

Minutes of the Board of Selectmen Meeting

This meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order at 12:00PM on Monday, December 12, 2022 at the Town Offices. Jason Petraitis, John Tripp, and Brooke Canada present. Also present were Jason Benoit and Dan Delaney from Fuss and O'Neil.

Cider Mill Bridge Project:

Dan Delaney said the cost of construction increased from about \$500,000.00 to just over a million dollars. Jason Benoit asked what caused this, Dan said the size, height, and foundation type had to be changed from original plan. He explained that they did a new study that allowed them to go back to the original footing.

Mr. Petraitis said they received the grant for this bridge about five and half years ago and asked what happened to hold the project up. Dan said it took a year to get a contract executed with MassDOT. Once that was in place they started working, but the biggest issue was a hydrology report. The report said the area was in a flood way, but Fuss & O'Neil disagreed with MassDOT about the effects on the bridge, F&O thought it would have no effect. F&O requested data from FEMA which took 8 or 9 months.

Dan said at the time of the original grant \$500,000.00 was the max and they thought they could make it work. They just completed a bridge in Southwick that ended up costing \$900,000.00.

Mr. Petraitis asked if all the studies were done, Dan said yes and that we could change back to the original design, which would decrease construction costs by \$300,000.00 but would cost the town more money to redesign and that would take about two and half months to complete. Dan said F&O has spent more than double the original design budget going back and forth with MassDOT. Mr. Petraitis asked what the hangup was, Dan said MassDOT didn't like the piles, but couldn't switch because of scouring. They were getting conflicting comments and lost a few months progress. Dan also said the FEMA process is arduous.

Dan wondered if we could apply for additional funding through the bridge program. Jason Benoit said this can't be unique to North Brookfield and asked what other towns have done. Dan said that Southwick rolled their bridge into the MVP Action Grant. He said the expression of interest phase would be coming up, applications due March through May and awards given in July. Dan said Pittsfield came up with the money on their own.

Mrs. Canada asked for clarification the cost and design. Dan gave her the two estimates: 1.07 million dollars for spread footing, and 1.5 million for piles. The fee to redesign the bridge is \$31,000.00. Currently the design has cost \$65,000.00 and they've spent \$22,000.00 on studies. Dan said there is an endangered wood turtle in the area of Cider Mill Bridge, they will need to spend \$5,700.00 doing a study of that.

Ashley called Mohammed Nabulsi at MassDOT/Small Bridge Program-Dan explained the situation and asked if there was any funding options through the program. Mohammed said that is an issue with this program, he said to look to see if there are other options but other towns have not been successful. He said we must look for other funding, we can use the available funds from the grant to complete the design. The expectation of the small bridge program is that they are helping towns but won't cover the full cost. Mohammed said we might be able to use Chapter 90 money.

Dan explained the design that was last submitted and Mohammed said that plan is fine. Dan also said there is a cost issue for the Town either way, it will cost us money to change the footing design to the less expensive plan. Mohammed suggested to go with the more cost-effective plan.

Mrs. Canada asked if we should pursue the cheaper plan and then find funding. Mohammed said to look at our options then push forward with cost effective alternative, but couldn't guarantee the plan would be approved. He said it would be hard to get additional funding, the expectation is that the Town will leverage this grant with other available money, not to cover the cost of the project entirely.

Mr. Petraitis thought we should submit what we have to get final approval of MassDOT, as changing the plan back may not get approved. Dan said he sent everything for this plan to MassDOT in August. Dan said there a few line items to pay for, but the cost of revisions will go away if we submit this plan. Wood Turtle Plan is \$5,700.00, H&H Calculations (hydrology study, which is done) is \$22,000.00 and Final coordination is \$6,000.00.

Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to submit the current complete plan to MassDOT for approval. So voted.

Dan Delaney said that F&O will submit the plan. Jason Benoit thought it would be possible to use WRAP and Chapter 90 money.

At 12:45PM, there being no further business, Mrs. Canada moved, and Mr. Tripp seconded, a motion into executive session for reason 2, to discuss contract negotiations. Roll Call: Petraitis, yes; Tripp, yes; Canada, yes. So voted. Mr. Petraitis noted the Board would exit executive session to reconvene in open session.

At 1:14PM the Board came out of executive session.

Mr. Petraitis wanted to know why and how Bill Paille (from BSC Group) did more work that was contracted. Mrs. Canada said we need to do anything we can to move forward. Mr. Petraitis said that Bill has not been responsive. We need the updated drawings and the contract.

Mrs. Canada said the DDC put a lot of work into getting the Complete Streets grant.

Mr. Petraitis said we made clear to Bill Paille the changes we needed made, Bill kept going back and forth to the DDC and ignored the BoS. This whole process we've gone back and forth. We had issues with the bump outs, they look nice but we'd have to dedicate on Highway person to maintain during snow. If Bill wants to work within the parameters, we have described we can move forward.

Mr. Tripp suggested Bill Paille sitting with the BoS and Jason Benoit, Mr. Tripp is ok working with BSC Group if Bill works with us.

Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to have Ashley write an email to Bill Paille regarding the contract, the design changes, and who authorized him to work without a valid contract. So voted.

There being no further business, at 1:30PM Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to adjourn. So voted.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ashley Barre