

1 Town of Lincoln, Vermont
2 Minutes of Special Select Board Meeting
3 Lincoln Town Office
4 March 12, 2018 3:00 p.m.
5

6 In attendance: Bill Finger, Chair; Board Members Paul Forlenza, Will Sipsey, Oakley Smith;
7 Bookkeeper/Admin Ann Kensek, Road Foreman David Cavoretto. Absent: James Needham.
8 Public attendees: Dave Antone (Municipal Public Works Consulting), Ashley Bishop (Agency of
9 Transportation), Jaron Borg (Agency of Natural Resources), Josh Donabedian (Regional
10 Planning Commission), Jim Ryan (Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation), Linda
11 Blasch (VT-Trans Better Roads Program).
12

13 Introductions were made around the table.
14

15 Bill Finger announced that the purpose of the meeting was to educate the Select Board about
16 funding for roads. He reviewed what the Select Board has done to date regarding road
17 maintenance.

- 18 ▪ He presented a State road map of Lincoln on the overhead screen.
- 19 ▪ The bulk of road work has been grant fund driven.
- 20 ▪ The Board has talked about the possibility of bonding for road work.
- 21 ▪ A grid was presented explaining major road projects, including Quaker Street, South
22 Lincoln Road, River Road, Ripton Road, Colby Hill, Forge Hill, York Hill Road, and
23 Lincoln Gap Road.
- 24 ▪ Single road projects include box culverts and large culverts.
- 25 ▪ Bridge projects include York Hill Bridge B-46 and Grimes Road Bridge B-18.
- 26 ▪ Town of Warren intends to proceed with repairs to the Lincoln Gap Road on the Warren
27 side up to the top, where Lincoln's responsibility begins. Issues have arisen regarding
28 recreation vehicles and vehicles stranded on the Gap Road in the winter. Questions about
29 funding have been raised regarding road repair and safety issues.
- 30 ▪ The Forest Service has been requested to be involved in maintaining the Lincoln Gap
31 Road and other roads going through National Forest areas.
- 32 ▪ Reference was made to Dave Antone's report excerpting the Capital Plan. Dave Antone
33 presented a handout explaining his services to the Town of Lincoln regarding a Better
34 Roads Inventory and Highway Capital Improvement Plan. The handout is attached
35 hereto.
36

37 Jim Ryan asked about short-versus-long-term plan for funding. The response was three to five
38 years or a twenty to thirty-year bond.
39

40 A question arose about other town requirements. Josh Donobedian responded that through the
41 lens of Municipal Roads General Projects (MRGP), Lincoln is "up there" with roads that need
42 work.
43

44 Jim Ryan presented a sheet of near-term and longer-term deliverables. Municipal Roads and
45 Clean Water recently came up with programs through VTrans and other programs designed to
46 meet road standards.

- 47 ▪ The focus was on municipal roads closest to water, including classes 1, 2, 3 and 4 and the
48 potential for water running off into streams and rivers.
49 ▪ There is a requirement to do a road inventory to see if standards are in place and if not, to
50 bring them up to standards.
51 ▪ Towns have been given until 2020 to complete road inventories. In the years 2021 and
52 2022, all roads not meeting standards need to be brought up to standards.
53 ▪ The first permit cycle is a five-year cycle addressing high-priority roads before the year
54 2025 on slopes greater than 10% that do not meet MRGP standards.
55 ▪ Josh Donabedian added that all 100-meter roads should be categorized by low priority,
56 moderate priority, and high priority.
57

58 A question was asked about funding for towns with high-priority roads.

- 59 ▪ The response was that Lincoln has addressed clean water standards for local roads.
60 ▪ Meeting standards should be required instead of voluntary.
61 ▪ DEC allocates money to participating towns based on their road mileage.
62 ▪ Funding criteria are that the work has to be directed to a connected road section and that
63 the town agrees to meet the standards.
64

65 Dave Antone stated that some of the clean water issues have been addressed by the work that
66 Dave Cavoretto has done on local roads.
67

68 A question was posed about the \$3 million and \$2.9 million budgets for road improvement and
69 whether there is a maximum that a town can get every year.

- 70 ▪ This year the available moneys is \$2.9 million to towns for implementation, depending
71 on the number of towns that choose to participate.
72 ▪ Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) awards 80% cost share up to
73 the allocation.
74 ▪ Last year 70% of towns participated.
75 ▪ It is anticipated that more towns will participate this year.
76 ▪ For the Better Roads program, a project must be defined at the time of grant application.
77 ▪ More than one project may be applied for at one time.
78

79 Dave Antone reiterated that much of the road work will be done within the regular maintenance
80 of town roads.

- 81 ▪ Much of the work necessary to be funded depends on the road inventory.
82 ▪ About half of the connected roads already meet standards.
83 ▪ Other roads may need a higher level of work.
84 ▪ A percentage of road work must be done every year, including ditching, berming, and
85 taking down culverts.
86 ▪ A mile of road per year may need a considerable deal of work.
87 ▪ It was recommended that when applying for a Better Roads implementation grant, think
88 about how to bring the whole section of road up to standards rather than doing piecemeal
89 work.
90

91 A question arose about how much of the grant aid is federally funded.

- 92 ▪ Better Roads grants are all state funded.

