



NORTHFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING

Minutes of the meeting of August 28, 2019

Present: Chairman Wayne Crowley, Sel. Brown, Sel. Haskins

Also Present: Dr. Tracey Hutton, Town Administrator, Police Chief John Raffaelly, Andy Buteau, DPW Director, Mike Bean, M.A. Bean Associates, Lisa Martin, and 20 other members of the public

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 pm by Chairman Crowley.

- **Shaker Road Culvert**

Chairman Crowley began the meeting by setting the ground rules and making introductory remarks. He asked that first Michael Bean, M.A. Bean Associates, LLC, go over the engineer stamped concrete drawings and the site. This would be followed by Board questions/discussion and then questions from the public.

Chairman Crowley stated that the Shaker Road culvert replacement was adjacent to Route 140 on the Belmont side. A NHDOT engineer told the Town, when it was discovered to be a town culvert not state, that if the culvert was a State responsibility that they would close the road. The Selectmen made the decision to close the road. They realized there would be an effect on residents and business since the detour takes 10-15 minutes. As a result, the Selectmen looked for an expedient and fiscally responsible permanent solution. This solution seemed to be the pre-cast bridge that could be constructed by Mr. Bean's company.

Mr. Bean stated that he was contacted by Lisa Martin and went on a Saturday to examine the falling culvert. It was clear, at that time, that the culvert is rusted on the sides making slip lining an impossible option, even if it could be permitted by NH DES. At that time, he put a proposal together that would construct the bridge without interfering with the stream or associated wetlands. The bridge is currently being fabricated and should be ready in 2 weeks. In addition, the gas company has been contacted about their line that is over the culvert and a solution has been derived for this utility.

The deck of the bridge is comprised of 7 pieces each weighing 20 tons, which requires a crane to place. There will be curb and guardrail. Once the pieces are routed they will act as one. The existing culvert will be exposed making removal at a later time easier. The bridge will be at the same elevation as the culvert is currently to match the pavement of the road surface. The abutments will be protected from scour with shot rock and the base of the footers wrapped with structural fill.

Sel. Haskins asked about compaction under the footings. Mr. Bean responded that bridge has been structurally engineered. He went on to add that there will be a minimum of 6 inches of crushed stone and 3 inches of pavement; the bridge will be 26 feet long and match the adjacent grade. There will be riprap at a 1 ½:1 slope with the existing culvert exposed, but protected.

Lisa Martin wanted to make clear that she was speaking as a resident and her comments were her own not that of Quantum Construction Consultants, for whom she works. She explained that since the work is being completed in the existing footprint of the road, that a NH DES wetlands permit is not required. If this project were completed with a NH DES wetlands permit, it would have to be done at low water, which is July or August. This would result in a long term road closure.

Ms. Martin went on to explain that this project does not qualify as an emergency for NH DES for a number of reasons. First, the culvert has been failing for a while; an emergency must be applied for within five days of the defect. As a resident, she was looking for a solution within budget that solves the problem long term and be able to be implemented quickly. A permit and open bottom culvert would be in the order of \$450,000 and require Town Meeting to secure funding. While the culvert will fail eventually, it may not be for a year or ten. It would be prudent to apply for and obtain the permit for removal, with an ability to renew, so the permit is in place when needed. The bridge would not interfere with the eventual removal of the culvert.

Chairman Crowley inquired if there have been any failures of this type of bridge. Mr. Bean responded that in his 35 years constructing them that there has not. Sel. Haskins returned the conversation to the culvert, asserting that it was the true issue. Mr. Bean explained that the flow line is rusted and as a result there is no structural integrity. To remove it it could be sawed into thirds and pulled out. This would be made easier by the fact that the gas company has plans to bury their line under the stream bed. Once the culvert is removed from under the bridge, the slopes and stream bed can be stabilized.

Sel. Haskins asked about a warranty. It was explained that the bridge was designed to have a HL-93 load rating which is a federal highway standard. Mr. Bean does not think anything will happen to the bridge.

Frank Tilton was perplexed about the lack of geotechnical investigation and footing design. Mr. Bean stated that his installation method has worked in a variety of conditions. Chairman Crowley asked about back up from the Winnepesaukee River overtopping the bridge. Ms. Martin replied that while the culvert has been $\frac{3}{4}$ full in the past, it has not overtopped the road and therefore should not be a problem for the bridge.

