

**TOWN OF ALSTEAD, NEW HAMPSHIRE**  
**Select Board**  
**Approved Minutes for Informational Public Meeting about Alstead Dams**  
**August 16, 2023 at 6:00 PM**  
**Town Hall, 9 Main Street, Alstead, NH 03602**

**SELECT BOARD PRESENT:** In person: Chair Joel McCarty, Matthew Saxton, Gordon Kemp.

**GUESTS:** Steve Doyon, Chief of Dam Safety Inspection and Lorilee Mather, Dam Safety Engineer – New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, Dam Bureau; Jason Ayotte, Project Manager and Curtis Morrill – NH Department of Transportation, Bureau of Highway Design

**COMMUNITY MEMBERS:** Cathy Jahos, Annie Hess, Lisa Tusveld, Jane Sundius, Robert Quaglin, Jane Quaglin, Barbara Viegner, Rudy Viegner, Bob Brown, Nathan Perry, John Mann, Virginia Koster, Bill Koster, Don Cheek, Purly Lund, Donna Lund, Scott Keim, Karen Keim, Jeanne Brooks, Bindy Curtis

**CALL TO ORDER:** After the group recited the Pledge of Allegiance, Mr. McCarty called the Select Board meeting to order at 6:00 PM and reminded those present that the Board requested the presentation because they want to understand the reasons that Warren dam was recently reclassified as high hazard. Mr. McCarty then introduced Steve Doyon, who explained what the Dam Bureau is and introduced Ms. Mather's presentation about Alstead dams.

**PRESENTATION:** Ms. Mather's presentation defined what a dam is and focused on the two main dams in Alstead – Warren dam and Vilas Pool dam – but it also provided some information about all of the dams in Alstead. There are seventeen dams in Alstead, five of which are unclassified because they are either ruins or not built; and twelve of which are active and range in classification from no menace or low hazard (to significant hazard (Vilas Pool) to high hazard (Warren).

Ms. Mather explained the definition of a dam and summarized the different dam classifications.

**Warren dam:** Ms. Mather then walked the crowd through the results of the 2023 computer modeling hazard analysis that was used to determine Warren dam's classification as high hazard. Dams are classified based on the potential downstream impacts if the dam were to fail. For a high hazard dam, the downstream impacts are possible loss of life and one foot of flooding of occupied structures.

Ms. Mather explained that the accumulation of more and better-quality data over time, changing weather patterns, the existing insufficient discharge capacity of the dam, and the amount of development below the dam all played a role in the Warren dam's modeling results. When asked why repairs made in 1998 weren't sufficient to improve the dam's classification now, Ms. Mather explained that in 1998, no engineering evaluation was done to assess the dam to then-current standards; the only changes made were to fix the leaks. She noted that twenty years ago, a 100-year event was 6.7 inches of rain in 24 hours. Now, it's 7.5 inches of rain in 24 hours.

Mr. Doyon noted that there is a way to address the problems successfully; it won't be inexpensive, but it won't be beyond exorbitant either. The key is to build a dam that can overtop safely without erosion causing a failure. The insufficient discharge capacity problem is not new; it is just bigger now.

Mr. McCarty wondered if flood insurance rates would increase because Alstead owns a high hazard dam. Mr. Doyon reassured the group that flood insurance rates don't increase because you're downstream of a dam.

The Bureau's general recommendation is to 1) hire an engineer to perform a complete evaluation and plan to reconstruct the dam to meet the requirements for a high hazard structure; 2) Complete and test an updated Emergency Action Plan (EAP) including a new breach analysis and inundation mapping; and 3) Continue all regular repairs, maintenance and monitoring. (This is a summary of the recommendations; the letter from the Dam Bureau contains the complete set.) Mr. Kemp wondered if requiring the second analysis is an unfunded mandate; Mr. Doyon pointed out that the dam is not in compliance with dam safety laws and the second analysis is necessary for getting it into compliance.

