

Town of Lincoln
Selectboard Regular Meeting
April 1, 2025

{Draft} Meeting Minutes

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84549957839?pwd=R6iOAnlriWMmmQ1V5uUZ6Dd4aGO8cY.1>

Vote format: YES/NO/Vacant, Absent, Abstention, Recusal

Called to order at 5:30 PM by Tim McGowan, Chair

Present: Jessica Erwin, Joe Martell, Tim McGowan, Lisa Sargent, Ken Stockman

Other town officials present: Will Mathis, Highway Supervisor; Trish Waugh, Town Administrator

Public present: Deirdre Zele (Zoom), Geoff Booth (Zoom), Laura Stone, VTrans, Mike Winslow, ACRPC, JB McCarthy, VTrans, Kyle Medash, VTrans (Zoom), Mindee Jeffery, Amy Masefield, Bill Finger

Public Comment

None

Agenda

MOTION by Tim, 2nd by Lisa to approve the agenda as written.

PASSED 5/0/0

Public Information Session - Local Concerns Meeting - Bridge 46 (York Hill)

- Laura Stone, Scoping Engineer, JB McCarthy, Design Project Manager and Kyle Medash (Zoom) were present from VTrans.
- Laura reviewed the goals of this meeting; providing an understanding of the approach to the project, an overview of the constraints, gathering the Town's needs, discussing the alternatives and providing an opportunity for questions and input. This information will be used to finalize a recommendation and scope of work for the bridge project.
- Laura shared the Local Concerns Meeting presentation with everyone and quickly went over what would be included in the presentation. Maps, current conditions, photos, alternative plans, anticipated timelines and project costs.
- Maps and aerial views of the location were displayed.
- On the VTrans Project Development process slide, Laura confirmed for everyone that this is still in the very early stages. The first stage was funding the project which had been done. Now we are in the Project Definition Stage. From this stage the project moves into the Project Defined stage, which is when they really get into permitting processes, develop plan sets and start the ROW processes. Once the Project Design is completed, we move to the Contract Award phase and then to Construction.
- The next slides showed definitions of the parts of a bridge and existing conditions of the bridge from different angles. Laura commented that the bridge was originally built in 1919 and rebuilt in 1970, however VTrans has no records or plans from the 1970 rebuild and is hoping that the town

can provide something. Trish confirmed that early in the scoping the town was asked about this and was not able to find any plans for the York Hill Bridge from that time.

- Lisa mentioned she thought the bridge was moved to that location, Joe confirmed a similar memory and after a brief discussion it was decided that the bridge was not moved.
- Laura reviewed Act 153 and how the Local Share of the project will be affected based on either the project being a rehabilitation only or a replacement, if the road is closed during construction or if the road is open during construction. The federal share is 80% of the cost, the state and town share the other 20% of the cost. If the town was to choose only to rehabilitate the bridge and close the road during the construction process so that there were no additional traffic control costs, then the town would only be responsible for 2.5% cost share. With the road open the cost share rises to 5%. Should the town decide on full replacement of the bridge then the share would be 5% if the road is closed and 10% of the cost if the road remains open.
- Laura moved on to the next slide showing again existing conditions. Tim asked Laura to go back over the prior slide since it was a lot of information to take in. Joe asked what the share would be if we went with a wider bridge and closed the road during construction. Laura confirmed it would be a 5% share.
- The existing conditions slide shows the current weight limit of 16,000 lbs. Additional information on existing conditions show the width of the bridge is currently substandard, the deck/floor system is in bad shape, the guardrail is damaged and substandard, the bridge does not meet the minimum hydraulic standard, and a new layer of asphalt is needed on the deck.
- Bill Finger commented that there was never asphalt on the deck; it was concrete and indeed is now in need of repair after some patching a few years ago.
- Laura's next slide showed the state rating systems for the existing conditions; Deck = 6 (Satisfactory), Superstructure = 4 (Poor, with inspections moved to annually), Substructure = 6 (Satisfactory) and the Channel = 6 (Satisfactory). To put it in perspective a 9 is brand new and a zero is failing. There are still concerns with scour and rotting on both the sub and superstructures.
- Laura explained on the next slide of the Southern Abutment that there is quite a bit of cracking, and the concrete is falling. Additionally, the base is like a gravelly material and they are concerned about it washing out.
- The slide of the Northern Abutment shows how it is starting to scour, the structure beginning to fall apart and collapse.
- Laura confirmed that we will not need to be concerned about anything environmental during the planning such as wetlands, or rare and endangered species, and that they did not find any archeological significance that we need to be concerned with. Although not included on the slide, the bridge is considered an historic structure and is on the National Register of Historic Places. This means the project will need to go through a 106 review and 4F process which just adds additional steps to the processes and tends to favor rehabilitation over replacement. JB commented that based on the substandard conditions, we should not have a problem if we decide on replacement rather than rehabilitation. Ken asked if it was considered historic because of its age and KB confirmed that was the reason, because it is over 50 years old.
- The next slide is an overview of the existing conditions layout showing the town's ROW, and utilities. The existing conditions typical section show the bridge width as substandard as it is only 20 feet wide rail to rail (18' each lane and 1' for each shoulder).
- Laura went over the Design Criteria and Considerations are based on an average of 140 vehicles per day with approximately 22 per hour at a speed of 35 MPH. It is estimated that 6% of those vehicles include trucks. Trish asked where those figures came from and if they were compiled since the bridge weight limit was lowered. Trish is concerned that 6% seems low for the truck traffic and would like to see the bridge built to withstand the actual amount of trucks crossing if it is higher under normal weight conditions. Laura said they ask their traffic folks to go out with traffic counters to evaluate. JB stated that they also have formulas that consider the type of neighborhood on the road. The figures they are showing are based on 20 years in the future so the

