

**Wolcott Selectboard Special Meeting
Minutes
August 22, 2018**

All Minutes are draft until approved by the Selectboard.
Please see future Minutes for approval of these Minutes.

Members Present: Eric Furs, Kimberly Gravel, Michael Davidson, Jennifer Holton-Clapp
Members Absent: Richard Lee
Town Employees: Linda Martin, Skip Patten
Guests: Jim Cota, Tyler Billingsley, Rob Moore, Pam Thurber
Public: Leon Whitcomb, Rhoda Bedell
Reporter: Doug McClure, *Hardwick Gazette*

Eric called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.

Amendments to the Agenda: None.

School Street Bridge - Discussion:

Eric reported that recently the game warden was speaking with a couple of fishermen below the School Street Bridge. While there, the warden noticed deterioration to the underside of the bridge. Pam Thurber, a bridge inspector with VTRANS was contacted.

Pam's report indicated Inspectors visited the bridge on August 6, 2018 and discovered the gusset connection had deteriorated to the point where it completely cracked through with some deformation seen. It was determined the bridge should be closed to traffic until repairs are made. The bridge was closed to traffic on August 6, 2018. The report further noted the bridge is in an advanced state of deterioration.

Rob Moore, LCPC, explained his role as coordinating and facilitating conversations regarding the project. Rob presented to the Selectboard a Memorandum sent to him and Seth Jensen from the consulting firm, Milone & MacBroom, in which several alternatives are set forth regarding flood mitigation and the School Street Bridge.

Jim, with VTRANS, emphasized that the first step is to protect the public. The bridge has been closed to traffic. Linda stated additional road signs to redirect traffic have already been ordered. Flooding of Flat Iron Road is a concern. The second step is to determine how to get a temporary bridge that is designed to handle heavy loads in place allowing two points of egress. There was preliminary discussion of potential mobilization, set up, and rental costs for a temporary bridge. It is also possible to purchase a temporary bridge if it is going to be in place for several years. If the temporary bridge is one-lane only, that would result in traffic and safety issues for vehicles entering from Rt. 15.

Alternative options were discussed such as eliminating the bridge and improving Flat Iron Road. That would allow only one way in and out of town for emergency vehicles. Perhaps the Fire Department could temporarily or permanently be relocated to the other side of the bridge. Linda pointed out the Town has invested in this area as our Town center per the Town Plan.

Discussion ensued regarding Wolcott's eligibility for State and/or Federal funding. The Town is not in a very good position. It could be four or five years before we could get a new bridge. Linda pointed out that a temporary bridge would buy the Town time while we try to get on the

Federal grants list. To cover interim costs the Town could possibly take out a low-interest loan and spread payments out over time. Kim pointed out Townspeople want to see the bridge open as soon as possible.

Tyler, with East Engineering, will check on the feasibility of an accelerated bridge. An accelerated bridge is one that is pre-engineered and can go in relatively quickly. It would be more expensive than a temporary bridge, but it would be permanent.

Also presented to the Selectboard was a multi-page packet prepared by Pam containing photos depicting problems with the bridge; a list of concerns; options to restore traffic; and discussion of temporary bridge options.

Jim stated VTRANS maintains a stock of temporary bridges. A temporary bridge could be ready within a few weeks. Jim recommended the Selectboard send a letter to District 8, to the attention of David Blackmore, Regional Manager, requesting a temporary bridge. In the letter the Town could seek information on the availability of both a one- and two-lane bridge. There would be no obligation to the Town based upon the letter.

Motion by Eric for Michael to work with Tyler to provide the Board estimates for various options along with rough sketches. Seconded by Kim. Voting: 4 in favor, 0 opposed.

Motion by Eric to have Linda serve as the contact agent to sign the letter to David Blackmore. Seconded by Kim. Voting: 4 in favor, 0 opposed.

The Selectboard was also provided a hard copy of the VTRANS “orange book,” which is a handbook for local officials.

Motion to Adjourn: Motion by Eric to adjourn the meeting at 7:48 p.m. Seconded by Michael. Voting: 4 in favor, 0 opposed.

Respectfully submitted by Deborah Klein.

The next Selectboard meeting is scheduled for September 5, 2018