

TOWN OF ALSTEAD, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Public Hearing – NHDOT re: 123A by Vilas Pool

Approved Minutes for Meeting of November 12, 2024 at 5:00 PM

Town Hall, 9 Mechanic Street, Alstead, NH 03602

SELECT BOARD PRESENT: Joel McCarty, Chair, Gordon Kemp, and Matthew Saxton.

STAFF PRESENT:

Name	Position	In Person	Google Meet
Misty Gratacos	Town Administrator	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shelley Steuwe	Recording Secretary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prescott Trafton	Road Agent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Steve Murrell	Police Chief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Steve Reynolds	Emergency Mgmt Dir	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

CALL TO ORDER: Mr. McCarty called the Public Hearing to order at 5:02 PM and then proceeded with describing the intent of the hearing.

Presenters: (in order of presentation) Jason Ayotte, Project Manager, Highway Design, NHDOT; Todd Clark, Sr. VP and Principal Transportation Engineer, Hoyle Tanner; Kimberly Peace, Sr. Environmental Coordinator, Hoyle Tanner; Hans Weber, P.E., Design Lead, Highway Design, NHDOT; and Curtis Morrill, P.E., NHDO

Link to presentation: [Alstead 43566A & 43566B | Department of Transportation](#)

Printed graphics will be available at the Town Office.

Q & A:

- Mr. Saxton – Regarding the presented detour, two shorter detours come to mind. There is concern about the added traffic on Pleasant Street and Winch Hill (when the presented detour is not taken), and someone will have to do something about that.
 - NHDOT – NHDOT isn't able to use local roadways in their detours. FEMA funds only have so much money to do this, so we don't have funds to approve local roadways outside the proposed detour. We can discuss language on road signage, and can see how it goes with Acworth in earlier projects (using the same detour). Can also look into traffic counts.
- Mr. McCarty – Mr. Saxton's point is that people will drive where they want to drive, and it'll be on us to be better neighbors and encourage detour usage.
- Public – There is a blueberry farm in Acworth, which will be affected by both projects. When is the Acworth project set to begin?
 - NHDOT – July 7 - August 15.
- Public – When will Vilas Pool be closed?
 - NHDOT – Summer of 2026. We want to get a better understanding from the Vilas Pool Committee of what events are planned for the summer to help with construction timing. We can take information derived from the upcoming meeting to have some more concrete information.
- Public – How wide will 123A be, and will there be enough space on either side to put in a sidewalk?
 - NHDOT – 22 feet wide, but does bow out in the middle to upwards of 26 feet in some places.
 - Public – There is a proposed Complete Streets sidewalk project from Vilas School to Vilas Pool, so if the road width here won't support this, they need to know.
 - NHDOT – That will require a higher level discussion. We can talk to District 4 about this. Please share specific concept/idea so we can share that with District 4. That construction would not be included with this particular project.
- Public – Do you intend to fix the washout between the jersey barriers before going to the "big dig".
 - NHDOT – We saw that tonight when we drove through so we'll reach out to District 4 to inform them that it needs addressing.

Presenter: Charlie Johnston; Dubois & King (oral presentation only)

Mr. McCarty introduces Mr. Johnston and explains that he invited him to this meeting as his work on the Lake Warren and Vilas Dams will be somewhat intertwined with the work being presented above. Mr. Johnston begins by discussing the work being done with the Lake Warren Dam – The firm is in the middle of this project, and is currently collecting information about the dam and its deficiencies and then providing that information to the town in a detailed report. Included in the report are potential alternatives to dealing with the identified deficiencies. They did site inspection about a month and a half ago, along with survey and wetland delineations.

They were at Lake Warren two weeks ago doing borings. They are currently running stability models on the dam, and there doesn't appear to be issues with stability at this time. The Hydrologic and Hydraulic (H&H) study has been completed, and is showing that the five year flood (which the dam has to pass without overtopping) will overtop the dam by about two feet. They'll complete a stability model on that and come up with some potential alternatives to address that issue, but the conceptual alternative is going to focus on overtopping protection, and not enlarging the spillway. They intend to have the deficiency report complete by Thanksgiving, and have potential alternatives to the Selectboard by the end of the year.

Re: Vilas Dam – The information presented by NHDOT this evening provides new information to them which may necessitate broadening their scope. They are in the process of doing a breach analysis of the dam, which is currently classified as a high hazard dam, though there is no justification behind that from the records they have available to them. So they are running an H&H analysis and breach analysis to verify that that is the correct classification. They have run a couple of scenarios and a one hundred year flood is only about 4-5,000 CFS running through the dam, and it seems to be contained by the primary spillway. The July flood was a magnitude of 10,000 CFS which raised the water 1-2 feet above the spillway and into the parking lot. One of the proposed solutions was to create overtopping protection of the parking lot area, and the proposed retaining wall in the NHDOT project seems to address that issue.

