

Select Board Meeting
@ Town Office
January 24, 2023
6:00 pm

MEETING MINUTES

Present: Select Board: Jeff Chase, Diana Garrow, Mark Turco (Chair); Town Officials: In Person: Caitlin Boyle, Carol Garrow-Woolley, David Johnson, Steven Michel, Clinton Woolley. State Officials: Laura Stone (VTrans), Dave Peterson (VTrans); Members of the Public: In Person: James and Pamela Croply. Via Zoom: Jennifer Burrows.

Call to Order at 6:00 pm

Consideration of additional agenda items: The Select Board noted it would add several small items to the end of the meeting, including Adopting the Warning for Town Meeting; Approval of a Town Zoom Account; Approval of New Phones for the Town Office; and confirmation of a Date for Hearing of Proposed Flood Hazard and River Corridor Bylaw.

1. VTrans Alternatives Presentation Meeting, Bridge #64 (Bowlsville Bridge): VTrans Scoping Engineer Laura Stone presented the state's "Alternatives Presentation" regarding the need for repair or reconstruction of Bridge #64, known locally as the Bowlsville Bridge. ([Accessible here.](#)) Ms. Stone noted that the state had finalized its scoping of the bridge, and is presenting its findings and suggested pathways for action to the Town:

- Currently, the bridge is on a Class 3 road, with a 31-foot span bridge, constructed in 1934. The bridge shows heavy deterioration, including heavily saturated concrete. The deck has been reduced to erodible fine soils. In addition, the existing bridge does not meet the state's hydraulic standard for bankfull width and has a scour critical rating. There is section loss in the flange, fascia beam deterioration, spalled-out concrete and the bridge railing is in a failed state. Additionally there is abutment cracking and spalling, and the concrete shows signs of alkali silica reaction, which means that all rehabilitation pathways for the bridge will have a reduced life span. Per recent legislation (IIJA), the town would not need to share in any part of construction costs for the repair or rebuilding of the bridge if that pathway is pursued. There would be some town cost-sharing for the pre-construction work, including right-of-way work and permitting. Given its current condition, VTrans is considering several alternative approaches to repairing or reconstructing the bridge. These are:
 - No Action Alternative: No action taken
 - Minor Rehabilitation: Would offer an additional lifespan of ~15 years.
 - Deck Replacement: Would offer an additional lifespan of ~15 years.
 - Superstructure Replacement: Would offer an additional lifespan of ~30 years.
 - Full-bridge Replacement On-Alignment: Would entail construction of a brand-new bridge, with a 75-year design life. The new bridge would be constructed in the same position as the current bridge.
 - Full-bridge Replacement Off-Alignment: Would entail construction of a brand-new bridge, with a 75-year design life. The bridge would be constructed in a slightly different upstream location, which offers better sight distance and tees up the intersection with Route 103, but there are potentially more property impacts. One benefit of off-alignment replacement is that it provides a convenient traffic control option during construction, as the existing bridge can

be used to divert traffic.

- The State recommends a full-bridge replacement, either on- or off-alignment. In either case, the Town would decide about the road closure; construction would take a full-season duration (May-October). If the off-alignment selection is chosen, abutting property owners would be compensated for selling their right-of-way; the state would negotiate with the property owner; if negotiations failed; the town would hire a lawyer to begin the condemnation process.
 - The total cost of the bridge replacement would be ~\$1.5 million; the town share would be \$45,000-\$57,000; construction is 100% federally funded. The project will be put on hold until the Town responds to the state's recommendations.
 - **Questions and Comments:** Resident Jim Croply asked whether the land that abuts the bridge is heavily sloped and therefore less valuable for development; Ms. Stone confirmed that it is. Selectboard Member Diana Garrow asked about how a temporary bridge might impact property owners' right-of-ways; Ms. Stone confirmed that the State would negotiate with landowners to identify a fair price for purchase of some property for bridge reconstruction. Mark Turco asked whether there was an in-between option that would place the reconstructed bridge upstream to the current bridge, but not as far upstream as the state's concept; Ms. Stone confirmed that alternative concepts could be drawn for review. Mr. Croply shared that the turn onto the bridge is currently hard to make from Route 103. He asked about the grade of the current bridge; Ms. Stone said that they would like the grade to be relatively flat. Currently there is a 16' grade. Ms. Stone reiterated that the State is recommending a replacement because the cost to repair the bridge and the cost to replace it entirely are comparable, but the lifespan for a reconstructed bridge is far longer. She noted that if an Irene-sized flood came through, and the bridge had not been replaced to hydraulic standards, the Town would not qualify for FEMA reimbursement. She confirmed that the Town has time to hold more meetings, meet with property owners, and put the decision up for a vote at a Select Board meeting. She recommended making a decision within four to six months, if not sooner, as the IJA funds, which provide federal funding at 100% of construction costs, will be fully obligated in the next several years, and the sooner the decision is made, the sooner the bridge goes in the construction pipeline. Currently the timeline for replacement would be ~2025. Town Treasurer David Johnson noted that the Town does have sufficient funds in its Bridge Fund to cover the town's share of pre-construction costs. Mr. Turco noted that he would like to put further discussion of the decision on the next Select Board meeting agenda.
2. **Adopting Warning for Town Meeting:** Diana Garrow made a motion to adopt the warning for the Town Meeting as drafted by the Town Clerk; Jeff Chase seconded; unanimously approved.
 3. **Approval of Town Zoom Account:** Mark Turco made a motion to approve purchase of a Town Zoom account to facilitate a hybrid Town Meeting; Jeff Chase seconded; unanimously approved.
 4. **Approval of New Phones for Town Office.** Jeff Chase made a motion to purchase four new phones for the Town Office at a cost of \$395.98; Diana Garrow seconded; unanimously approved.

5. **Confirmation of Date for Hearing of Proposed Flood Hazard and River Corridor Bylaw:** Jeff Chase made a motion to confirm the previously proposed date for a hearing for the proposed bylaw as Wednesday, March 29 at 6:30 pm; Mark Turco seconded; unanimously approved.
6. **Meeting adjourned** 7:08 pm .