

**TOWN OF ALSTEAD, NEW HAMPSHIRE**  
**Approved Minutes for Select Board Meeting about Alstead Dams and**  
**Regular Select Board Meeting**  
**August 22, 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:** Josif Bicja, PE (Project Manager) and Katelyn Welch, PE (Project Engineer) – Hoyle Tanner, presenting; and Julie Avenant, NH Department of Transportation

**STAFF:** Junie Esslinger, Transfer Station; Kim Kercewich, Fire Chief; Jesse Moore, Ambulance Chief; Steve Murrell, Police Chief; Mary Schoppmeyer, Office Administrator; Prescott Trafton, Road Agent; Bobbie Wilson, Ambulance Lieutenant.

**COMMUNITY MEMBERS:** Bill Blaiklok, Glenn Elsesser, James Hanatow, Keith Hanatow, Laurence Howard, Susan Krebs, Joe Levesque, Vonda Mitchell, Rich Nalevanko, Marge Noonan, Susan Norlander, Lester Phillips, Laurie Ryan, Carol Reller, David Smith, Jenna Spear, Barb Viegner, Judith Willis.

**CALL TO ORDER:** After the group recited the Pledge of Allegiance, Mr. McCarty called the Select Board meeting to order at 6:00 PM, stated the goal of the first part of the meeting, and introduced the guest presenters.

**PRESENTATION:** Mr. Bicja thanked everyone for attending, gave an overview of Hoyle Tanner and the bridge projects. He noted that Alstead has two of the twenty-three projects in the MOBIL bridge program and stated the goal of their presentation, which is to explain the projects, schedule, scope, process, and funding. Then he requested that the group save its questions for after the presentation and turned the presentation of project details over to Ms. Welch.

Ms. Welch provided for each bridge an overview that included the history, size, problems or deficiencies faced, services completed to date, and an estimate of the number of vehicles each bridge sees per day (about 100 vehicles in both cases). In addition, Ms. Welch explained that the engineering study has collected topographic, subsurface, hydrologic and hydraulic data and site photographs for each bridge, and has identified traffic control recommendations.

The schedule is as follows. As a cost-saving measure, both bridges will be completed sequentially, during the same construction season, using the same contractor.

<u>Project phase</u>	<u>Timeframe</u>
Engineering study	Currently under way, through January 2024
Preliminary design, permitting, and right-of-way	February 2024 - February 2025
Final design	March 2025 – September 2025
Construction	2026

The audience raised the following points:

- The Hill Road bridge has overtopped twice in recent years, are there any plans to increase capacity by blasting? (Unlikely; don't want too much elevation change.)
- Closing both bridges simultaneously is a problem. (The bridges will not be closed simultaneously.) Mr. Bicja observed that doing both bridges simultaneously is a cost saver because the study work is consolidated, there is one contractor, and the work will be done in the same construction season.
- Will landowners be contacted about construction activities that explicitly affect their property, such as removal of trees? (Yes, they will be contacted directly, this is standard procedure.) In addition, various public meetings like this one will be held, including a Solutions meeting in October to explore the different possibilities.
- The narrow width of Comstock Road bridge is desirable because it slows traffic down. (This bridge is narrower than the state requirement; a meeting must be held to determine what width the town wants. A narrower width can be chosen by the town; additional steps in the process might be required and the town must accept any liability for choosing not to conform to state standards. Hoyle Tanner has built bridges under these circumstances elsewhere.)
- Much of the traffic on these bridges is dump truck traffic from Garland's pit.
- The permitting process includes abutters.

- The temporary bridge on Hill Road has posted weights that some service providers will not cross which affects ability to reach residents behind that bridge for things like propane or fuel oil delivery or septic maintenance. (The temporary bridge is engineered to carry all legal loads in NH and the posted limits can be adjusted as needed on a temporary basis.)
- Chunks of gray rock are not desirable.
- Terminology explanations were given for efflorescence and hydrologic vs hydraulic, and what it means for a bridge to be on the “red list.” A bridge’s presence on the red list opens the door to funding, but opting not to follow state requirements can compromise the availability of state funding.
- Residents fish Darby Brook in the area of these bridges, particularly Comstock Road, and expressed concern about changing the brook. (There is no need to make any changes to the brook as part of these projects.)
- There is a natural dam of trees and debris from prior flooding building up in a certain location. The bridges will need to handle that debris if it breaks free in future. (Mr. McCarty urged residents to develop a relationship with NHDES with regard to this debris and to send pictures and arrange a site visit.)
- What can the current openings withstand? (Hill Road has a 3- to 4-foot opening in a 50-year flood event; Comstock Road slightly more than that.)
- Woods location versus village location – does it make a difference in terms of aesthetics? (The solutions meeting in October will address those issues.)
- Does increasing the size of the opening also increase the amount of water that passes my land? (Not necessarily; in a high flood event, increasing the size reduces water velocity.)
- Hoyle Tanner provides contact information and wants to hear from residents. The presentation will be posted on the town web site.