values being shown today are actually lower. Mike Winslow stated that the ACRPC also did a traffic study in 2022 on that bridge and came to a similar conclusion.

- Laura discussed the alternatives that would be included in the Scoping Report which include; no action (not recommended), truss rehabilitation, full bridge replacement with a new pony truss and full bridge replacement with a steel beam bridge. Both the full replacements have alternatives for on and off alignments. Additionally, both of the full replacement options would widen the bridge to meet minimum standards.
- Truss rehabilitation would basically mean cleaning, repair or replacement of the deteriorated truss members and painting attempting to keep the historical structures. Replacement of the bridge seats and backwalls and construction of a new floor system and deck. This option has an expected life span of 40 years. Ken asked if the portion of road pictured above York Hill bridge would be widened to accommodate a wider bridge. Laura stated that the drawings are not to scale as they are conceptual in nature. The rehabilitation option would not widen the bridge. Ken asked Laura to confirm that if the road did need to be widened to accommodate one of the other options that it appeared all the work would be completed within the town ROW. Laura confirmed.
- The 2nd alternative, a new parker pony truss, would widen the bridge to minimum standards, has a 75-year design life and increase the length to 80' for improved hydraulics. Bill asked if the additional width would accommodate pedestrians and bicycles. Laura confirmed that the increased width to 2' on each shoulder would allow for additional foot traffic. Since it is a town owned bridge, we are able to ask for the width to be increased further. If we ask for too much, it is considered an enhancement and will not be paid for under this project. Ken asked how much wider we could go if we only rehabilitated, Laura and JB confirmed that they did not think the bridge could go much wider with that alternative plan.
- On and off alignment layouts for the 2nd alternative were shown. This would have a higher impact on adjacent properties. A benefit of going with off alignment is that you can keep the road open during construction.
- Alternative three is for a new steel beam bridge. Once again, this will widen the bridge to 2' on each shoulder. This is shown with regular steel guardrails and can be constructed with a concrete deck.
- Ken asked about the off-alignment options and if there would be a desire to align them another way. Clarification was needed on which bridge was the "off alignment" since both are drawn on the sketch. Laura confirmed that the original bridge was on the bottom and the new off alignment bridge would be located slightly upstream. Will thought it would make more sense to move the off-alignment bridge downstream. Ken asked if that would create a four-way intersection with Atkins Road. Will said it would not as the new alignment would still be slightly up from there. Lisa asked if the new alignment would help see better around the corner since there is currently an obstructed view. Lisa stated that where the bridge is now it is difficult to turn left. Will asked, because the bridge is historical, do we need to keep the trusses. It is the trusses that seem to create the blind stop. Will stated that the alignment of the bridge should be straight on. Joe mentioned that there are trees that are creating a blind spot as well. Tim asked Joe to point on the map where he thought might be a good spot for the realignment. Amy mentioned that the realignment may be helpful for the blind spot. Bill pointed out that this is the last bridge in Lincoln that has any historical architecture. Although he understands the trusses are causing blind spots, perhaps there is another solution like having the concrete pillars underneath like in Middlebury. Laura thought although it was feasible, it would make it more difficult to meet the hydraulic standard and would be costly. Laura confirmed either way it would still be an 80/20 split on the financing. JB stated that design options are available but within reason. Costly options would not be approved. Bill gave an example of a bridge in Huntington recently installed. He thought it would be interesting to see what that involved. JB thought that it might have been replaced during a mitigation project which has different requirements.

