**NH Traffic Safety Commission**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Meeting Date: September 17, 2018**

**In attendance:** Captain William Haynes (OHS), John Clegg (OHS), Robert Quinn (DOS Deputy Commissioner), Major John Marasco (DOS), Mike Dugas (DOT), Marilyn Costa (NH Driver Education Association), Howard Hedegard (IPC-CHAD), Tim Blagden (Lake Sunapee Rail Trail), Michelle Marshall (US DOT), Pat Sullivan (NH Chiefs of Police), Mark Raposo (Student Transportation of America), Gary Abbott (Associated General Contractors NH), Peter McNamara (NH Auto Dealers Association), Joanne Miles-Holmes (DHHS), Kevin Vaughn (DMV), Bill Joseph (DMV), Glen Wilder (DOS), Roberta Witham (DOS), Chip Cooper ( NH Bureau of EMS), Gerard Christian (NH Trauma Registry)

**Meeting Agenda Items Discussed**

Captain Haynes and John Clegg made opening comments and welcomed all who were present. Captain Haynes informed the group that Howard Hedegard had given his notice to retire as the highway safety specialist with the Injury Prevention Center at Dartmouth-Hitchcock effective January 11, 2019. He further stated there was the possibility, using donated funds from AT&T, to keep Howard involved by contracting with him for up to 16 hours per week.

Roberta Witham, department of safety business systems analyst, provided an in-depth analysis of non-fatal crash data with an emphasis on those crashes resulting in incapacitating injury. Using NHTSA’s definition for crash related injuries, Roberta’s data shows that only about 2% of all crashes result in said injuries.

During the first 3 months of calendar year 2018, there were 29 crash related incapacitating injuries. This number is most likely higher because 32% of the crash reports received during this period were missing injury related information.

Other information provided shows that 82% of all non-fatal crashes involved vehicles registered and licensed in New Hampshire, 60% of them were single vehicle crashes and 38% were multiple vehicle. The majority (83%) happened on undivided roadways, 45% occurred on roads that straight and level and 19% occurred on roads that were curved and level.

Also, most of the non-fatal crashes were preventable, 30 to 40-year old drivers had the highest distraction rate, 75% of those with capacitating injuries were not belted.

Roberta also discussed the fact that DMV did a study which documented that drivers who attended the National Safety Council driving attitude course, had a 63% reduction in tickets and/or crashes during the three-year period after class attendance compared to the three years before attending.

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This presentation resulted in extensive follow up conversation by attending traffic safety commission members. This conversation included discussion about training officers on how to more effectively and consistently define the primary causes of crashes. Time Blagden proposed educating the public about the financial impact of motor vehicle crashes. Showing public service announcements (PSA’s) on the DMV monitors was discussed. Kevin Vaughn seemed receptive to considering this idea. There was also discussion about showing PSA’s in the service waiting rooms of auto dealers. Peter McNamara seemed open to explore this potential.

There was also discussion about the need for more consistent and more thorough crash data reporting. The office of highway safety and other safety related state departments are working toward this goal.

Glen Wilder, department of safety FARS supervisor, provided an in-depth analysis on fatal crashes including a 10-year trend analysis.

In order for a death to be counted as a motor vehicle fatality, it must occur with 720 hours (30 days) of the crash event, the crash event must occur on a public roadway (not a parking area, etc., and the death must be a direct result of the crash.

This presentation resulted in further extensive discussion by the commission members on issues including pedestrian deaths, seat belt usage and ejection. Glen stated that NHTSA’s definition for ejection infers that the individual was not belted as, with improved seat belt design, it is almost impossible to be ejected if belted. Also, an individual becomes a pedestrian as soon as their feet touch the ground.

Deputy Commissioner Quinn stated the importance of educating the public about the violence of rollover crashes and related ejections stressing the reality that we can survive a rollover crash, even with multiple rollovers, if we are properly restrained.

Glen stated that in fatal crashes resulting from drug use, marijuana is the most commonly drug used.

Chip Cooper, NH Bureau of EMS, and Gerard Christian who is responsible for the NH Trauma Registry, provided an overview of their efforts to develop a more effective crash data reporting system including their goals of increasing the thoroughness of their crash data and of allowing increased access to their data by other safety partners. Major challenges that they need to overcome includes increasing direct reporting by more (all) hospitals and their ability to share data.

Deputy Commissioner Quinn identified NHTSA’s need to receive serious injury crash data from us and questioned why it is so hard to get hospitals to report trauma data. EMS is researching and trying to solve this specific issue and the office of highway safety is working to standardize crash data reporting by April of 2019.

Mike Dugas, NH DOT, discussed DOT’s data needs and how they prioritize infrastructure work based on the data that they have. Current infrastructure changes, including rumble strips and curbing, are based on available crash data.

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Tim Blagden asked about the possibility about increasing spacing between strips, where appropriate, so that bicyclists can more safely move through (around) them.

The conversation that occurred, in response to the presentations made at this meeting, were extensive and appropriate showing the value of these meetings and the importance of the resulting partnerships.

John Clegg stated that the 2019 state highway safety plan has been approved by NHTSA. He identified, as examples of the plan’s programs, the NH youth operator and Buckle UP NH efforts operated by the Injury Prevention Center.

Captain Haynes closed the meeting with a summary of important next steps stressing that they need to include the right mix of enforcement and education, that partnerships are a must, and that on-going and open conversation is a must.