Mr. McCarty summarized the cash flow and financing details. During the engineering phase (80 percent covered, town pays 20 percent), the town pays the bills up front and receives reimbursement, but not until 2025. During the construction phase (100 percent covered), the reimbursement schedule is much more regular. The town will have to borrow in order to avoid cash flow problems during the engineering study phase (imminent). Encumbering future voters with multi-year debt is a subject of much debate and legal counsel advises that these projects are done all the time and there are ways to do it properly.

The group thanked Mr. Bicja and Ms. Welch for their presentation and Ms. Avenant for attending with a round of appreciative applause. A ten-minute break followed before resuming the regular Select Board meeting at 7:15 PM.

**ACTION ITEMS:** Signed the payroll manifest (\$31,893.26) for the 8/25 payroll. Signed the Bill manifest (\$329,359.07) and the tax liability manifest (\$6,290.01) for the 8/25 payroll. Signed one Vilas Pool expenditure (power bill- discussed last week, insufficient signatures affixed). Signed the proposal for fixing the power entrance to the Village Station as discussed on 8/15 (proposal not signed). Signed one request for permission to use the Alstead Center common for the 1<sup>st</sup> Congregational Church fundraiser from 9/15/23 - 9/17/23. Signed the proposed agreement between the Library Trustees and the Town (after discussion).

**MINUTES:** Minutes of August 15, 2023 regular meeting; : Minutes of August 16, 2023 Alstead Dams meeting; No changes were requested. On a motion from Mr. Saxton that was seconded by Mr. Kemp, ***the Board voted to accept both sets of minutes as submitted.***

**OLD BUSINESS: Library agreement** – The Library Trustees submitted a revised agreement for the Board’s consideration. Ms. Reller summarized the agreement. The agreement describes increased detail, decreased complexity, and increased transparency. The agreement will hopefully make it easier for future boards and trustees to operate in future. Ms. Reller noted that the Trustees are working on a list of capital projects that the Trustees have undertaken over time at the Library’s expense. There was additional conversation about the downstairs bathroom renovation and sources of Library revenue. Mr. Saxton indicated that there will be a warrant article for March that covers fixing the front corners of the Library roof with copper at a cost of twenty-nine thousand six hundred forty-three dollars. ***The Board signed the agreement as submitted.*** Arrangements will be made for the Trustees to sign the document and a copy will be provided to the Library Trustees for their records. **Washout Glass deposits** – Mr. Trafton reported that the highway department did remove the pile of washed-out glass and gravel that Mr. Landry gathered from his property; it was not taken to the Transfer Station as previously reported but instead was buried on a Gilsum Mine Road pull-off where fill was needed

and that is not susceptible to washouts. The Transfer Station location mentioned at previous meetings will be used as the dump site for the vacuum truck that will be scheduled to handle the remaining glass and gravel deposits. The estimated amount of material yet to be removed is 24 yards and a vacuum truck typically has an eight- to ten-yard capacity. **Flood repair update** – Mr. Trafton reported that the 2021 flood money has progressed through the approval process and should be disbursed within two weeks. The total amount expected is approximately four hundred twenty-four thousand seven hundred twenty-nine dollars and sixty-four cents (\$424,729.64). This money will go into the fund balance for appropriation next year. The 2023 flooding event has not yet been declared; to date it has cost the town forty-five thousand eight hundred thirty-seven dollars (\$45,837) in materials. Acworth is opening up their end of Thayer Brook Road and we will have to clean up our end as well. Most road washouts have been repaired; some tarring is needed on North and Corbin Roads but holding off to see how funding goes later this fall. Mr. Saxton thanked the Road Crew for their efforts. Mr. Kemp asked about shoulder work on Gilsum Mine Road; Mr. Trafton is watching for opportunities to complete that where time and budget allow. Mr. McCarty urged Mr. Trafton to start thinking about budget and capital reserve needs for next year. Mr. Trafton concluded by saying that he looked at culvert damage on Pine Cliff Road and will be working on the headwall of that culvert but most of the damage is on private property. He will communicate with the property owner. **Dams** – The meeting on 8/16 was informative and helpful. **Bridges** – Mr. McCarty reiterated that there will be a public meeting on Tuesday September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 6 PM at the Town Hall to discuss the width of the Comstock Road bridge over Darby Brook. **Real Estate** – Shadowland has several lots that are so small or situated in such a way that they are suitable for purchase only by an abutter. Mr. Saxton suggests valuing the lots for sale at the same price per square foot at which the purchasing landowner's property is assessed. What to do if legal costs exceed the sale price of the property must be determined. Mr. Elsesser asked whether the lots must be marketed to all or auctioned. There was more discussion about the Shadowland lots. **Village Station lighting** – The emergency service-entrance work approved on 8/15 is not yet completed. **Plastic recycling** – A lengthy discussion took place about plastic recycling and its cost and environmental effectiveness and the availability of markets. Mr. Saxton is researching where our recyclables go when they leave here. Mr. Kemp is doing a cost effectiveness study. Nothing conclusive yet. Mr. Nalevanko mentioned an article he read that said that only about 5% of plastics are recycled. There was additional discussion about ways to get more data. Mr. McCarty thanked everyone for their studies and looks forward to more information to feed the discussion at future meetings. **Trail rehab volunteer** – Mr. Kemp asked volunteer Dave Smith to help remove miscellaneous metal and discarded farm machinery from the Bragg Lane property where trail rehabilitation is occurring. Mr. Smith signed volunteer forms and arrangements were made.