- Maintenance of traffic options considered are an offsite detour (full road closure) or a temporary bridge. Offsite would be chosen and signage installed by the Town during the entire construction. The shortest detour route would be about 5 miles end-to-end, which includes the road being closed at West Hill Rd and York Hill Rd.
- An overview of the location of a temporary one lane bridge was shown which would be downstream from the existing bridge. Once completed the temporary bridge would be removed.
- A matrix showing the estimated costs for each project was displayed. Rehabilitation (alternative 1) is a total cost of \$3,196,928 with a town share of \$79,923 (2.5%). Use of a temporary bridge during this rehabilitation would more than double the town's share. Alternative 2, which is full replacement with another truss bridge, has a total cost of \$4,232,251 with a town share of \$211,613 (5%). Off alignment and temporary bridge options would double the town cost. Alternative 3 is the full replacement with a steel beam bridge that has a total cost of \$3,045,957 and a town share of \$152,298 (5%). Again, adding off alignment or temporary bridge options doubles the town share. The realignment options are a bit cheaper, but it increases the town share from 5% to 10%, which is what makes it more expensive.
- Bill asked if these construction estimates were based on future prices or current prices. Laura stated that costs are very difficult to pin down lately, having a 45% increase over the last few years. There is a small contingency built in, so they are inflated slightly. Bill is concerned since a recent bridge replacement was estimated at \$800,000 and then came in at over \$3 million.
- Laura reminded that bridge inspections will continue during this time and could lead to increased costs. Ken asked if extreme storm damage could move the timeline up. Laura stated that although the funds have been accounted for, they are not currently available, and storm damage would likely be covered under other means.
- The state recommends using the traffic offsite detour to maintain traffic as it reduces the cost of the local share by 50%.
- Laura explained that the town needs to decide what option should be included in the Scoping Plan. Tim asked when the decision was needed. Laura said the town does not need to decide today or this week but within the next couple of months, the state needs to include the recommendation in the Scoping Plan. Once permitting starts, divisions like historical will refer to what the recommendation is in the Scoping Plan.
- The preliminary project schedule currently shows construction beginning in 2030.
- Tim asked Kyle if he had any thoughts on the options. Kyle stated we are too early in the process yet for him to have any guidance. Although, the bridge is in the FEMA flood zone which makes hydraulics important. Studies will need to be performed regardless of which structure we decide on. Tim asked if costs for those studies were included in the estimates. Laura confirmed that they would be included in the engineering costs. The state has in-house staff and occasionally seeks outside consultants.
- Tim asked if widening the bridge would increase costs. Laura stated that widening the shoulder from 2' to 3' would be negligible. Will questioned if moving the abutments upstream or downstream would-be additional engineering costs. JB thought it would not. JB went back to the reference of realigning the road to the bridge and said that would make it more difficult.
- Laura went through the next steps of finalizing the scoping report with the town's recommendation. Conceptual plans will be prepared for comment and then process of local agreements, ROW process (if needed) and updates and estimates of any plan updates after each submittal.
- Tim went over the approval schedule and when the town may be responsible for cutting checks. Laura stated that the town would be responsible when engineering costs start and would be billed as costs come in. Once construction starts, that is when the bigger bills will be coming in and then the town is billed less frequently. Design costs could begin sometime in FY26.
- Will and selectboard members discussed the available options. Will did not feel it was a good idea to put a band aid on it when it is not that much more expensive to replace it for new.

