main street and from curbs in the evenings. We have moved to morning hours when the staff come in. We will do snow removal every morning this week starting at 5 a.m."

Councillor Mary Kavanagh suggested the town get the word out that cutting costs might mean failing to meet residents' standards.

"Council should have some communication going out," said Kavanagh.

"Due to our financial efficiencies, it does not meet the public's expectations. We seek economic and financial efficiencies: the roads meet the minimum standards? There is a reason."

She added, "Just the reality of our financial situation. Now it is impacting this area of our operations."

Kelly noted the town's snow removal was up to date. He said main street snow removal during the day wasn't possible due to "safety and liability concerns."

"Let me stress," he said. "It is my intention, and the intention of my staff, to ensure the integrity of our ratepayers and visitors is not compromised... People just have to be patient."