

**Town of New Hartford
Trails Committee**

**Special Meeting
October 3, 2019**

MINUTES

Present: Chairman Dan Jerram; Committee Members Bill Baxter, Jim Brett, Pat Cunningham, Greg O'Brien, Jeff Peltier, Jeremy Schaller; Administrative Assistant Christine Hayward; Dan Boller, Farmington River Coordinating Council (left at 6:20 PM).

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION: by Baxter to approve the minutes dated September 23, 2019 and October 1, 2019 as presented; seconded by O'Brien.

Unanimous.

Discussion and Review of interviews held on Monday re: consultant for trail routing study:

The members expressed their opinions regarding the presentations by Anchor Engineering Inc, and Milone and MacBroom related to the proposals submitted by each firm for consideration of engagement to perform a routing study for a proposed trail that would connect downtown New Hartford to the Canton Town Line with the ultimate goal being connectivity to the Farmington River Trail.

Mr. Jerram liked the comfortable feeling presented by the team from Anchor; felt that they were engaging. He noted the "deep bench" that Milone and MacBroom brings with them; felt that the weak point was that they did not bring their public engagement person with them. Jerram concluded his thoughts with 'the town will not do badly with either one of them – they would both do right by the town.'

Mr. O'Brien liked the enthusiasm presented by Anchor; they are 'cheerleaders' for trails projects; they sound as if they would be very accessible and easy to deal with. However, Milone and MacBroom has a lot of in-house resources, which could prove to be very valuable.

Mr. Cunningham felt that Anchor was long on passion and short on specifics. Milone and MacBroom had the plan laid out in typical engineering fashion; very structured and have a deep knowledge of permitting and what it takes to get it done- they seem to focus on how to 'get in front of it.' Cunningham expressed concern that Anchor stated that trail work is a passion of theirs and they enjoy these projects even though there 'isn't a lot of money in them' –he wondered if this could mean that a trail project would be pushed to the back burner if a project that promised more financial reward came along and occupied their time. Would it lose priority?

Mr. Shaller rhetorically questioned how much value does this group place on the community outreach and public engagement portion of this project? He noted that Anchor seems to have a good grasp on community outreach while Milone and MacBroom seem to have more of a focus on "how to get it

done,” noting that there does need to be public buy in of the project’ therefore the question of how important is the community outreach could be a major factor in which firm would best represent the town.

Mr. Peltier stated that Kevin from Anchor was very passionate, but Peltier felt he lacked some of the experience that members on Milone and MacBroom team have. M&M has a deeper bench and more resources – they won’t have to engage outsiders (which can take time) to assist if they have questions – they just “walk down the hall and get the answers.” Peltier opined that the traffic engineer on M&M ‘knows his stuff’ and that could be valuable when dealing with Department of Transportation officials. He was concerned with the 6-year timeframe on one of Anchor’s projects – stating that he does not want to wait 6 years to get through Satan’s Kingdom Gorge. Jerram noted that depending on the permits needed, there is little control over the timeframe of getting things permitted.

Mr. Baxter agreed that Anchor wins on enthusiasm; but M&M wins on talent due to the ‘deep bench.’ He acknowledged his past relationship with M&M on projects in Torrington and noted that Vince would be available to him (and the committee) at all times, if needed; which could be a plus.

Mr. Brett stated that his heart was with Anchor but his head led to Milone and MacBroom. He got the sense that M&M would be the firm that would have better success ‘navigating through the red tape.’ He also added that he would hope that M&M would take a larger role in ‘steering the ship’ with this study. He felt that they relied too much on the Committee to make decisions and recommendations when they did the initial investigation of this trail. He wants them to guide the group and be honest with assessments regarding feasibility of routes.

Jerram summarized the discussion by stating that it appears that Milone and MacBroom is the firm that this group is leading towards, but that all would be comfortable with engaging either firm and that it may come down to cost. All agreed.

Initial Review of cost proposals followed by discussion of the proposals submitted:

Jerram opened the individual envelopes and revealed the costs. (proposals available upon request in the Office of the First Selectman).

The committee reviewed the proposals and there was some confusion regarding what each firm was guaranteeing to accomplish in each phase. It appears that Anchor Engineering is proposing to have a routing study and final design plans including the Satans Kingdom area for \$148,000. Milone and MacBroom proposal, on the other hand, appears to have the routing study and 30% design plans for a total of \$179,000. It appears that a final design of the route which would include the Satans Kingdom area would be a total of \$374,000.

The committee asked if clarification of the proposals could be obtained in writing prior to making a final decision. They would like to know if Milone and MacBroom are expressing that the town could determine which portion of their proposal would be essential items and thus would choose how to proceed according to the budget. They would like clarification on Anchor proposal to include the question of “are you telling us that Anchor can deliver final, ready to build design plans within a time frame of 8 months; including permitting?”

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The committee charged First Selectman Jerram with reaching out to both firms to ask the questions and report back to the committee on Monday, October 7 so that a decision can be rendered. The group agreed to meet again on Monday, October 7 at 6:00 PM.

MOTION: by Baxter to adjourn at 7:25 PM; seconded by Peltier.

Unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christine Hayward, Administrative Assistant