- Amy stated widening the bridge and the visibility need to be improved. She is concerned about over widening.
- Bill asked if the adjacent landowners were made aware. Laura stated that typically it is up to the town to contact. Once design plans were ready, they would reach out.
- The state left the meeting at this point.
- Bill informed the selectboard that the town meeting ad hoc committee met the night before and that it was a productive meeting.
- The selectboard members continued to discuss the bridge options. Lisa thinks the bridge should be realigned. Lisa remembers the 1998 flood when all of the debris was stuck at the bridge and water was flowing over the bridge.
- Jessica expressed the desire to keep the arches. Ken mentioned keeping the current bridge, building a new one and using the old bridge for recreation. Everyone agreed that would not be a good idea.
- Trish reminded the board that a decision need not be made this evening and that we needed to move on in the agenda as the meeting was running late.
- Most members seem to be leaning toward a total replacement. The discussion will continue in the next meeting. Since there seemed to be confusion on who was supposed to reach out to the neighbors, Trish would like to invite the adjoining neighbors to the next meeting.

Updates & Reports

Highway update

- Will stated that the focus over the past week has been hauling and spreading gravel.
- Wayne Preston has joined the team again as a part-time employee. Wayne's focus is on grading the roads.
- Will believes we are through the most severe part of the mud season. Will thought Quaker was extremely bad but local residents commented that it was the best it has been in years. One solution Will mentioned was to line and regrade the portion just past Zeno Road. There was discussion about whether this was really worth the time, effort and funds since it would benefit the Starksboro side more than the Lincoln side.
- There will be temporary road closures scheduled for Ripton and Notch Rd in the upcoming weeks for culvert replacement. The Town Administrator will be notified so as to post this on the website and Front Porch Form.
- The crew has been formulating a culvert inventory and noting what culverts need to be replaced. There are culverts on the inventory map listed as green that are now red. Trish asked if Will was updating the map as he was doing this and he confirmed that he was not. Trish asked Mike Winslow if Lincoln was still on the list to have their inventory reassessed this spring. Mike said we were taken off the list since we received grant funds to have it completed and he assumed we would be going with an outside vendor. Will and Trish confirmed with Mike that Lincoln would prefer ACRPC continued to complete the assessments. A future meeting to discuss the logistics will be scheduled.

Town Administrator Update

- Trish provided an update on the FY24 Audit. Another field visit will be scheduled, and Lincoln was provided with an updated to do list.
- Larry will be in this Friday to close out March and updated financials will be provided at the next selectboard meeting.
- Tax payments for the 24/25 are now completed and Nancy and Trish will be finalizing the delinquent list for approval at the next selectboard meeting.
- With the O365 project finally completed, the phone system upgrade approved last fall will begin.

- The former Administrative Assistant left a very helpful educational video on how to complete the heavy weight permits. Trish will be working on getting them updated and signed.
- Trish will be gathering the information necessary to submit for reimbursement for the Downingsville Rd Better Roads grant. The grant was \$40,000 with a \$10,000 town match. The deadline for completion of the project and submission of the final report is 9/30/2025.
- Advertising of the Administrative position was included in this week's Seven Days addition and went live on Indeed on Monday. We have two interviews scheduled for this evening and one currently scheduled for the next meeting.
- Annual reviews will be conducted in June. As preparation for the reviews, appointed employees will be asked to fill out a self-assessment. Once those are collected, Will and Trish will fill out the Annual Review forms for each employee and meet with the Selectboard to review before scheduling individual employee meetings.

Current Business and Authorizations

Decide on whether to join the Rural School Community Alliance

MOTION by Tim, 2nd by Lisa to table the discussion until the next meeting and invite someone from the Alliance and Lincoln School to provide additional information.