Mr. McCarty wondered whether the timing of this classification and the fact that there are currently no funding opportunities available in the state for dams puts the town in deeper jeopardy. Mr. Doyon responded that the Bureau will work with the town, and continuing the maintenance and updating the EAP are key to showing a good faith effort.

A September/October opening is expected for applications for a High Hazard Potential Dam program to be offered by FEMA. In addition, there are possibilities expected from Homeland Security Emergency Management that are not dam specific and will require a cost-benefit analysis that could be considered.

Ms. Keim volunteered to help the town find funds for the Warren dam project and urged the Lake Warren Association to invite the Alstead state senators and representatives to its annual meeting on August 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 9 AM at the Second Congregational Church.

**Vilas Pool dam:** Ms. Mather summarized the classification of Vilas Pool dam, which is classified as Significant Hazard. She noted that this dam has not yet been evaluated using the newer modeling. It too has an insufficient discharge capacity based on current requirements and it has structural deficiencies because it is made of a type of concrete that deteriorates faster. Recommendations are the same as for Warren dam - plus removing brush and trees, which has been done.

**Chase Mill dam:** This dam is a low hazard dam based on its use. The mill is not inhabited on a regular basis and no-one sleeps there. The Chase Mill Heritage Association has signed a usage agreement with the Dam Bureau that usage frequency will not change and no-one will sleep there.

Mr. McCarty asked whether any of the other dams in town are a concern and they are not – the others are all low hazard or non-menace dams. When asked whether the Dam Bureau can help write the plans for dam reconstruction, Mr. Doyon replied that the first thing an engineer who is hired to evaluate a dam does is go to the Dam Bureau for information on the dam in question. He urges that the town stay engaged with their engineer and the bureau.

At this point there were no more questions for the Dam Bureau team. Mr. McCarty invited the gentlemen from the Department of Transportation to comment and they recommended consulting with experts from the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources because of Vilas Pool’s cultural significance to the town. There will be engineering and construction grant options for Vilas Pool there. The 2025 schedule for Route 123A repairs both north and south of that dam was explained; it is more complicated because of the environmental steps that must be taken during the engineering phase and the need for FEMA reimbursement. Both areas will be repaired at the same time. They also urged seeking an advocate at the Regional Planning Commission for recreation-area-related funding opportunities.

There being no further questions for either team, Mr. McCarty thanked both teams for their time and talent. Mr. Kemp moved to adjourn and the meeting ended at 8:07 PM.

**INFORMATIONAL:**

<b>Next regular Select Board meeting:</b>	Tuesday, August 29 <sup>th</sup> , 2023 @ 6:00 PM, Town Hall, 9 Main St.
<b>FM School Board meeting:</b>	Monday, August 28 <sup>th</sup> , 2023 @ 6:00 PM, High School.
<b>FM Budget Committee meeting:</b>	Wednesday, August 16 <sup>th</sup> , 2023 @ 6:00 PM, High School.
<b>Informational Warren Dam meeting:</b>	Wednesday, August 16 <sup>th</sup> , 2023 @ 6 PM, Town Hall, 9 Main St.
<b>Informational Bridge Projects meeting:</b>	Tuesday, August 22 <sup>nd</sup> , 2023 @ 6 PM, Town Hall, 9 Main St.
<b>Community Power presentation</b>	Tuesday, August 29 <sup>th</sup> , 2023 @ 6 PM, Town Hall, 9 Main St.
<b>Alstead Emergency Preparedness Day</b>	Saturday, October 7 <sup>th</sup> , 2023 from 9-3 on the Green.
<b>Next 5-Town Select Board meeting:</b>	Wednesday, October 25 <sup>th</sup> , 2023 @ 4 PM, Acworth.

On a motion made by Mr. Saxton and seconded by Mr. Kemp, ***the public meeting adjourned at 7:49 PM.***

Respectfully submitted,



Mary Schoppmeyer, Office Administrator