

Minutes of the Westmoreland Selectmen's Meeting

Tuesday, February 4, 2025

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: John Snowdon, Bill McGahie and Mark Terry

1. The meeting was called to order at 1:00pm by John Snowdon.
2. Approval of Minutes: February 4, 2025 & February 7, 2025. Motion was made by Mark Terry, seconded by Bill McGahie to accept the minutes as printed. Motion passed 3-0.
4. Guests for River Road Bridge Replacement Funding Discussion:
County Administrator - Chris Coates, County Commissioners - Terry Clark, Claudia Stewart and Skip DiBernardo, Hoyle Tanner - Josif Bicja, NHDOT - C.R. Willeke, Senator Jeanne Shaheen's Office - Chris Scott and Pamela Slack, NH Representative - Paul Berch and Cathryn Harvey, Southwest Regional Planning (SWRP) - J. B. Mack, Maplewood - Kathryn Kindopp
 - A. 2022 SWRP Engineering study through Beta Group. Although the NHDOT rated the bridge as E2 (legal loads any truck) and Town had posted a 10-ton limit to prolong the red-listed bridge, the bridge was questionable for either amount of weight.
 - B. 2024 NHDOT agreed to pay to have a weight study done which was then done by Hoyle Tanner Engineer, Josif Bicja. Results made available February 2025 showed bridge rated passenger cars 3-ton only. Bridge closed immediately as Town could no longer safely plow. Bicja - Bridge 147' long with 24' spans. More than 1 car can pass over the bridge at a time but more than 3-ton on a span is not safe.
 - C. Town has discussed the bridge and lack of ability to finance with the County for years. County concerned about getting emergency vehicles to and from Maplewood as well as delivery trucks since about ½ mile of Partridge Brook Road floods at times during the spring. Town concerned about liability of the bridge and even if reopened in the spring ambulances and delivery trucks are too heavy to it..
 - D. Willeke - The 10-year Bridge Plan would divide the cost 80% State using both State and Federal Funding and 20% Town. The Town can opt to have State manage funding by paying 20% upfront in addition to another 2% of the match to avoid fronting the entire cost then being reimbursed. Bridge cost is estimated to be 4.1 million meaning Town would need to have approximately \$840,000.
 - E. Town has \$277,000 in Bridge Capital Reserve and would potentially be able to use \$200,000 towards the bridge replacement at this time. Need to find a source for additional funds. Federal grants cannot be used to match as the State already uses Federal Funds in their 80% which eliminates most grant opportunities.
 - F. Discussed bonding remaining match, but Selectmen agreed asking the Town to bond would be a hard sell after recent tax increase with 1.2 million fire station bond. Selectmen added that at that point Town would not be able to bond anything which would leave limited resources in the event of an emergency.
 - G. Berch - When the County weighed options for Maplewood's location, it was highly important to the Town to keep Maplewood in Westmoreland. The bridge was discussed at that time and the Town knew it needed to be addressed. Clayton Slaker, Selectman at that time -Residents did want the nursing home to stay in town rather than drug rehab or other options talked about. Selectmen made it clear the Town did not have the money to replace the bridge as the priority at that time was to replace the fire station.
 - H. Discussion about potential placement of a temporary bridge. Willeke -State has no funding for and would be up to the Town to fund. Would cost similar to 20% match. Mack added that it would be unlikely to find Federal funding for a temporary bridge.

