

Minutes of the Westmoreland Selectmen's Meeting

Thursday, March 16, 2023

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Russ Austin, Frank Reeder and John Snowdon.

1. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by Russ Austin
2. Approval of Minutes: March 2, 2023. Motion was made by John Snowdon, seconded by Frank Reeder to accept the minutes as printed. Motion passed 3-0
3. Accounts Payable: Motion was made by John Snowdon, seconded by Frank Reeder to Approve Manifests for: General Fund \$27,418.60 and Fire Station Fund \$11,875.00 Motion passed 3-0.
4. Guest:
April Ferguson
 - Shouldn't a shelter be opened during long power outages so people can be someplace warm with water? Would also offer line workers a place to get warm, use the bathroom, etc.
 - Reeder - Shelter opened if requested, but those without power often can't request. Selectboard can talk to Tom Finnegan about opening shelter after designated time during outages.
 - Snowdon - Current Emergency Operations Plan is on the Town's website.
5. Old Business
 - A. Bridge State Funding
 - a. River Road Bridge estimated by NHDOT to cost \$2,882,400. If Town applies for the 10 year plan the Town's share would be 20% approximately \$576,480
 - b. Currently the 10 year plan requires Town's to pay up front and be reimbursed 12-24 months later. Town would have to acquire a bond which cannot be paid back early so for 20 years payments would be paid using reimbursement funds.
 - c. Alison Fissette - Can the Town do another bond? Snowdon - Yes, Town could qualify for another bond, and the Town will make money on the broadband bond.
 - d. Motion was made by John Snowdon to send a letter to Senator Fenton to address the current payment process, seconded by Frank Reeder. Motion passed 3-0. (attachment)
 - e. Cannot receive any funding for the bridge unless it is on the 10 year plan.
 - f. Motion made by Frank Reeder to put the River Road Bridge on the 10 year plan, seconded by Russ Austin. Motion passed 3-0.
 - g. Snowdon is also looking into Congressionally Directed Spending due to the bridge's historic value. Would also require Town to pay and be reimbursed although no match would be required.
 - h. SB280 state is receiving \$40 million for bridges and roads which the state will distribute to towns similar to SB401 in which Westmoreland received both a highway and a bridge grant.
 - i. Discussed 2024 warrant article to put funds received from both SB401 & SB280 into existing Bridge Capital Reserve. Build Capital Reserve to prepare for 20% match if Town decided to proceed when state funds are available
 - B. Fire Station plans to be presented to the Planning Board - Reeder - Not required to per RSA 674:54. Only time required is if use is changed. Plans will be given to the Planning Board as a courtesy. Fissette - Was the water issue with the abutter addressed? Reeder - Steve Horton will be attending the next selectboard meeting to present updates. Ask to provide hydrology study.

6. New Business

Signature Approval was given for the following:

Payroll 3/7/2023	Appoint Tax Deputy -Frank Riley	Eversource \$383.25
Payroll Taxes 3/9/2023	NH Tax Collectors Assoc. \$30	GoDaddy \$89.40
Timber Intent	NHCTCA \$80	Hannafords \$26.57
Solar Exemption	Invoice Cloud \$87.40	Staples \$103.14

- A. Eversource - Snowdon contacted Alex Green at Eversource about multiple messages with different restoration times within minutes. Creates safety issues for people who need to decide if they should seek shelter or wait for power. Green will bring it to management to resolve. Reeder - need to encourage people affected to contact Eversource as well.
 - B. Austin - Barking dog complaint. Letter to be sent to owners
 - C. The Zoning Board Clerk resigned. Position to be posted on the website. The Zoning Board will be required to fill duties and should also actively search for replacement.
 - D. Zoning Board Administrator - Laurie Burt will look into a flowchart for procedures once used. Burt may be interested in the position. Larry Muchmore currently covering the role.
7. A motion was made by Russ Austin, second by John Snowdon to enter into a non-public session per RSA 91-A:3,II(c) at 6:55pm. Motion passed 3-0.
8. A motion was made by Frank Reeder, second by Russ Austin, to seal the non-public session minutes and return to the public session at 7:07pm. Motion passed 3-0
9. The meeting was adjourned at 7:07PM.

