

**Town of Auburn
Board of Selectmen
October 5, 2017**

Selectmen Present: James Headd, Richard Eaton & Dale Phillips

Also Present: Jim Fusco, Road Agent Michael Dross, Rene LaBranche of Stantec Consulting, and William Herman, Town Administrator

Mr. Headd called the public meeting to order at 3:02 p.m.

Appointments with the Board

Update on Status of Griffin Mill Bridge

Mr. Headd asked Mr. LaBranche to provide an update since everyone last met on September 25th. Mr. LaBranche reported the bridge team evaluated the suggestion of dual support cross beams for the temporary structural bridge support as Mr. Fusco had mentioned and it was agreed it would be a prudent course of action. He noted the overall cost for this temporary repair would be approximately \$30,000.

Mr. LaBranche also noted the Board of Selectmen had expressed concern about the need for temporary access of the Fusco's property for the construction or rehabilitation work associated with the permanent fix of the Griffin Mill Bridge. On September 25th, it was suggested all of the construction would have to take place from the Hooksett Road side of the bridge, but Mr. LaBranche indicated aspects of the construction will require or will be most cost effective with temporary access provided from the Fusco's side of the bridge. He indicated this work would include excavation for the proposed concrete abutment; trucking of gravels/crushed stone for the footing base material; placement of concrete formwork; placement of concrete for the abutment footing and abutment wall; trucking for backfill of the abutment; excavation of existing pavement and gravels; placement of new gravels for the roadway, and paving of the roadway. He indicated all of this work would be done in a controlled manner to minimize the impact on the Fusco's property, but access to their property for this purpose was necessary for the project.

Mr. Fusco asked if the bridge work was going to be put out to bid or would the Town be favoring a few local individuals who he felt were not qualified for this type of work? He felt the bridge is a specialty item and required talents beyond general road construction. The Road Agent stated he was highly insulted by Mr. Fusco's comments assuming he was referring to himself and Rolfe Construction. As a result, he said he would not be involved in any of the work associated with the Griffin Mill Bridge, whether it was on the Fusco property or not.

Mr. LaBranche noted the Town, through Road Agent Dross, served as the general contractor for the Old Candia Road bridge replacement, which was a far more complicated and detailed project than the Griffin Mill Bridge. He indicated the project was done well, met all requirements of the NH Department of Transportation, and involved specialty contractors as needed. He stated “a real bang up job” was done with that project.

Mr. Eaton felt the Town needed to build a temporary access road to function in place of the closed Griffin Mill Bridge. He felt the temporary road that begins on the Manchester Water Works property should be completed to Griffin Mill Road, and that he was not personally in favor of spending \$30,000 on a temporary repair of the bridge. He felt the temporary access road would need to be used for the next four years until the bridge is scheduled for replacement of the bridge.

Mr. Fusco indicated his wife has a lot of concerns with the temporary access road, and felt if the road was in place for four or five years, it would become the alternative to replacing the bridge. He also suggested the Town needs to discuss compensation to the Fuscos for aggravation and property damage/disruption that would be caused by a temporary access road. He stressed they are opposed to any access road in the location through Manchester Water Works property, and would prefer to have a gravel driveway through their field off Route 121 to their current driveway (approximately 450-feet in length). Mr. Herman indicated such an arrangement would need to be established through a temporary easement to the Town which legal counsel can prepare, and Mr. LaBranche estimated the construction of a 14-foot wide gravel driveway would be approximately \$25,000. The Road Agent noted there was a wetlands issue at the base of the current abutting driveway of the Sergeant's property which could impact placing a driveway in this location, in addition to being some wetlands noted in portions of the field itself. Mr. Herman was doubtful a driveway permit would be issued by NHDOT for this location.

Mr. LaBranche noted to determine if this temporary driveway location is possible, they would investigate the potential of a NHDOT driveway permit, in addition to whether the shoreline buffer and/or permit comes into play with this project. He also noted if the temporary driveway goes into this location, the Town will need to clean-up and removed the temporary access road established on the Manchester Water Works property.

