

TOWN OF ALSTEAD, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Public Hearing and Select Board

Approved Minutes for Meeting of February 11, 2025 at 5:00 PM

Town Offices, 15 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 Office Administrator	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shelley Steuwe	Recording Secretary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jesse Moore	Director of Sanitation, EMS & Grounds	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Steve Reynolds	Dir Emergency Management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

COMMUNITY MEMBERS: **In person:** Ann Acheson, Marge Noonan, Barbara Viegner, Susan Norlander, Judith Willis, Lisa Tusveld, Bob Quaglin, Jane Quaglin, Judy Bath, Greg Bath, Katie Gallagher, Alison Ishwardas, Manley Ishwardas, David Smith, Heidi Konesko, Darren Perlongo; **Google Meets:** Bobbie Wilson, Tim St. Pierre, Maura Lawlor

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PUBLIC HEARING:

Re: Vilas and Warren Dams; Hannah Pascual and Charles Johnston

Link to presentation: [Alstead Dams Public Information Meeting](#)

Public question/comment –

Lake Warren Dam:

- Mr. Bath – Were the previous rehab efforts taken into consideration? There was extensive material put back in behind the dam on the water side.
 - Mr. Johnston – We were not aware of this work and would like to see the plans.

- He will reach out to NHDES to obtain these records.
 - Mr. Johnston – If there’s an upstream barrier, then Mr. Johnston would lean toward overtopping protection.
 - Ms. Ishwardas – After the 2005 storm event, FEMA classified the whole area as a 500 year flood event.
 - Director Reynolds – Was the Dam Bureau aware of the previously completed work when they did their assessment of the dam?
 - Mr. McCarty – I’m almost certain they did.
 - Mr. McCarty – The State should have all the records of the work done before 2005.
 - Mr. Johnston says the Town should connect with the Dam Bureau to find out why they still sent a letter of deficiency.
 - Public – With the rehab option, will the concrete section be longer than the dam?
 - Mr. Johnston – The wall will serve as a secondary overflow, and will be much longer than the actual dam.
 - Ms. Acheson – What happens with the water in this option?
 - Mr. Johnston – It comes over the spillway and absorbs/is filtered by the buried material.
 - Ms. Viegner – Is there funding available?
 - Mr. Johnston – Yes, through FEMA and sometimes the Dam Bureau. I believe legislation was just passed or is being evaluated for a revolving fund option.
 - Ms. Viegner – How much do we have invested so far?
 - Mr. McCarty – \$70,000. The Selectboard is looking to increase that to fund the next steps with design etc.
 - Mr. Johnston – FEMA funding covers $\frac{2}{3}$, leaving the Town to cover $\frac{1}{3}$.
 - Mr. Saxton – Will there be large pieces of broken gray rock from the dam to the road?
 - Mr. Johnston – Yes, but that could change to a subsurface option, and we can discuss additional options during the design phase.
 - Mr. Kemp – What’s the lifespan of the articulating concrete blocks (ACBs)?
 - Mr. Johnston – 50-100 years. The steel degrades the fastest. They are galvanized and not supposed to rust. If it’s buried it’ll last a lot longer.

Vilas Dam

- Director Moore – What about just dredging the pond to remove silt?
 - Mr. Johnston – Then you have more water coming through during a flood. We need to address where water is going.
- Mr. Saxton – Can you just leave the silt if the dam is removed?
 - Mr. Johnston – No , you have to remove sediment to create a stable channel.
- Ms. Acheson – What do you do with the sediment?
 - Mr. Johnston – Other towns have sold it.
- Mr. Bath – If the dam remains, is there a benefit to dredging?
 - Mr. Johnston – Yes, to increase stability and integrity.
- Director Reynolds – NHDES is adamant that we shouldn’t dredge. What did the analysis classify the 2021 and 2023 flood events?

- Mr. Johnston – Both were considered 500 year flood events. Remember that the storm water alone is not all that's considered, it's the flood itself, which can be caused by days of rain outside of the storm event.
- Mr. Bellows – Has any consideration been made to putting a box culvert on the 123a side out of the pond around back into the river?
 - Mr. Johnston – Has not been considered because of how much blasting that would need to occur due to the amount of bedrock. The size of the culvert would have to be so large that you would have to infringe on the road.
- Mr. Johnston – It would work most efficiently to coincide the dam work with NHDOT's work on 123a.
 - Mr. McCarty – This is not likely to happen due to the bridge work that needs to happen over the next couple of years.
- Mr. McCarty – What's the risk of breach for each dam?
 - Mr. Johnston – For Warren Dam, loss of life. Modeling of stability of the dam shows it as adequate; however, if it overtops it could lead to loss of life. For Vilas Dam, a breach would impact one resident (not loss of life). There could be potential for loss of life within Vilas Park if someone were there during the flood. Dam stability is a concern.
- Director Reynolds – How many houses would be impacted with a breach of Warren Dam?
 - Mr. McCarty – Two, plus the Highway Garage.
- Ms. Acheson – With the Vilas Dam, would rehabbing also address the issues with the concrete as well?
 - Mr. Johnston – Yes.
- Ms. Acheson – Can we just rehab the concrete first?
 - Mr. Johnston – Yes, but you will end up paying more in the end because eventually the rest of the work will need to be done.
- Mr. Kemp – Is there any level we can lower the existing spillways to to fix the problems?
 - Mr. Johnston – For Vilas Dam, no. For Warren Dam, if there were significant downstream changes made, possibly 2-3 ft.
- Mr. McCarty – Does the bridge on Route 123 just down from Warren Dam need to be included?
 - Mr. Johnston – If you want to make changes to Pine Cliff Road and Prentiss Hill you may need to, but this is a NHDOT road, so we can only advocate for them to change it and not make changes to it as part of our work.

