



Ministerial Statement
by
Lt. Col. the Hon. David A Burch, OBE (Mil), ED, JP, MP
Minister of Public Works

The Purchasing of New Asphaltting Equipment and an Update on Road Works

Friday, June 28th, 2024

Mr. Speaker, in keeping with prior commitments made by myself to keep the public informed, I rise in this Honourable House for a seventh time since February 2020 to not only address the state of our national highways and plans to address their condition, but also to provide details of the agreement made between the Government of Bermuda and Astec Industries for the purchasing of a new asphalt plant and supporting equipment.

Mr. Speaker in my most recent statement regarding this topic in February of this year, I announced that the Cabinet would shortly consider the details of purchasing a new asphalt plant and replacement asphalt equipment from Astec Industries – a leading provider of asphalt plants and paving equipment in the United States

Mr. Speaker, in March of this year, the Cabinet approved an agreement between the Ministry of Public Works and Astec that sees the supply and maintenance of:

- One (1) Asphalt Plant including a new screening plant – The Asphalt plant creates asphalt for the laying process, while the screening plant sorts the construction aggregates that will be used in the asphalt mix.
- One (1) Asphalt Milling Machine – used to remove the old asphalt in preparation for the paving process.
- One (1) Material Transfer Vehicle (commonly referred to as a Shuttle Buggy) – a machine used in the field to store asphalt that is transported by trucks to the site, then it agitates and maintains the asphalt at an optimum temperature, before it is laid onto the road surface; and
- One (1) Asphalt Paver – used to lay the hot asphalt in a symmetrical uniform manner.

Mr. Speaker, negotiations with the company proved extremely fruitful, with the company able to meet all the specifications required for road paving works on the Island. In addition, Aztec offered free training to Public Officers assigned to the Asphaltting team. With employees that have over 40 years of experience in the industry, the training is a unique opportunity for them to receive expert guidance on modern techniques and applications to enhance the asphalt laying process.

Mr. Speaker, the cost of this agreement is \$6,197,470.00 for the new equipment with the first items being delivered in September, these being the Screening Plant, Shuttle Buggy and Asphalt Paver. The remaining equipment is expected to be delivered by the end of this calendar year and the new plant ready to begin production in April 2025. **Mr. Speaker**, this is an investment in the future, and we are expecting that this new equipment will last at least twenty (20) years.

In preparation for these new assets, the Ministry began the procurement process last month to seek the services of a contractor who will provide skilled labour, construction equipment and cranes to assemble the plants and provide technical support. This RFP is set to close today, June 28th, 2024 and can be found on the Government procurement site at www.gov.bm/procurement-notices. The cost of these works will be in addition to the equipment purchase costs.

While this is again a move for the future...let me now speak on the present.

Mr. Speaker, as I have stated before, there are multiple circumstances happening simultaneously that are contributing to the current state of the roadways – mainly [1] The \$250 million dollar BELCO Capital Plan to improve its underground high voltage electrical cable system; [2] recovering from the Excessive amounts of rain over the 2023 calendar year which produced an inordinate number of potholes; and [3] The Unreliability of owned Asphaltting Assets.

Mr Speaker, since my last statement in this House on February 23rd, 2024, the Ministry Highways team have been out in full force paving those roughest areas. Fortunately, with the recent pleasant weather our Island has seen, it has given the team the consistent ability for the following:

1. Paving both lanes on South Shore Road from the Reefs Hotel through to Fairmont Southampton including the area by Henry the VIII.
2. Paving South Shore Road at Collector's Hill Junction in Smith's with the remaining paving works and bus layby sidewalk improvements in the area scheduled to be completed next week.

Mr. Speaker, upon the conclusion of the works at Collector's Hill, the asphaltting teams will address rough areas on Middle Road in Warwick and Crawl Hill in Hamilton Parish.

They will eventually return to Harrington Sound Road to pave from the Harrington Sound School until Flatts. Then, onto North Shore Rd, through Flatts village and Middle Road Flatts from North Shore Road to Store Hill.

Mr. Speaker, we are anticipating that BELCO will recommence their Capital Plan works this summer with “pull hole” works every eight hundred feet along Middle Road from Camp Hill to Belmont. They will continue with trench work to place new conduits in Middle Road from Barnes’ Corner to Evans Bay. The start date is still to be confirmed by the company. A slight reminder to the listening public that a “pull hole” is a hole dug in the road to allow for the cables to be pulled through the laid conduits and to be joined.

As always, **Mr. Speaker**, I will keep this House and the public updated as more information becomes available.

Mr. Speaker, honourable members may recall that in my statement in this House last year on Friday, July 21st, 2023, I announced that the Cabinet was set to approve the purchasing of sixteen (16) brand new solar powered Flashing Beacon Signal sets, which were intended to be installed at crosswalks in various locations across the Island to ensure the safety of pedestrians.

The Cabinet did in fact approve the purchase of the beacons for the sum of \$137,378.00 from the international company Traffic and Parking Control Company Inc. more commonly known as “TAPCO”.

Mr. Speaker, the new solar powered Flashing Beacon Signals were delivered approximately two (2) months ago and as such the Highways Sections has been installing the assets. Currently, there are new or replacement sets:

- At Heron Bay Marketplace in Southampton.
- Near the former T.N. Tatem Middle School in Warwick.
- Outside of the Maxi Mart in White Hill.
- On Frog Lane, Devonshire.
- At Barrs Park on Pitts Bay Road.
- Outside of the Bacardi building on Pitts Bay Road.
- At Bermuda College on South Road.
- At Ice Queen near White Sands in Paget.
- On Parsons Road, Pembroke, near the playground.
- On Middle Road, Devonshire, by ZBM
- Outside of the entrance to Radnor Road in Hamilton Parish
- Near Shelly Bay Marketplace in Hamilton Parish; and
- On North Shore Road near Shekinah Worship Centre in Hamilton Parish.

While these only total thirteen (13) of the sixteen (16) purchased, it is intended that the remaining will be kept for emergency circumstances until such time additional units arrive – to which the administrative process to procure them has already commenced. Some of these sites where there were single beacons have been switched out with other sites that had single beacons.

Mr. Speaker, to recap on what is currently being done to address the state of our national highways:

1. The Ministry has purchased a brand-new asphalt plant and supporting equipment to ensure works can be completed at the highest quality.
2. Paving works have been completed at a number of locations with the next scheduled area being Middle Road in Warwick; and
3. New solar-powered Flashing Beacon Signals are being installed across the Island, and it is intended that more will be ordered in this fiscal year.

Mr. Speaker, I hope this update provides an understanding of the situation and plan going forward. We are fully committed to addressing the state of our roads as quickly as possible.

I would like to take this opportunity to again thank the motoring public for their patience and understanding and like always **Mr. Speaker**, I will keep this House and the public informed as we progress.

Thank you, **Mr. Speaker**.