Mrs. Phillips noted it is her understanding the current wooden deck in place on the Griffin Mill Bridge is in great shape, and she would be interested in knowing if the deck can be re-used as part of the permanent bridge repair. Mr. LaBranche noted the Road Agent has made the same observation, and he felt it can be looked at, but he is not sure if it will meet with NHDOT approval under their funding program.

Mr. Eaton felt all options need to be looked at, suggesting a \$400,000 bridge project under NHDOT standards requires the Town to invest \$80,000 (20%). If the Town can

repair the bridge for a total cost of \$80,000 to \$100,000 on its own, it should be looked at and considered.

Mr. Fusco suggested the Town look at building up the bridge and then ramping up the road and driveway to meet the bridge. The Road Agent and Mr. LaBranche both indicated it is better to use what you have to the extent possible and not change the grades. Mr. LaBranche felt that would be the most cost effective approach

Mr. LaBranche felt for the permanent replacement project, they need to determine if the re-use of the deck and the seat of the current abutments can be used as part of the long-term repair process and, if they can, to put a number to it for the Board's consideration.

Mr. Fusco felt a decision had to be made as to whether a temporary fix to the bridge or the temporary access driveway is undertaken. The Road Agent felt it did not make sense to perform a temporary repair of the bridge and then build a temporary access road for the construction project. He noted the road or driveway was going to be needed no matter what, and it did not make sense to do both.

Mr. Fusco indicated they are trying to work with the Town, but the Town has not been working with them. He also felt the Town has not been maintaining what it currently owns, which has led to the current state of affairs. He asked how their property would be restored if a temporary gravel driveway is installed. Mr. LaBranche reported it would be restored to current condition with the removal of most of the gravel driveway, and then loam being placed where the gravel had been. Mr. Fusco indicated a 14-foot driveway would be fine, but they were not going to allow a road to be built through their property.

Mrs. Phillips indicated she didn't see why the Town can't continue the road from the temporary access in place on Manchester Water Works property, and Mr. Fusco indicated they did not want that portion of their property disturbed and they simply were not going to allow the Town to use that property.

Mr. LaBranche summarized that Stantec would initially look into the potential of a NHDOT driveway permit and a NHDES shoreline permit for the potential gravel driveway through the Fusco's property. They will also evaluate the permanent bridge fix to include use of the existing deck as discussed.

It was agreed the parties would meet again on Thursday, October 12th at 3:00 PM.

Mr. LaBranche and Mr. Fusco left the meeting at 4:01 PM.

Other Business

Non-Public Meeting for Personnel Matter

Mr. Headd indicated to the Board he has had contact with a former employee who had asked for a non-public meeting with the Board. The Board agreed they would meet on a date to be chosen during the week of October 16th.

2017 Tax Rate

Mr. Herman reported the Town has received a preliminary tax rate for 2017 from the NH Department of Revenue Administration. He indicated the rate was \$21.15, which was a 90-cent increase from the current rate of \$20.25. The main difference in this rate and the rate the Town Administrator and Finance Director estimated in September is that a lower overlay amount (\$50,000 versus \$75,000) was used, and the School District had a significant increase in the State Education Grant from the prior year.

Mr. Herman noted if the Board wanted to retain a \$75,000 overlay account, it would change the rate by four-cents to \$21.19. The Board unanimously agreed to leave the calculations as they are and stay with the rate of \$21.15.

Appletree Property

Mr. Herman reported a flaw in the tax deeding process of 1978 was discovered for the three acre parcel on Appletree Road that was sold at auction in August. A title search found the defect, which can be resolved through a quiet title process. In consulting with Town Counsel, the process will likely take four to five months and would cost approximately \$5,000. The successful bidder has indicated they would move to close on the property once a judge's order quiets the title. The Board unanimously agreed to authorize the quiet title process.

Mr. Herman reported the other property of 0.66-acres on Appletree Road is moving forward to close, and a date for closing will be set for the week of October 10th.

Adjourn

Mr. Eaton moved to adjourn; Mrs. Phillips seconded the motion; all were in favor, the meeting ended at 4:16 p.m.