

**Town of Freedom
Selectmen's Meeting
Friday, November 8, 2019**

Present were Selectmen Leslie Babb, Ernest Day, Jr., and Alan Fall and Ellen White, Town Administrator, who recorded the minutes. This meeting was held in the Town Office.

Chairman Babb called the meeting to order at 9:00 am.

Chris Fournier from HEB Engineers, Inc. reported that he has completed the preliminary review on the two bids received for the Danforth Bridge Project. He concludes that the math checks out on each bid received. Fournier stated that two items were missing from the bid request including a requirement for the contractor to be on the NH DOT qualified contractors list that he confirmed in his notes as requested by the Town and he in error omitted from the bid package, but because there is no federal funding included, they can proceed with accepting the bids received as submitted.

Fournier confirmed with C.R. Willeke at NH DOT that even though the bids came in higher than expected, additional funds are available to the Town of Freedom.

Discussion took place on whether it would be worthwhile to put the project back out to bid. It was agreed that they can proceed to award using the bids received.

Road Agent Scott Brooks discussed the contractor qualification requirement and confirmed the cost estimate for this particular project to be \$1.2-\$1.5 million. The bid received from an experienced contractor (Northeast Earth Mechanics, Inc.) came in just less than the projected amount.

Fournier acknowledged that there have been no reference checks conducted at this time. Babb expressed concern with the lack of experience with the other contractor (Integrity Earth Works). Day questioned why the credentials of both contractors have not been reviewed yet. Fournier explained that HEB is already familiar with Northeast Earth as a prequalified contractor.

A citizen voiced concern with the closure of the bridge during construction and suggested overlapping emergency services to accommodate emergency needs. Babb responded that they are beyond that point of discussion.

Mark McConkey questioned the difference in price between the two bids received. Day responded that the difference is \$221,000 of which \$44,000 is the Town's portion.

Paul Eli questioned if there is a difference in the time to complete the project if the bridge is closed down completely. The preliminary details for emergency response have already been worked out with Rob Cunio, and the closure will result in a 6-8-week diversion.

Brooks added that the challenge will be mitigating the water runoff. This will require additional provisions to maintain a dry hole, similar to what he dealt with in the Square Brook project which was noted to be much less complicated than this project.

Fournier acknowledged that no schedule has been received from either contractor, but the request is for completion in October.

Discussion took place on whether they are prepared to proceed. Fall made a motion to proceed with awarding the bid to Northeast Earth Mechanics, Inc. pending receipt of a schedule and NH DOT approval. Day seconded. All in favor, motion carried.

The Board proceeded with the setting of the 2019 tax rate.

Further discussion took place on the process for the sale of tax deeded properties.

Being no further input, the meeting was adjourned at 9:50 am.

Respectfully submitted,
Ellen White
Town Administrator

Approved by the Board of Selectmen on _____:

Leslie R. Babb

Ernest F. Day, Jr.

Alan G. Fall