

TOWN OF HOLLAND BOARD MEETING

August 3, 2023

Special Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT	Chair Bob Stupi, Nikole Hauser, Mike Hoffman and David Weber
MEMBERS EXCUSED	Jeff Herlitzke
STAFF PRESENT	Clerk Marilyn Pedretti
OFFICIALS PRESENT	State Senator Brad Pfaff, State Representative Steve Doyle, DOT Representatives Rob Winterton and Randy Byom

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Stupi called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Notices were posted.

CASBERG BRIDGE – ELECTED OFFICIALS

Stupi noted he just completed a tour of the bridge and detour with Senator Pfaff and Representative Doyle. He reported the Town is waiting for the State and the State reports they are waiting for the Town and asked the elected officials for assistance in moving the process forward. Stupi then introduced State Senator Brad Pfaff and State Representative Steve Doyle and Department of Transportation (DOT) officials Rob Winterton and Randy Byom. Stupi then gave background on the timeline and asked the DOT representatives for input on how to move the process forward.

Rob Winterton, DOT Local Programs Engineer, stated they have to wait for Federal authorization and get assigned a Transportation Identification Program (TIP) number before moving forward, which he projected would be assigned next week. He reported after the authorization, they begin a three-party negotiation with the design consultant and noted it could take up to six months.

Randy Byom, DOT Local Program Project Manager, explained the vetting process with the DOT. Winterton noted the design portion of the project is scheduled to be completed by November 2024.

State Representative Steve Doyle asked where things stand with a temporary fix. Stupi reported on the engineer's research on a temporary 115' bridge span, which does not seem to exist, and an option for installing a plate arch inside the current structure to allow for one-lane traffic, but noted an engineer will not sign-off on liability. He noted the Board will be discussing the options and whether the Town can assume liability and fiscal responsibility at the board meeting next week. Discussion followed concerning timing and process for DNR and DOT approval of a temporary option.

Doyle asked about an option for the Town to self-fund and whether that would move the process faster. Winterton noted it could move faster without the Federal requirements and suggested it could possibly be completed in 2024 depending upon consultant and bridge contractor availability. Stupi noted it would require a loan and levy adjustment for all tax payers. Weber asked if there was state money if we self-funded. State Senator Brad Pfaff said he would try to find out.

Jay Bratberg, N7274 Casberg Coulee Road, asked why we are not pursuing the by-pass option that was provided by Rybold. Stupi responded that the option could cost over \$300,000 as the

Town engineer found many items missing from the quote and that option would still need to go through DNR and DOT approval.

Brad Heineck, W6784 Casberg Coulee Road, noted that on July 21st, Governor Evers signed legislation for an Agricultural Road Improvement Program (ARIP) and asked if this bridge would qualify. Pfaff said they are always looking for new money for roads and this may qualify. Heineck was unhappy with the two year wait and suggested if we can do it faster with State money, let's get the Feds out. Pfaff noted that self-funding may move it faster but there are calendar concerns. Doyle stated that citizens are doing the right thing by involving the state legislators and they will do all they can to move this forward.

Jill Sherry, W6708 Casberg Coulee Road, found information from the Legislative Fiscal Bureau that our Town will receive \$107,167 in 2024 and \$109,656 in 2025 and asked if that money could be used for the bridge. Stupi noted that is the annual General Transportation Aid (GTA) and covers road work for all 47 miles of Town roads including ditch mowing, salt/sand and chip sealing. He stated that the Town Board allocates those funds each fall during the budget process and it rarely covers the chip sealing costs for the set roads in a seven year cycle. Sherry asked for an update on the temporary turn-around. Stupi reported that rock has been installed and the school has agreed with the temporary turn-around, which will be used by buses and garbage service with a driveway closer to the bridge for the plow truck turn-around.

Steven Eisermann, W6667 Casberg Coulee Road, expressed his appreciate for all the Town is doing such as the shouldering and stop signs but the big concern for him is when there is talk of Federal money, why is it now a Federal bridge instead of a culvert. Stupi noted the Town has no role in that but the County and the DOT are in charge of all structures over 20 feet. Eisermann asked about the timing for the temporary solution and, if no engineer will sign off, what does that do to liability and could residents sign waivers. Doyle spoke as a Town attorney and explained why residents cannot waiver liability on a public road.

Mike Koziara, W6531 Casberg Coulee Road, said he was on-site when the engineer was here and heard that the center of the bridge was good so why cannot the Town put a weight limit on the bridge and allow single lane traffic. Stupi noted the Town is still investigating a temporary patch.

Kevin Olson, W6688 Casberg Coulee Road, thanked Doyle and Pfaff for being present. He said there is a failure of safety and financial responsibility. He stated the detour is unacceptable. Pfaff agreed two years was a long time but there are calendar concerns with the timing of everything. He was impressed the Town received the \$800,000 grant because it is highly competitive and he will look for state money but the Town will not get every penny back if they go that route.

