

Town of Londonderry, Vermont
Williams Dam Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
Monday, September 18, 2023
Twitchell Building-100 Old School Street, Londonderry, VT

Committee Members Present: Robert Forbes, Rachel Febbie, Richard Phelan, Paul Hendler, Jim Ameden

Selectboard Member: Tom Cavanagh, Melissa Brown

Planning Board Member: Heather Stephenson

Town Administrator: Shane O'Keefe (in and out)

1. The meeting was called to order at 4:30 Pm by Phelan.
2. Additions or Deletions to Agenda (1 VSA 312(d)(3)9A): None
3. Minutes were approved for the August 7, 2023 and August 21, 2023 meeting.
4. The committee approved the RFP for hydrologists to show what would happen during a significant flood event if the Williams Dam was removed. Bob Forbes spoke to the RFP being general, and that the committee members are not engineers, and we need the engineers (whomever is selected) to help us define what exactly the committee is looking for, how to achieve it, and what the best tools are needed to achieve those goals. Forbes spoke to the fact that we also have Ben Green's (Dam Safety) suggestions as well as other engineers that have been spoken to. It was agreed the RFP will need to be sent out ASAP. Discussion continued on when Stephenson asked the questions whether or not any studies have been done modeling both unsteady and steady flow, asked if we were asking the engineer to calibrate their modeling using empirical data with the assumption that it has not been done before, and ask if the photosims was necessary since we are working with a small budget and we will have the reports. Stephenson also pointed out that the proposal is only asking to model the flow without the dam during peak flow, and did not ask to model unsteady flow overtime without the dam, for example what would 5 years look like, and said they are two separate things. Febbie had previously expressed the same concern. Hendler stated that we are trying to determine how flooding would change if the dam was removed. Febbie said she would vote yes to the proposal, but doesn't think it is as simple as just what will be the change in flooding with or without the dam. The discussion continued, and Phelan stated we just need an engineer in here, and we can add and subtract later, but we need to get the RFP out. Ameden agreed. O'Keefe suggested we be upfront with our budget to the engineers, and conversation continued regarding cost. *Ameden made a motion to put out a RFP with a 20K price tag, and Phelan 2nd it. The motion was approved.*
5. Discussion about the recent DuBois & King after flood inspection of the Williams Dam was short. Discussion was whether or not D & K found further damage to the dam, and possible plans for Edge Hill Road. The bridge and VTrans came up in discussion, and Forbes presented

the bridge engineer plans showing boring samples done to establish where the ledge is. Forbes stated that we have hard data, and we can share that with the engineer who is hired **for the** study. Discussion moved to the flood gate, when it worked last, how much a repair would cost, what it would help, the recommendations from the state and studies that have been made to fix it, etc. Stephenson states, “I am hearing you say that all the studies are pointing to removal, and I did not find that clearly in any of the reports. I understand the perspective of the state and the CRC, but the data that is missing for me is modeling without the dam during peak flow and during regular flow, like what happens in 5 years to the folks downstream from the dam when the river changes and things like that, and in this moment I really appreciate the due diligence even though there are old report none of it is clear what will happen if the dam is gone. I haven’t seen that anywhere”. Phelan agreed. Febbie brought up a conversation she had with a FEMA Risk Analysis regarding risk, and in that conversation she was told the biggest risk is removal because it is the one thing we do not know. Discussion moved to cost. Brown pointed out the appeal to removal of the dam is that there is funding available for it that could lead to “little or no cost” to remove it. Ameden stated that there will be a cost, it may not be a financial cost, but there is apt to be a cost. Brown agreed, and said this is why we need this information and why we have this committee.

6. Discussion moved to FEMA not willing to repair the Dam. O’Keefe said, “FEMA said because we have not kept up with the dam maintenance over the years and there is not a significant amount of damage to the dam from the flooding there is no reason to keep it in their FEMA inventory.” O’Keefe spoke that they are trying to encourage FEMA to pay for the study the committee is looking to get.

Phelan moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Forbes, passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 6:15pm.

The next regular meeting of the Williams Dam Advisory is scheduled for October 2, 2023 at Londonderry Town Office.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rachel Febbie

Approved
Williams Dam Advisory Committee

Rich Phelan, Chair