Mr. McCarty goes on to summarize that part of what the Selectboard expects from Mr. Johnston is the detailed report of the condition of the two dams, and to take the recommendations proposed in the report to address the deficiencies of each dam; first running the recommendations by the regulator and then trying to figure out which ones are in the best interest of the Town. Mr. Johnston goes on to say that the primary concern for the Vilas Dam is hydraulic capacity as well as stability, and they will likely recommend going forward with the NHDOT project, as well as some additional improvements recommended by Dubois and King. He reiterates that they plan to have a report with recommendations to the Selectboard in December, and to also give a more in depth, formal presentation discussing the two dams, their deficiencies, and the alternatives and recommendations before the next Town voting day. Mr. McCarty responds clarifying that if the Town expects to spend any money on the dams' improvements in 2025, they'll need budget estimations by the second week of January. Mr. Johnston says that the Town will not spend any construction funds in 2025, and Mr. McCarty says they may spend more money on analysis, design, or permits. Mr. Johnston says he will speed up the process of having these estimates to the Selectboard in time. Mr. McCarty asks if he has any final thoughts before going to the public for Q & A. Mr. Johnston says that one of their scope items is to look at three or four options for the Lake Warren Dam. It's clear that removal of the dam is not really an option, however they will present it as it is one option that can be funded by an external organization. The other options that they are looking at are ways to control overtopping flow. The primary spillway is not going to be modified, but they are looking at creating an open channel spillway. The added spillway will be dry unless a large flood event happens. Whatever work is recommended will take the work being completed by NHDOT into consideration to ensure there are no competing alternatives.

Q & A

- Public – We didn't understand why they changed the classification on the Lake Warren Dam.
 - Mr. Johnston – The new State rules just came out, so annual inspection found that the hazard designation needed updating (as "significant hazard" is defined by damage/loss of life to properties downstream).
 - Mr. McCarty – Vilas Dam will likely be reclassified at some point as well.
- Public – The 2005 flood event was like a 500 year storm event, and both dams withheld that event, as well as the most recent flood events, so why are they now deemed "unsafe"?
 - Mr. Johnston – They not saying that they're unsafe. They appear to be in good condition, however if they want it to be able to handle three times what it currently does.
- Public – Is the new spillway on the Lake Warren Dam going to be same design as the one on Route 10 in Gilsum?
 - Mr. Johnston – Hasn't seen that, so not sure.

Presenter: Josif Bicja, P.E., VP and Bridge Team Leader, Hoyle Tanner

Link to presentation: [INSERT LINK TO PRESENTATION](#)

Q & A

- Public – Since the upfront cost is taken out of Capital Reserve, when reimbursed, will that go back into the General Fund balance?
 - Mr. McCarty – Unsure, need to figure that out (looking to the public to make decision). Will also ask the auditor.
- Public – Is there going to be a Warrant Article for 2025 for \$75,000 for bridge projects, or is this money already raised and appropriated?
 - Mr. McCarty – Will have a better answer at end of December, but believe there's enough left over in the Bridge Fund to avoid a Warrant Article.
- Public – Is there a potential for the price of materials changing?
 - Mr. Bicja – We have contingencies in place to help offset any fluctuations in price.
 - Mr. McCarty – Materials will all be American-made.
- Public – Didn't we vote about raising \$25,000 for an H&H study on the Thayer Brook Road bridge?
 - Mr. McCarty – Yes, less than that, and this has been done (in addition to one on the North Road bridge).

Presenter: Joe Levesque, Complete Streets (oral presentation only)

The goal of Complete Streets is to make streets safer for pedestrians, bikes, ATVs, vehicles, etc. Currently they are trying to get funding for a sidewalk that goes from Vilas School to the Library. This work is being done in partnership with the Southwest Regional Planning Commission. Their next step is to ask the Selectboard for \$3-5,000 for the Town's share of the engineering study. They are considering the following projects:

- Reconfiguring the triangle by the Town Hall to make for easier travel,
- Putting in a sidewalk to Vilas Pool from Vilas School, and
- Putting in a sidewalk from downtown to the Post Office.

The Committee is comprised of 7 people, and they are working on getting a Transportation Alternatives Program grant for the sidewalk.

Q & A

None.

There being no further discussion, on a motion made by Mr. McCarty and seconded by Mr. Kemp, the Chair adjourned the public hearing at 8:06 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Shelley Steuwe

Recording Secretary