**DEPARTMENT REPORTS: Fire department** – Chief Kercewich reported 72 calls year to date, and continuing work on the East Station punch lists. Mr. Kemp is setting up a meeting of the subcommittee to revise fire department procedures and policies; he will keep the Chief Kercewich in the loop. **Capital Improvement planning** – Mr. Elsesser reminded the department heads that it is time to begin developing the 2024 capital improvement wish and need lists. **Ambulance** – Chief Moore reported 101 calls year to date. Ambulance crewman Bryan Wetherby is installing equipment and radio in the new vehicle (cost effective). Ambulance payroll is at the year end point. Paramedic service paperwork is complete; waiting for systems installation to be complete so the state can inspect. Last week the squad did a driver training course with the Gilsum squad; a fire department member also participated. Documentation will be submitted. **Transfer station** – Mr. Elsesser reported that he is working on a better way to keep data and that he is on vacation next week. He is reviewing safety material in machinery owner manuals and seeking training on various machines. Mr. Elsesser suggested asking Primex if they offer any courses. **Police department** – Chief Murrell reported 670 calls year to date. Chief and Mr. Kemp met with a U.S. Cellular subcontractor who is responsible for lease work. They are getting numbers for rental of space on the tower for antenna equipment. More follow-up is needed but maybe in a better place than expected cost-wise. No solid conclusions yet; probably a warrant article for March. On another topic, Chief reported that the time frame for the Alstead Preparedness Day event has been shortened due to budget concerns. Finally, Chief reported that he met with the new Fall Mountain superintendent, who would like to have two emergency meetings per year. A 10/14/23 Fire Prevention event is planned at the high school and he was asked of he and Ms. Norlander would do their school bus presentation. **Vilas Pool** – Ms. Wilson reported that September 3<sup>rd</sup> will be the last day of the season. This coming weekend hosts the last event booked for the season; both days are booked. **School board** – Mr. Levesque reported that he attended the final rule webinar about how towns can spend ARPA funds. He learned that ARPA funds can be used for emergency relief due to natural disasters. He also learned that if the state doesn't declare a disaster, the County Commissioner can do it; if they don't, the Board can declare it and can then use remaining funds where needed. It was noted the state might not reimburse purchases made with ARPA money. Apparently ARPA money can also be used to pay for bridge work as long as it's not being used for more than thirty percent of the total cost. Mr. Levesque asked for permission to research the Clean Fleet program for Alstead; on a

motion from Mr. McCarty that was seconded by Mr. Saxton, ***the Board voted to authorize Mr. Levesque to research the Clean Fleet program.***

**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>Community Power presentation</b>	Tuesday, August 29 <sup>th</sup> , 2023 @ 6 PM, Town Hall, 9 Main St.
<b>Alstead Emergency Preparedness Day</b>	CANCELLED
<b>Next 5-Town Select Board meeting:</b>	Wednesday, October 25 <sup>th</sup> , 2023 @ 4 PM, Acworth.
<b>Comstock Road bridge width public meeting:</b>	Tuesday, September 5 <sup>th</sup> , 2023 @ 6 PM, Town Hall, 9 Main St. (NO regular Select Board meeting.)
<b>FMRSD Superintendent Meet &amp; Greet</b>	Wednesday, September 13, 5-6:30 PM, Vilas Middle School Gym

On a motion made by Mr. Saxton and seconded by Mr. Kemp, ***the public meeting adjourned at 8:42 PM.***

Respectfully submitted,



Mary Schoppmeyer, Office Administrator