Respectfully submitted,
 Jodi Scanlan
 Town Administrator

NEXT MEETING THURSDAY APRIL 6, 2023 1:00PM
 MINUTES ARE INITIALLY POSTED AS UNAPPROVED
 SELECTMEN SIGNATURES DENOTE APPROVAL

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Russ Austin, Chairman

Frank Reeder

John Snowdon

TOWN OF WESTMORELAND
780 Route 63, PO Box 55
Westmoreland, NH 03467



March 16, 2023

Dear Senator Fenton:

As Selectman for the Town of Westmoreland, NH, we find ourselves extremely frustrated with the State's funding of red listed bridges. In order to take advantage of the NHDOT 80/20 program, towns are required to pay the entire cost of construction up front in order to be reimbursed later. This requires towns to bond the entire cost of the project vs. only the 20% for which they will eventually be responsible. As bonds through the NH Bond Bank are not eligible to be prepaid prior to the end of the original term, this adds a considerable tax burden to residents.

Our red listed bridge, 089/100, is estimated by NHDOT to cost just over \$2.8M. It is considered vital infrastructure by Cheshire County as it is part of a primary delivery/evacuation route for the Maplewood Nursing Home. Having passed a \$2.4M bond to replace a 75-year-old firehouse in 2022, another \$2.8M bond is simply not possible for a town of 1,700 to afford.

In order for the State to reduce the number of red listed bridges, we propose the following. Rather than have the State provide a reimbursement 12-24 months after bridge completion, the State would cover 80% of the costs as they occur, allowing towns to either receive grants, save funds, or bond for the remaining 20%. This would be a much easier vote and make it more likely for towns (and taxpayers) to replace aging infrastructure.

We are happy to discuss this with you should you be interested. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Russ Austin, Chair

Frank Reeder

John Snowdon



THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



William Cass, P.E.
Commissioner

David Rodrigue, P.E.
Assistant Commissioner
Andre Briere, Colonel, USAF (RET)
Deputy Commissioner

March 3, 2023

Russell Austin, Chair of Selectboard
Town of Westmoreland
PO Box 55
Westmoreland, NH 03467

RE: NHDOT Bridge Funding Opportunity
Westmoreland Bridge #089/100
River Road South over Partridge Brook

Dear Mr. Austin:

The New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) is pleased to inform Westmoreland that bridge aid funding is planned to be available for the rehabilitation or replacement of the above noted bridge.

As part of the upcoming Ten-Year Plan process, NHDOT will reduce the number of red listed bridges statewide with our available State and Federal bridge funds. Based on NHDOT bridge inspection data and this bridge's current poor condition, the above noted bridge is considered one of up to 65 candidates for funding. Our bridge aid programs are funded with 80% State or 80% Federal funds with the municipality responsible for the 20% local match. These programs are "reimbursement" type grants in which the municipality covers 100% of preapproved project costs initially and is subsequently reimbursed NHDOT's 80% share of eligible costs incurred.

Based on very preliminary data, NHDOT estimates the cost to rehabilitate or replace the above noted bridge is approximately \$2,882,400.00. The municipality's 20% share is estimated to be approximately \$576,480.00. The actual project cost and local share will depend on the design of the bridge, inflation, and other project related factors not possible to know at this time.

NHDOT is currently beginning the enrollment process for the bridge aid program for official acceptance in the next Ten-Year Plan cycle anticipated to be approved in the summer of 2024. Accepted Ten-Year Plan approved bridge projects will be programmed for construction in years 2027 thru 2032.

Although we can't guarantee that funding will be available to enroll your project, we would like to know if your municipality is interested in applying for funds? This will allow us to better develop our local bridge aid program for the upcoming Ten-Year Plan cycle. If Westmoreland is interested or not interested in beginning the enrollment process with NHDOT for the above noted bridge, please check the appropriate response below and return a copy to me via my email noted below by April 15, 2023.

[X] Yes, Westmoreland is interested in applying for bridge aid funding for the above noted bridge, or

No, Westmoreland is not interested in applying for bridge aid funding for the above noted bridge at this time.

FRANK REEDER Municipality Contact Name (print name)

Municipality Contact Email (print email)

Please note that checking "Yes" does not legally bind Westmoreland to enrolling in the bridge aid program. We are simply looking for an indication that if bridge aid funding is available, that your municipality would be interested in pursuing a bridge aid project with NHDOT and that your municipality would work towards obtaining your local 20% match.

Thank you for your attention to this request and please call or email me with any questions. I look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,

C.R. Willeke

C.R. Willeke, PE
Municipal Highways Engineer
Phone # 603-271-6472
charles.r.willeke@dot.nh.gov

cc via email: Jodi Scanlan, Town of Westmoreland
Timothy Murphy, Southwest Region Planning Commission