- 93 ▪ Better Roads has been around for 20 years and is well established.
- 94 ▪ Inventory cost is funded federally.
- 95 ▪ The recommendation is to take advantage of the money while it is there.

96

97 Dave Antone explained that in the past drainage ditches have been directed into streams. The
98 new standard is to direct drainage into other places.

99

100 The Town will owe DEC money in July.

- 101 ▪ The fee bill in 2015 for permits and other permits was \$2000 annually per town per year.
- 102 ▪ Application for the permit requires an additional \$640 fee.
- 103 ▪ Administrative processing for Notice of Intent fee is \$240.
- 104 ▪ A bill is pending in the legislation to reduce the fees on a tier basis so the fee is based on
105 population and road miles. If the bill is approved, the fees for Lincoln will be reduced by
106 a couple hundred dollars.
- 107 ▪ Annual Report to DEC from towns ensures that the work is on target for meeting
108 standards.
- 109 ▪ An eroding road embankment next to a stream is exempt from the permit requirements.
- 110 ▪ New Haven River is considered a partially navigable waterway, which will be required to
111 meet different standards.

112

113 Mike Adams from the Army Corps of Engineers has stated that their jurisdiction is over perennial
114 streams, intermittent streams, ephemeral streams, and wetlands. Their standards are different
115 from state standards.

- 116 ▪ For bridges the town would need to work with the Corps of Engineers.
- 117 ▪ Less than 200 linear feet does not require Corps involvement, but volume may require
118 involving the Corps.
- 119 ▪ The Town would have to consult the Corps for class 2 roads.
- 120 ▪ It would be helpful to have another technical expert consulting in the field.
- 121 ▪ It was suggested that the self-verification be clear before consulting the Army Corps of
122 Engineers.

123

124 A question arose about Board decisions regarding roads being grant-driven.

- 125 ▪ For big projects, it would be helpful to have a central way of pulling grants together to
126 feed into projects rather than feeding projects into grants.
- 127 ▪ Grants should be applied for to Agency of Transportation (AOT).
- 128 ▪ The application period currently is 3-4 years for class 2 roads and 4-5 years for structures.
- 129 ▪ There is a \$175,000 maximum grant for class 2 and structures projects.
- 130 ▪ Two projects may be awarded funds under one grant if the roads are adjacent or close
131 together.
- 132 ▪ AOT allows two years to finish the work.
- 133 ▪ The award amounts to 80% state, 20% local moneys for class 2 roads.
- 134 ▪ The award amounts to 90% state, 10% local moneys for structures.
- 135 ▪ An AOT grant was last awarded Lincoln in 2014.
- 136 ▪ Regarding the Lincoln Gap Road, Warren and Lincoln will be required to apply for
137 funding separately.

- 138 ▪ A 30-month window provides opportunity to collaborate between towns for a project like
139 the Lincoln Gap Road.

140

141 A question arose about whether a grant can be awarded before the Board presents a bond vote for
142 road work. The answer was that road work may not begin until the grant is awarded.

143

144 Dave Cavoretto presented an estimate for work on Forge Hill Road.

- 145 ▪ Dave Cavoretto's estimate totals \$196,448.
- 146 ▪ There is a huge drainage issue of runoff into the New Haven River.
- 147 ▪ The proposal is to restructure the drainage system and route runoff into Isham Brook.
- 148 ▪ Josh Donabedian stated that within VTrans there is a Transportation Alternatives
149 Program for big-ticket projects with \$300,000 max on applications.
- 150 ▪ This fall will be the second year that the funding is reserved solely for water quality
151 projects within the state.
- 152 ▪ The Transportation Alternatives Program is designed for storm water structures.
- 153 ▪ Design for projects may require involvement by engineers and design consultants.
- 154 ▪ Timeline typically is 3-4 years from application to construction.
- 155 ▪ Being federal funds, there is a 75-page booklet of requirements that must be met.
- 156 ▪ It may be prudent to have Better Roads take a look at Forge Hill to see if it's a project for
157 the springtime.
- 158 ▪ A question arose about whether the Forge Hill project can be broken into segments.
- 159 ▪ Much of the work will be subbed out.
- 160 ▪ Forge Hill Road is class 3 and not eligible for class 2 funding.
- 161 ▪ The first two segments of the road are hydro-connected.
- 162 ▪ Grants in Aid funding from last summer allocated from Gove Hill has not yet been spent
163 and might be reallocated to Forge Hill.
- 164 ▪ The Forge Hill project is 1,090 feet long, or a total of 1,350 feet.
- 165 ▪ Relative to dividing the project into segments, the Quaker Street project was segmented
166 into two applications, both of which were granted.
- 167 ▪ A question arose about whether funds could be used to pay off a bond.
- 168 ▪ The response was that no work can be begun for an AOT grant until the grant is signed.
- 169 ▪ Letters of support from citizens regarding the need for road repair would help win a grant
170 award for the Forge Hill project.