Mark Hebert asserted that the carrying capacity of water would not be increased until the culvert was removed and until that time the culvert will continue to weaken. Mr. Bean explained that the culvert would be helped by removing the fill from on top of it. Once this pressure is relieved it doesn't matter when the culvert is taken out.

George Corliss recalled that the area was built on fill and that he is concerned what will be under the footings. Additionally, if the footings do not go below the water level, what will

prevent heaving in the winter? Mr. Bean explained that the footing will be 17 feet from the center of the culver and this will not present a problem.

Kevin Waldron asked the Selectmen if they had signed a contract; this question received an affirmative response from the Chairman. Mr. Waldron further inquired if the Town could be released from the contract. Mr. Bean explained that the precast parts were already in production with costs incurred.

Jared Hebert had drawn a diagram on the easel of the road profile in the area of the culvert. He asked Mr. Bean to explain how the profile would look from the centerline of the road. Mr. Bean explained that the bridge structure will extend 17 feet from the centerline of the pipe and that the entirety of the pipe would remain in place. Mr. Bean intends to steepen the slopes and stabilize with shot rock to ease the eventual removal of the culvert.

Representative Hill asked if the Town applies for a permit to remove and replace the culvert what that would entail in cost and time. Chairman Crowley reiterated that this would be a ½ million dollar project and would not be funded until Town Meeting in March. This would likely be a box culvert project. Representative Hill suggested that it may be the right thing to keep the road closed and do it “right.” Mr. J. Hebert again mentioned slip lining the culvert at a potential cost of \$123,000 exclusive of the permits.

Mr. Waldron asked what the cost would be from Mr. Bean to “go home.” Chairman Crowley again commented that would be leave the road closed until at least spring and be a greater cost. Mr. Bean said he has \$70,000 - \$80,000 in currently unrecoverable costs. EJ Prescott stated to Mr. Bean that you cannot slip line a rusted pipe.

Janet Atwood commented that “you don’t know what you miss until it’s gone.” Ms. Atwood stated adamantly that she misses the use of Shaker Road. There was a similar sentiment from the audience that the issues could be debated all night but that an inconvenience was preferable to driving on a dangerous road.

Ms. Atwood asked about the costs of a wetlands permit. Mr. Bean again explained that this is a 2-4 moth process and costs about \$30,000. Chairman Crowley ended the comment period by stating the path forward was for the Board to review the drawings, consider the comments, and make a decision at a public meeting.

Christopher Hunt wanted to add that he had been watching the process and wished there had been more communication from the Road Agent and he hopes this was not indicative of the event preparedness of the Town in general.

That being said the Chairman called for a recess at 6:10 pm.

At 6:24 pm the meeting was called back to order.

Crowley/Haskins moved to enter into non-public session under the provisions of RSA 91-A3II (a) at 6:24 pm. **Motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.**

Also Present: Dr. Tracey Hutton, Town Administrator, Andy Buteau, DPW Director, and Police Chief John Raffaelly

Crowley/Brown moved to reconvene the public session at 6:44 pm. **Motion passed by unanimous vote.**

Crowley/Haskins moved to seal the minutes of the non-public session. **Motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.**

An update was given by Dr. Hutton on the Sandogardy Pond Road project and Change Order #4. NH DOT is working on approval of the change order, it should be approved soon.

Mr. Buteau explained that he had a vacation coming up and that he would make sure the Assistant Town Administrator had a contact she could get a hold of in an emergency.

There was continued Board debate on the Shaker Road situation. Sel. Brown. felt the Town should proceed with the bridge solution. Sel. Haskins said that if we don't go forward with the bridge solution then the Town would have to pay for costs incurred this far and wait until Town Meeting to secure additional funding. Chairman Crowley agrees that the Town would need to obtain a wetlands permit and then proceed to Town Meeting with a cost. Sel. Haskins was concerned that if it came to a Town Meeting vote it may not be approved. There was consensus on continuing the current path forward.

Mr. Buteau asked about the required 4 inches of pavement. The Selectmen directed him to obtain quotes for the job, not leaving out the smaller contractors' in-town since this was a small job compared to other road projects.

- **Adjournment**

There being no other business the meeting adjourned at 7:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:

Dr. Tracey E. Hutton

Minutes Approved September 17, 2019