

**Town of Londonderry, Vermont  
Williams Dam Advisory Committee**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Wednesday, June 8, 2023**

**Twitchell Building - 100 Old School Street, South Londonderry, VT**

**Committee Members Present:**

**Robert Forbes, Rachel Febbie, Richard Phelan, Paul Hendler**

**Committee Members Absent: Jim Ameden**

**Others in Attendance:**

**Select Board Members: Melissa Brown, Tom Cavanagh**

**Town Administrator: Shane O'Keefe**

**Vermont Dam Safety: Ben Green**

**Meeting was called to order at 4:30Pm.**

**Additions or Deletions to Agenda (1 VSA 312(d)(3)9A): None**

**Introductions were made between Ben Green and the Williams Dam Advisory Committee.**

**Meeting(s) will be held every 1st and 3rd Monday of the month until November 30, 2023**

## **Questions and Answers with Ben Green:**

The committee asked multiple questions to Green regarding the Dam Safety Program, about other dams in the State of Vermont, conditions ratings and classifications of dams (including the Williams Dam), and questions pertaining just to the Williams Dam.

### **Information gathered from the questions:**

The Dam Safety Program does have recording keeping, and would be happy to share any records/information they have with the committee on the Williams Dam. Forbes shared with Green the 1999 engineer work in his possession, and offered Green a copy as well for their records.

Condition ratings and hazard classification ratings are different. The Williams Dam first “poor” condition rating was in 1999, and the Williams Dam hazard classification change from “low” to “significant” in 2022. There is a visual inspection scheduled to take place this year for a condition rating.

The classification study conducted by the Dam Safety Program that changed the Williams Dam classification rating from “low” to “significant” relied heavily on the data that was collected in the D&K Study of the Williams Dam in 2022. Dam Safety calibrated with D&K during their study, and the D&K Study and the Dam Safety Classification Study of the Williams Dam were published within weeks of each other. Forbes pointed out in the 2015 Dam Inspection Report that the Dam Safety Program suggested the town of Londonderry have an engineer study the dam during the appropriate time of year when water levels are lower, however D&K conducted their evaluation and data collection 2 days during November when water levels were not that of summer months and there was also ice on the river. Brown noted that all past inspection where done in July and in August. Febbie question whether the D&K data was collected could have error due to the time of year the data was collected, the

location, and minimal duration of time the collection to place. Also, stated that the data seems to differ from pictures and measurement Forbes took over the summer of 2022. Febbie then asked when changing the hazard classification did Dam Safety only rely on the D&K study. Dam Safety responded that they used primarily two resources: D&K and FEMA Mapping. The FEMA mapping is what is available to Dam Safety, but they are not sure when the mapping was last done or if it is still accurate. It is assumed to be. Dam Safety reminded the committee if the town of Londonderry wished to dispute the classification of the Williams Dam there is a provision to do so, and that it would require the town to hire an engineer. The responsibilities of a dam owner for “low” and “significant” hazard dams do differ, and there are less requirements when a dam is classified as “low hazard”. Dam Safety did say if the town would like to dispute the classification that only two factors could change the classification in the modeling they use is: 1) the impoundment behind the dam and 2) the natural dam the Utility Brook created when West River and Utility Brook merge (Dam Safety was not aware of the natural occurring water dam/water bank)

Febbie asked if removing the dam would change the impact to the downtown village during heavy rains, flash flooding, and flooding? The answer was yes. During floods the water diverts over the cement wall on the opposite of the bridge from the dam, and goes down the center of town, and if the dam is removed it will be lower, and more water will go down the river channel most likely having greater impact on the buildings along the river (ie. Jellys, Mike and Tammys, Garden).

Would fixing the gate resolve anything? Mixed messages...

Febbie asked if fire safety was a concern of dam safety, moreover, if removing the Williams Dam creates a life safety issue for fire safety in the community then have we actually created a less life threatening situation for our community by removing the dam. Their response was Dam Safety is worried about dam safety only, and that the town of Londonderry would have to decide which carries more life safety concern for the community, fire safety or concern of a breach of the dam.

The biggest take away was that Dam Safety said at this time there are NO requirements being made for the Town of Londonderry to do anything with the Williams Dam.

*Phelan moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Forbes, passed unanimously.*

The meeting adjourned at 5:55pm.

The next regular meeting of the Williams Dam Advisory is scheduled for June 19, 2023 at 4:30Pm at the Williams Dam.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rachel Febbie

***Approved***

**Williams Dam Advisory Committee**

---

Rich Phelan, Chair

\* \* \*