Re: Anonymous Donation of \$5,000 for Ambulance 2 repair

Mr. McCarty announces that a \$5,000 anonymous donation has been made for repairs to Ambulance 2. He asks if anyone has any questions or concerns about accepting this donation the way the Town has historically accepted them (see 1/14 Public Hearing/Selectboard meeting minutes for additional background).

Mr. Kemp – NHMA does not recommend taking “anonymous” donations. We have to keep a record of the donor and if someone requests information about who donated, the Town is obligated to provide that information.

There were no other questions or comments. The Board unanimously approves to accept the donation.

CALL TO ORDER: Mr. McCarty called the Select Board meeting to order at 7:01 PM and then proceeded with leading the agenda-based discussion.

GUESTS: Dubois and King – presenting information regarding the dams at Vilas Pool and Lake Warren

ACTION ITEMS: Review and sign payroll manifest (\$24,827.77); review and sign 2 (two) tax exemptions.

MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS: Minutes from 2/4 have been reviewed, amended, and approved as amended by the Board.

OLD BUSINESS: Not discussed

NEW BUSINESS: Bruce Bellows, FMRSD withdrawal study cost conversation

Mr. Bellows says that he discovered at the Fall Mountain Regional School District Deliberative Session that it will cost \$50,000 to perform the withdrawal study. This cost will be shared by all who pass it on their ballots (Alstead, Langdon, and Walpole). He’s worried that if Alstead votes to pass and Walpole does not (many Walpole residents weren’t aware of or in favor during the FMRSD Deliberative Session) that we’ll be saddled with the cost despite this being a Walpole request. He asks the Selectboard to notify the public via mailing of the above information and encourage voters to vote “no”.

Mr. Kemp asks who provided this information, and Mr. Bellows said it’s on the school ballot.

Mr. Kemp mentions that the study will have different results depending on how many towns are involved. He also has concerns about telling people to vote it down since the Selectboard recommended passing it 3-0. He says he is ok including the language with more information about the cost on the Selectboard’s warrant letter.

OTHER ITEMS:

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

Emergency Management – Director Reynolds reports that a copy of the formally accepted and approved Hazard Mitigation Plan has been provided to the Selectboard.

Last week Director Reynolds received a call from Matt Cahillane, who is affiliated with Antioch College. Mr. Cahillane is currently working on a grant funded project with NH Healthy Climate for the 20th anniversary of the 2005 flood. There is a letter of intent for the Selectboard to review. Mr. Kemp is concerned about the intent of the project.

Lastly, Director Reynolds says that an email regarding safety policy violations has been sent to the Selectboard. He asks them to have EMS review their current policies to address some of the violations.

BOARD REPORTS:

Mr. Kemp – Not provided.

Mr. McCarty – Not provided.

Mr. Saxton – Keith Hanatow is firmly in our corner with regards to fixing the Library roof. He suggested that a leak in the circular staircase where the paint is destroyed is caused by a failed mortar joint, not an issue with the roof.

PUBLIC COMMENTS/QUESTIONS:

INFORMATIONAL:

EXECUTIVE SESSION/S: RSA 91-A:3, II (a) dismissal

On a motion made by Mr. McCarty and seconded by Mr. Saxton, ***the Board voted by roll call (Joel – y; Matt – y; Gordon – y) to enter non-public at 7:43 PM pursuant to RSA 91-A:3. II (c) dismissal***

On a motion made by Mr. McCarty and seconded by Mr. Saxton ***the Board voted to leave the non-public session at 8:03 PM. The motion passed unanimously.***

On a motion made by Mr. McCarty and seconded by Mr. Kemp ***the Board Chair adjourned the public meeting at 8:04 PM.***

Important Upcoming Events/Meetings

Date/Time	Subject	Location	Notes
February 18 at 5:00 pm	Selectboard Meeting	Town Offices; 15 Mechanic Street	
March 10 at 6:00 pm	FMRSD School Board Meeting	High School	2nd Monday of each month

March 11 8:00 am - 7:00 pm	Town and School Voting Day	Town Hall; 9 Main Street	
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Respectfully submitted,

Shelley Steuwe

Recording Secretary