- I. A study of options including: 1. Bridge Replacement 2. Temporary Bridge 3. Mitigation of Partridge Brook Road to alleviate flooding issues and to potentially eliminate the need for a bridge. NHDOT can do study. Cost would be \$100,000 of which Town would need to match 20%. Snowdon asked the County if they would split the cost. The Executive Committee would need to vote to do so.
- J. Scott - NHDOT doesn't typically give Toll Credit funding to towns for local projects, however with access to the nursing home and County facilities an issue potentially the Town could pursue. If backed by the County Caucus, Toll Credit money may be an option. Snowdon and Coates to discuss with Bill Watson, Administrator, Bureau of Planning and Community Assistance, NHDOT
- K. Richard Schmidt - County replaced bridge washed out by flood in 1936 and gave the bridge to the Town. Is there money for historic bridges? Mack - There is no funding available for historic bridges.
- L. Dave Wirth - There was a road that connected Partridge Brook Road to River Road around the field. If the road could be put there it would open the bridge area and potentially the Town could have a boat landing. Bieja - FEMA would be a problem if in flood plain. Stalker - There was a study done 4-5 years ago and it wasn't possible due to flood plain.
- M. Dave Putnam, Selectmen early 2000s - Town used to have to cover the entire cost up front then get paid back the State's 80%. Has that changed? Is this for a high end bridge? Willeke - Changes a couple of years ago. State will manage funding for an additional 2% of the match. Town would need to front the approximate \$840,000 which would include that 2%. State would build a bridge to suit Town's needs as long as approved by engineers, take care of any environmental regulations and property easements required as part of the cost.
- N. Willeke - Bridge replacement cost has increased 80% in the last 2 years. Ten years ago replacement would have been approx. 1.6 million and in 2022 Beta Group projected 2.4. 2025 replacement is 4.1.
- O. Snowdon - Asked residents in the audience to not use Facebook as a source of information as it is often opinion based and unreliable. Encourage people to read minutes, come to meetings, or call the town office for accurate information.

5. Old Business

- A. Elan City Signs - Radar signs ordered at the end of last year delayed until April due to an IT issue.
- B. Town Hall Renovations - Lift, bathroom and partial kitchen renovation estimate approx. \$238,000. Will need to look for ADA accessibility grants. Until there is a lift the upstairs will only be available for private functions.

6. Accounts Payable: Motion was made by John Snowdon seconded by Mark Terry to approve Manifests for: General Fund \$75,757.51 Motion passed 3-0.

7. New Business

Signature Approval was given for the following:

Payroll 2/18/25	MS-737	Amazon \$83.88
Payroll Taxes 2/18/25	Eversource \$631.68	Staples \$39.44
Town Warrant	Invoice Cloud \$116.80	

- A. SolSmart - Federally funded group to assist towns with solar issues. Will review ordinances, help with Master Plan, community communication, develop permitting processes and give ways to search for grants. Ideal to have a member of the Planning Board and Building Inspector involved. Meetings are recorded so they don't have to attend in person. Selectmen are in favor of joining and Mark Terry

volunteered to attend and represent Selectboard.

- B. Planning Board - Meeting time to change from 3rd Monday at 6:30pm to 1st Monday at 6pm beginning in April to allow time between Planning and Zoning meetings.
- C. 4H - Stephanie Sutch requested permission to use the Town Hall every other Sunday in order to begin a 4H group for ages 8-18. After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Mark Terry, seconded by Bill McGahie to approve the new 4H group as a service group without charge.
- D. Plowing snow onto road - Complaint from Road agent that snow is being plowed from Reynolds Road over the top of Poocham after Poocham has been cleared and sanded. Road agent plowed snow back to Reynolds and residents were upset. Notice to be sent about plowing snow onto roads with State RSAs. Road agent to report issues to administration before any action taken in the future.

8. Non-public session per RSA 91-A:3 II (I)

9.. 3:49 pm Motion by John Snowdon, seconded by Mark Terry to enter nonpublic session per RSA91-A:3, II(I) . Motion passed 3-0.

10.. 3:55 pm Motion by John Snowdon, seconded by Bill McGahie to leave nonpublic session, seal minutes, and return to public session. Motion passed 3-0.

11. After brief follow up discussion a motion was made by Mark Terry, seconded by Bill McGahie to match county funds up to \$10,000 for study to take place of River Road Bridge options. Motion passed 3-0.

12. 3:59pm Motion by John Snowdon, seconded by Bill McGahie to adjourn meeting. Motion Passed 3-0. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Jodi Scanlan
Town Administrator

NEXT REGULAR MEETING TUESDAY MARCH 4, 2025 1:00PM
MINUTES ARE INITIALLY POSTED AS UNAPPROVED
SELECTMEN SIGNATURES DENOTE APPROVAL

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

John Snowdon, Chairman

William McGahie

Mark Terry

