

Bristol Board of Selectmen
and
Bristol Mills Dam Advisory Committee

Minutes of Hearing Tuesday, January 30, 2018
Bristol Consolidated School Gym

Selectmen present: Paul Yates (acting chair), Terry Lowd.

Committee members present: James Albright, Pam Allen, Phil Averill, Claire Enterline, Chuck Farrell, John Freburger, James Hatch, Abby Ingraham

The secretary (C. Hall) counted 128 members of the public present in the course of the meeting, though 108 voted in the final straw poll. The meeting was filmed by Lincoln County Television and can be seen on the web at their video on demand page:

<http://lctv.org/watch/video-on-demand/>

The meeting was called to order by chair Yates at 7.00 pm, and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Chair Paul Yates explained the Selectmen's purpose in forming the Committee to advise the Board of Selectmen and the wider Town on options for the future of the dam. The Committee has met since November, 2016. This meeting will consider the final report of the Committee, prepared by Wright-Pierce Engineers under contract, largely covered by a grant to the Town for \$29,900 though the Town expects to pay a final \$5,000 to cover additional work requested by the Committee. He outlined the agenda for the meeting: remarks from Committee members Claire Enterline, Phil Averill and Jim Hatch; a presentation by Joe McLean of Wright-Pierce; questions and answers; and a non-binding straw poll.

Yates introduced Claire Enterline, chair of the Dam Committee. She described the charge from the Selectmen to the Committee and the timeframe for the Committee's meetings.

Phil Averill gave an outline of the history of the dam and the alewife run, beginning with the retreat of the glaciers at the end of the last ice age. He brought this up to 2016, when the Town's application for NOAA funds to rebuild the fishway was turned down, and the Dam Committee formed to search for alternatives.

Jim Hatch described the Committee's activities, including presentations from a number of sources – ecologists, marine and freshwater biologists, and representatives of nearby towns with successful fish restorations – and meetings with the Fire Department, Parks and Recreation Commission, and other stakeholders.

Joe McLean presented slides that summarized the Options reviewed in the report: Option A being the fish passage designed in 2015-16; and Option B being dam removal and construction of replacement water level control structures, swimming facility and fire protection water access above the Benner Road bridge. Option C, an attempt to develop a compromise solution at the current dam location, appeared too expensive, and unsatisfactory, to pursue seriously.

Yates moderated questions from the floor, many of which were aimed at Wright-Pierce for clarification. Several made remarks in favor of retaining the dam for reasons of

recreation, fire protection, or historic and sentimental value, while others urged dam removal on grounds of reduced maintenance costs and improved chances for alewife restoration.

At 8.40 pm the Chair called for a straw vote by show of hands of those favoring either Option A or B. The Town Clerk and Town Administrator counted votes as follows:

- Favoring Option A, 84 votes;
- Favoring Option B, 24 votes.

The chair stressed that there was no present intention to ask the 2018 Town Meeting to act on the dam other than committing additional funds to the Dam and Fish Passage capital reserve funds. Town Administrator Hall would be tasked in 2018 with identifying potential additional sources of funding. Yates then thanked the Committee for their service to the Town and adjourned the meeting at 8:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Hall
Town Administrator
January 31, 2018