171

172 It was reiterated that Lincoln roads need to be inventoried and necessary work prioritized.

- 173 ▪ The Select Board is faced with paved roads that are nearly impassable.
- 174 ▪ Funds may be wasted in patching roads while waiting for grants to be awarded.
- 175 ▪ Appreciation was given to transportation officials at the table who gave their time to
176 gather in order to make Lincoln proactive in meeting standards and getting the work done
177 regarding roads.
- 178 ▪ It may take a year to inventory roads.
- 179 ▪ Last year's Grant In Aid needs to be used on a project by June 1.
- 180 ▪ The higher the dollar value of a grant, the greater the competition for the grant.
- 181 ▪ Before resubmitting for a Better Roads grant that was denied, it is worth discussing with
182 Linda Blasch about why the grant was denied.
- 183 ▪ If a structures grant is applied for by April 13, the grant may be awarded on July 1.

- 184 ▪ A grant may be considered an engineering grant through the structures program for
- 185 culverts, for example.
- 186 ▪ Once a structures grant is awarded, there could be as much as a five-year wait to be
- 187 awarded another structures grant.
- 188 ▪ Jim Ryan offered to go out with Dave Antone and Dave Cavoretto to inspect possible
- 189 projects to help with prioritizing the inventory.
- 190 ▪ Hazard Mitigation Grant Program through FEMA offers funding for road projects.
- 191 ▪ The only consistent funding currently is through Grants in Aid and Better Road
- 192 Programs.
- 193 ▪ A skim coat and ditching may be a short fix while waiting for grant money.

194
195 The Natural Resources Atlas was uploaded from the Vermont Natural Resources website to
196 show storm water infrastructure.

- 197 ▪ Jim Ryan explained the makeup of the atlas, specifically how roads are divided into
- 198 segments.
- 199 ▪ It was determined that although Forge Hill is not designated as a connected road, it
- 200 qualifies as connected because its runoff feeds directly into the New Haven River.
- 201 ▪ For the Better Roads grant match portion of the expense, the 20% required from the town
- 202 can be in-kind services.
- 203 ▪ A structures grant may be allocated for class 1, 2, or 3 roads but must involve a 36-inch
- 204 pipe.

205
206 Pizza arrived at 5:30 p.m.

207
208 Jim Ryan handed out frequently asked questions about Vermont DEC Municipal Road Program
209 and a summary sheet regarding developing the Municipal Roads General Permit. Both handouts
210 will be attached to these minutes.

211
212 It was stated that York Hill Bridge #46 is in bad shape.

- 213 ▪ Josh Donabedian stated that VTrans ranks York Hill Bridge as a precandidate bridge.
- 214 ▪ The bridge is listed third in priority for repair.
- 215 ▪ The top priority bridge is in Middlebury, and the second is a bridge in Vergennes.
- 216 ▪ It is possible that York Hill Bridge could be closed and a temporary bridge built at extra
- 217 expense.

218
219 Other funding opportunities:

- 220 • ANR/DEC grants
- 221 • Municipal Planning grant—ACRPC/TAC grants
- 222 • High Risk Rural Roads grants
- 223 • Vermont Recreational grants
- 224 • Bike and Pedestrian grants
 - 225 ○ Statewide \$4 million is available in grant money, including small scale
 - 226 (\$25,000 cap) and large scale construction (sidewalks, streetscapes at
 - 227 \$300,000 cap).
 - 228 ○ The money is federally funded.
 - 229 ○ Contact for that program is John Caplan.

- 230 ○ Jaron Borg suggested that Lincoln Gap Road is used for biking and may
- 231 qualify for a grant application.
- 232 ○ Application deadline is mid-July every summer.
- 233 ○ Josh Donabedian is available to consult on grant application and will write a
- 234 letter of support.
- 235

236 Josh Donabedian stated that the Town's mitigation program has expired.

- 237 ▪ He is willing to work with the Town to readopting the program.
- 238 ▪ It is useful for grant applications to state that the Town mitigation program is in effect.
- 239 ▪ Bill Finger will call Tim Boutin regarding mitigation.
- 240

241 Ashley Bishop stated that in the case of a natural disaster, FEMA will fund road construction.

242

243 It was stated that at the March 20 meeting road inventory and priorities will be discussed.

244

245 Meeting adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

246

247 Respectfully submitted,

248 Ellie Bryant