PASSED 5/0/0

Review Employee Request

- Discussion continued from the previous meeting in regard to an employee's request to use the Town Garage after hours for working on a personal vehicle. The engine needs to be replaced, and it will take a few days to complete.
- Trish explained that the Vermont Municipal Code of Ethics was recently updated on 1/1/2025. Trish also reminded the Selectboard this also requires training to be completed by board members and other town officials. In addition, section 1993 (e) Prohibited conduct prohibits the use of a town's materials, funds, property, facilities, or equipment unless the use is expressly permitted by State law; ordinance; or a written policy or rule. While we could adopt a personnel policy to allow the use, there is still considerable risk of liability for the employee and our equipment. PACIF feels a waiver of liability would not hold up in court. Trish did present an additional option of creating a Facility Use Policy rather than adopting a personnel policy which would require the user to purchase their own insurance. The board agreed that the waiver does not provide protection and felt it was too much of a liability. Additionally, even if we were to adopt a policy for the employees, the Municipal Code of Ethics states that Will's position is ineligible, which is not treating everyone equally.

MOTION by Tim, 2nd by Joe to deny the employees' request to use any town facilities for personal use.

PASSED 5/0/0

Review and Approve Catering Permit for Burnham Hall May 23rd.

MOTION by Tim, 2nd by Ken to approve permit application #56410 for a preschool fundraiser at Burnham Hall on May 23, 2025.

PASSED 5/0/0

Accounts Payable & Payroll Warrants

MOTION by Tim, 2nd by Joe to approve **AP 25-40 for \$30,883.50.**

Includes \$6,989.95 for health insurance; \$4,994.64 for the US Bank interest payment; and \$2,240.00 for the 2024 Dog Warden fees; \$1,927.50 for legal fees.

- Tim questioned charges on the Putnam legal invoice that appeared unrelated to town business. It was decided to remove the invoice from the warrant for further investigation

MOTION by Tim to amend the prior approval to **\$28,956.00**, 2nd by Lisa.

PASSED 5/0/0

MOTION by Tim, 2nd by Lisa to approve **PR 25-38 for \$6,091.35** [pay period ending 3/15/2025.]

PASSED 5/0/0

MOTION by Tim, 2nd by Lisa to approve **PR 25-39 for \$6,155.40** [pay period ending 3/22/2025.]

PASSED 5/0/0

Previous Meeting Minutes

MOTION by **Tim**, 2nd by **Joe** to approve meeting minutes for the 3/18/2025 regular meeting with the addition of Benjamin Putnam as a participant.

PASSED 4/0/1 (Ken abstain)

New Business

- Joe asked the Board members to consider a raise for both Dan and Gary for their superior work. Trish reminded Joe that the board adopted a Personnel Review Policy so that any raises would follow a procedure that allowed for equality amongst all employees. It was further discussed that a 4% raise was approved by the voters that would take effect on 7/1/2025. Lisa asked if Dan and Gary had requested a raise. Joe confirmed they did not.

Appointments and Employment

Appointments Update

- Discussion regarding why the Treasurer position had a 1-year term as it is an appointed position. Although not certain, Trish remembers there being a reason why this was still listed with a term. The Board approved appointing the current interim Treasurer, Trish, to another year. The Assistant Treasurer's position was extended until September as Larry is seeking to retire this summer.
- Outreach to appointees with expiring terms continued from the last meeting. Tim will contact the Emergency Manager. Additionally, Tim will reach out to the one person that filled out the volunteer sheet at Town meeting to see if they would be interested in filling the Addison County Communications Union District Alternate position.
- Trish updated the Appointee Term Tracker with the information provided from Nicole/DRB. Ken Stockman was assigned as the TAC delegate and Bill Finger moved to the Alternate position. Prior appointees were confirmed for re-appointment for the other positions.
- The list should be finalized at the next Selectboard meeting.

MOTION by Tim, 2nd by Lisa to approve the new municipal appointments. .

PASSED 5/0/0

Executive Session

MOTION by Tim, 2nd by Lisa to enter executive session regarding the appointment, employment, or evaluation of a public officer or employee under the provisions of 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3).

PASSED 5/0/0

Entered Executive Session at 8:07 PM

Exited Executive Session at 9:10 PM

No decisions were made as a result of executive session discussion.

MOTION by Tim, 2nd by Joe to adjourn at 9:10 PM.

PASSED 5/0/0

Respectfully submitted: Trish Waugh