

**Board of Selectmen
September 14, 2018**

Present: Connie Twombly, Chair; Vinton Wallace; Kelley A. Collins, Town Administrator; and Toni Bodah, Secretary.

Also present were: Chris Fournier, HEB Engineers; Robert Baxter; Annette Perry; Priscilla Colbath; Howie Knight; Niko Giokas (videographer); and Cindy Hart, Chuck Gregory and Arnold Murray, Acton Road Commissioners.

Ms. Twombly called the posted meeting to order and led all in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Wallace moved to appoint Dennis Miller to fill the vacancy on the Board of Selectmen until the March 2019 election. Ms. Twombly seconded the motion. Mr. Wallace spoke to Mr. Miller's qualifications. Both existing Board members agree that Mr. Miller will be a great asset to the Board. Mr. Wallace also expressed thanks to all who submitted their names for consideration. **The motion then passed 2-0.**

Ms. Twombly introduced Chris Fournier of HEB Engineers, who is present to provide an overview of the project, including funding options and prioritization. (Ms. Twombly then left the session.)

Funding options include NH DOT State Aid Bridge. These are State funds, with no federal funds involved. The Town would ultimately receive 80% reimbursement through this program. Mr. Wallace questioned how long it generally takes to receive the 80% reimbursement. Mr. Fournier noted one scenario allows SAB to pay for 80% of the engineering costs, then provide seed money (1/2 the State's ultimate share) once the project is awarded. The remainder is paid at the end of the project. The earliest Wakefield's turn could be expected is 2026. Ms. Collins noted that during the end of the State's fiscal year, reimbursement payments may be delayed.

Another option is the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. This is only available for projects in the Hazard Mitigation Plan, for which Maple Street would qualify. We have already begun this process. If awarded, funds must be spent within 3 years of the award. These funds can be combined with SAB funds. Ultimately, the Town could pay only 5% of the project costs. Under this scenario, the State would accelerate reimbursement, as their share would be reduced to 20% of what FEMA does not pay.

Mr. Fournier prioritized the projects as follows:

#1 – Canal Road Bridge. One funding option would be: Acton ME – 50%, NH SAB - 40%, Wakefield – 10% (FY 2026). If the bridge were to be closed, Acton's share would be 50%, and the Town would need to float the remaining 50% for a number of years until SAB reimbursement for 80% of that 50% were received in 2026. Mr. Fournier confirmed to Mr. Knight that the Town would not be guaranteed to receive funding in 2026 should the bridge close in 2021. However, Mr. Collins indicated that would be an unlikely scenario. She has made application for both Canal Road Bridge and Maple Street Bridge to be on the SBA list, but she has not received any official notification that we are on the 2026 list.

Ms. Hart referred to Acton's position that the entire bridge is owned by Wakefield. Therefore, Acton's funding share should be adjusted. Ms. Collins stated that the Town of Wakefield disagrees; however, today's purpose is to explore funding options. There will be public hearing/meetings at a future date.

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#2 – Maple Street Bridge. This bridge could be removed or removed/replaced, and it is part of the Town's Hazard Mitigation Plan. Ms. Collins asked whether the HMP Grant supports either option. Mr. Fournier advised that it supports a \$1.4 million project—whatever that project is. He added that the application is due soon. There is no harm in applying, then eventually withdrawing or restructuring the project. Ms. Collins requested the application be available for the September 26 Selectmen's meeting.

#3 – North Old Farm's Road. Wakefield could use SAB to replace this bridge (in 2027), or the Town could fund preservation (in 2021).

#4 – Copp Brook Bridge. This bridge needs repair—likely via Town funding.

#5 – Bridge Street Bridge. The theory here is to keep a good bridge good. The timing of Town-funded preservation would be dependent upon #3 & #4 above.

#6 – Marsh Road Bridge – If the Town chooses to replace this bridge, SAB could be planned for 2028. Town-funded preservation could occur earlier, or the bridge could be abandoned given its minimal use.

#7 – North Wakefield Bridge. This bridge requires maintenance, likely via Town funding.

Mr. Fournier shared a graphic including estimates for each project, noting the Town's share. He also presented cash flow models, with the Town's share ranging from \$920,000 to \$1,140,000. The lowest total cost of the projects is not necessarily the lowest cost to the Town. Mr. Fournier compared criteria for each of the 5 models. Model #5 does not consider financing charges. Mr. Fournier shared a cumulative model of expenses (Town's share) through 2031. Revenue could be generated via warrant articles at \$120,000/year for 3 years, being reduced to \$60,000 from the 4th year on. Ms. Collins noted that the Town has only put \$10,000 to \$20,000 in the capital reserve fund for the past several years. If we appropriate lower amounts, we will need to borrow sooner. Mr. Fournier noted to avoid debt would require an appropriation of \$120,000/year through 2028, which would result in a surplus. The surplus could be returned to the taxpayers or it could be kept in the CRF to continue to maintain the Town's bridges. Ms. Collins noted that this CRF does not include funds for culvert work.

Mr. Fournier shared cash flow model comparisons, with and without debt. He stressed it is important to begin the SAB process for both Canal and Maple Streets as well as the HMP grant for Maple Street. Ms. Collins referred to the priority of Canal Road as it will not last until 2026 and involves a 9-mile detour. Discussed the possibility of including some of the other bridges in the SAB. Mr. Wallace stated that a full Board should discuss this on September 26. Ms. Collins will prepare the necessary forms.

Ms. Colbath referred to the rail systems on these bridges. Mr. Fournier stated that have identified addressing the rails of all bridges, although some are more concerning than others. Ms. Collins and Mr. Fournier will arrange for the various spreadsheets to be shared. Discussion followed regarding HMP grant program.

Mr. Gregory asked what the next step would be with regarding to Acton's position. Mr. Wallace understands Mr. Gregory's concerns, however, he is not prepared to discuss that today.

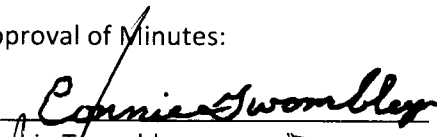
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Ms. Collins stressed that Wakefield will reach out to the surveyors, adding she feels strongly that the ownership is 50/50. She will also provide information to Town Counsel and reach out to her contact on the Acton Board of Selectmen to have counsel for each town involved in communication.

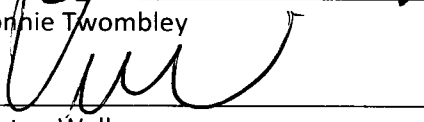
The session adjourned ag 11:10 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Toni Bodah, Secretary

Approval of Minutes:



Connie Twombly



Vinton Wallace

Dennis Miller