

TOWN OF EGREMONT, MASSACHUSETTS
MEETING OF THE SELECT BOARD
MINUTES

Date: February 3, 2022
Time: 10:00am
Place: Via Zoom Meeting & Town Hall
Egremont

Present at the meeting in person were Selectboard members Chairman George McGurn, Vice-Chair Lucinda Fenn-Vermeulen, Board member Mary Brazie, also present was Steve Cohen. Others present via zoom we Road Superintendent Jim Noe, Finance Committee Chair Laura Allen, and Engineers from CHA Ellen Moshier and John Morgan.

The meeting was audio and video recorded.

The intent of the meeting is to discuss the Mount Washington Road reconstruction project that was begun in 2016 with design beginning in 2017. CHA was contracted for the project design and submission of the project to the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

John Morgan said that construction costs were estimated at \$16,605,000 in August of 2021, with the town's contribution, for engineering, at approximately \$1,605,000.

A design hearing is currently tentatively scheduled for April, 2022.

The 25% design was submitted by CHA in August of 2021. There have been considerable pricing increases and the MPO plans in an inflation factor over a 5 year period. An interim estimate can be drafted, though a 75% design estimate will be needed prior to the design hearing.

The roadway is in and abutting wetlands, and is in an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). MassDOT is reluctant to allow any wetlands impacts. The easterly portion of the road may need to be decreased in width which will have some savings. Current width is 22', proposed was 26' to meet MassDOT standards, possibly reduced to 24'.

MassDOT has recently notified CHA that the Farm Lane bridge is not eligible for TIP funding, but is eligible for Bridge Program funding. This may be removed from the submittal. A grant under the Bridge Program does not jeopardize TIP funding. The bridge is also of concern as it is deteriorating and may soon get a deficient grade from MassDOT. The estimate for the bridge replacement is \$1,000,000.

The Westerly portion of the road has recently become a safety concern and may not hold up until 2026. CHA recently began looking at alternative ways to fund this portion and move construction up from the current estimated 2026 to a much sooner time line.

Ellen Moshier shared her screen to show a graph of options for the reconstruction project.

1. Full funding under TIP for the whole road through the program may not have enough funds for this project. Project delayed until at least 2026.
2. Split TIP submission into two projects: Westerly portion funded sooner, designed already, less permits needed then the Easterly portion. Would possibly move up on the TIP schedule to 2024, less funds so more likely to get approved. Easterly portion would be a second submission for in the future.

3. Apply for a MassWorks STRAP grant to do repairs to the critical area of the Westerly Portion. A MassWorks grant is capped at \$1,000,000 so less work would get done. Projects under MassWorks do not need to meet MassDOT standards so \$1,000,000 would go further than TIP funding but not repair the whole Westerly portion of the road, safety issues would be addressed but no drainage upgrades done. Removes the Westerly portion from TIP eligibility so the Easterly section would need to be applied for as a new project on the TIP list.

Selectboard member Brazie thought it made sense to split the road into 2 phases on the TIP list, get the critical westerly portion done as quickly as possible, apply for Bridge funds to replace the Farm Lane bridge.

Road Superintendent Jim Noe said he has done some temporary repairs on the Easterly portion of the road. Reconstruction of that portion of roadway could be delayed with the town using town funds to continue doing temporary repairs. The Farm Lane bridge is critical and will likely fail inspection in the next 2 or 3 years and have to be closed. Jim recommended expediting the repairs to the Westerly portion of the road.

John Morgan said the Town had a better chance of getting TIP funding, possibly in 2024, if the project was split into 2 phases.

The Town of Egremont needs representation at the TIP meeting and needs to be assured that our TIP representative Jim Lovejoy is supporting the project.

Selectboard member Brazie moved to move forward with a 2 phased project. No second was forthcoming as Chairman McGurn felt there needed to be more discussions with the District 1 MassDOT officials. Selectboard Brazie agreed as long as those meetings involved the whole Selectboard.

A meeting will be set up with MassDOT officials, the engineers and TIP officials before the next TIP meeting.

John Morgan noted that with a 2 phased project there would be additional design and engineering costs as everything would need to be submitted twice. Currently the Town has about \$412,000 in the Mount Washington Road engineering budget. A ball park additional amount of \$600,000 would be needed.

Laura Allen asked for a spread sheet that pin downed the costs with a time line.

Adjournment 10:48am

Mary Brazie,
Office Administrator

minutes.22/feb3mwr

The recording of the minutes is on record at the Town Hall for 90 days. Anyone who wishes to may obtain a copy or listen to the recording at Town Hall. Attachments are on file at Town Hall.