

TOWN OF EGREMONT, MASSACHUSETTS  
MEETING OF THE SELECT BOARD  
MINUTES

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Date: February 14, 2022  
Time: 1:30pm  
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. Others present via zoom we Road Superintendent Jim Noe, Finance Committee members Thomas Berkel, Frank Penglase, Daniel Blitzler, CHA Engineers Ellen Moshier, Rob Faulker and John Morgan, MassDOT officials Mark Moore and Peter Frieri, and Mount Washington Selectperon and MPO TIP representative Jim Lovejoy.

The meeting was audio and video recorded.

The intent of the meeting is to hold further discussions about the Mount Washington Road reconstruction project.

Mark Moore, MassDOT Lenox, said the 25% design was submitted in August of 2021, has been reviewed and approved, and comment resolution was held. The project can now advance to public hearing which is tentatively scheduled for mid-April, 2022. Currently this project has to year tag on the Transportation Improvement Plan(TIP). Year tags are determined by readiness and budget availability. This year TIP funding is at \$10mil. In April, the Metropolitan Planning Organization(MPO) will plan for upcoming projects.

John Morgan, CHA Engineer, said that MassDOT has some issues with some components of the easterly section. MassDOT wants no wetlands filling as the roadway is in an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). Design modifications will be needed. Design exceptions will be needed for approval on a change of width of the roadway in easterly portion to avoid the filling of wetlands. Mark Moore clarified that the plans needed to be revised to avoid any wetlands impact. If the revisions change the roadway width then design exception approval will be needed. This will likely delay an April public hearing.

The bridge near Farm Lane may not qualify for TIP funds but could qualify for the Small Bridge Program funding. CHA is following up on this. Mark Moore clarified that the TIP can use 50% of its funds for bridges and 50% for roadways. Because funding is not unlimited, TIP is hesitant to use funds on bridge that are eligible under other programs.

Jim Noe expressed his concern over the scheduling time frame. The upper section is deteriorating very fast and likely will not hold up until 2026/2027.

Finance Committee member Tom Berkel asked if there was additional infrastructure funds that could be used, if the condition of the road would be considered in placement on the list, and if there would be delays because of supply chain issues.

Mark Moore explained that an additional \$2mil was received from infrastructure funds that bumped the TIP funding up to \$10mil from \$8mil. They have been seeing some delays to supply chain issues, but that would not stop a project from being advertised and contracted which assures funding.

Jim Lovejoy explained that he is the voting representative on the MPO for the South County Region. Members need to be convinced of the worthiness of a project. Projects are given a score. He is aware, as a Mount Washington Selectmen, of the urgency of this project as it is the only access to his town in Massachusetts. It also gives access to three state parks. He urged Selectboard members to attend the MPO meetings and advocate for the project, as will he.

Mark Moore said project scoring takes place at the February meeting, the TIP program is drafted in March and the final program schedule is prepared in April.

Selectboard member Brazie proposed the option of a two phases project, with the Westerly portion that is in critical need of repair being made a project on its own, the Easterly project being presented in the future or funded under other means, and the bridge at Farm Lane being repaired through a Small Bridge Program grant.

Mark More said that CHA has already presented that idea and it would be helpful in getting a project on the TIP list sooner. John Morgan said that this would remove all bridges from the scope of the project. An estimated of the total for Westerly portion of the road would be \$8mil.

Peter Frieri said the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) meets the next day to review the status of all projects on the TIP list. It is important someone attends that meeting.

Vice-Chair Lucinda Vermeulen asked why it hadn't been anticipated that the bridge would be removed and the project costs exceeded TIP funding. John Morgan said the original estimate was an \$8-10mil scope of work, cost increases have been substantial over the last 2 years.

CHA Engineer Rob Faulkner said that two phases of reconstruction would work their through the TIP program as 2 separate projects. There is the possibility that a project could receive funding in 2 TIP years. Mark Moore supported that and said it was an advanced construction program that if a project costs more than a years allocation of TIP funding it could be allocated over multiple years.

John Morgan will look at cost savings that may be implemented, will look at design changes to retaining walls, and suggested that maybe only the portion that is of critical concern on the Westerly section could be done. Rob Faulkner noted that the current design was to optimize design exceptions and safety and to lessen right of way impacts.

Selectboard member Mary Brazie moved to split the reconstruction project in two phases, the westerly portion being presented in the current TIP program and the Easterly portion being presented in the future, with the bridge near Farm Lane being removed and Small Bridge funds sought to replace it. Vice-Chair Vermeulen seconded. Voted unanimously in roll call vote.

Rob Faulkner said from a safety perspective this made better sense. CHA will let the Town know what the effect will be on the costs for engineering and will put together a construction estimate for just the Westerly portion of the road.

Chairman McGurn and Road Superintendent James Noe will attend the TAC meeting on February 15.

A MassWorks grant, capped at \$1mil, can be considered for other areas of the roadway.

Meeting adjourned at 2:19pm.

Mary Brazie,  
Office Administrator

minutes.22/feb14mwr

*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.*