Brenda Lichucki, W6665 Casberg Coulee Road, found a company in New Jersey that can provide a 120 foot temporary bridge which would rent for \$230,000 to \$376,000 for the two-year period. She also talked with Lunda about installing a box inside the culvert. Stupi thanked her for the information and asked that she forward to the clerk.

Kevin Kiel, W6663 Casberg Coulee Road, suggested only 40% of the culvert has failed and the Town should open the other portion to traffic. Stupi noted six engineers have inspected the culvert and of the 90 foot pipe, only 30 feet is undamaged, so 67% is unsafe. He reiterated that the Board members are not experts and rely on professionals.

Rachel Olson, W6688 Casberg Coulee Road, asked why the Town did not earmark money for this bridge when the wash-out occurred in 2019. Stupi responded this goes back to the GTA and how past boards prioritize spending for all 47 miles of road with other areas that needed addressing and with the limited budget. He also noted the Town did apply for grant funding three other times since 2019. Olson asked about liability of a collapsed bridge versus liability if someone is hurt or dies because emergency services could not access the coulee when a tree blocks the road like last week's storm. Stupi noted when a tree blocks a road, County Dispatch calls out our Town crew, like last week and he noted the Town has many dead-end roads to which we respond as fast as possible when called.

Reporter Jeremy Wolf, News8, asked the elected officials why the Town has to wait 15 months for the design to be completed. Pfaff stated the DOT and Federal requirements must be followed in order to qualify for the \$800,000 funding. Doyle stated the Town has a difficult balancing act of time versus dollars – receive Federal money to cover all costs or self-fund and put the burden on all Town taxpayers.

Lindsey Meindl, W6880 Casberg Coulee Road, noted that the engineer suggested that, without a soil boring, the worst case calculations required a 115 foot temporary bridge and asked if the Town could pay for the test and perhaps not need that length of bridge. Stupi noted that the Town has to balance how much research to conduct and noted the engineer does not work for free. Meindl asked if the test results could be used for the permanent bridge. Byom did not think that would work as the engineer could be looking at different areas when they test for the new bridge.

Meranda Kiel, W6663 Casberg Coulee Road, asked about the timeline and was discouraged by the last engineer's prediction of 2026. She asked if they were on a dead-end road, would the Town have acted differently. Stupi noted that would have qualified as an emergency situation.

Cathy Olson, W6602 Casberg Coulee Road, noted most of the people present are running ragged and frustrated that the Town does not seem to have enough money for roads. She was concerned with the windy roads and hollyhock hill, especially in the winter and felt it was a disaster waiting to happen. She asked why the Town was not liable if someone went into the ditch and froze. Doyle noted the Town does have liability insurance but there are limits. He also noted the Board has expressed concern if someone fell through the bridge and died, which is not about the money but about a life. Doyle also noted when the Town talks about not enough money for roads, it is the same concern at the County level but neither are allowed to raise taxes due to the levy limit. He noted local government has little resources and lots of rules and gave credit to the Town for trying.

Michael Lichucki, W6665 Casberg Coulee Road, noted they are new to the coulee but did not choose long EMS and fire service times with this detour. He said everyone has a story and told of his son who has special needs and how they were using a system of maneuvering through the concrete blocks to access transportation on the other side. He noted the Town recently bolted the barricades so now he has to carry his son a great distance. Lichucki felt two years was too long and asked if the Town could take out a loan to move this process along faster and to at least allow access through the barricades. Stupi said they were not aware of this situation and will have the barricades adjusted to allow access. He reported they decided to bolt them when the recently installed stop signs were stolen twice.

Patricia Eveland, W6888 Casberg Coulee Road, noted they live on the hill and have seen people who do not know about the barriers fly by way too fast. She felt signage is very important. Doyle thanked her for the information because these types of stories help when they work with bureaucrats in Madison.

Rick Hauser, W7915 Prairie Meadows Street, suggested the group needs to help educate the public in order to pursue the option of self-funding as that will require a tax increase. He noted 37% of the residents said no to the last “ask” for the fire department. Hauser said the Town does not have a magic checkbook and still needs to maintain all roads.

Eisermann said emergency response times are very important to his family and talked about his heart issues. He noted other residents who have medical concerns. He asked why, in the report the Town provided, the Town did not do something sooner when the efficiency rating went from 88.9% to 55.8% in September 2021. Stupi said it is always a balancing act and there were different Board members throughout the years who have to balance the needs of the town.

Jerry Heintz, N7318 Casberg Coulee Road, reported his family called 911 on Sunday with his wife in pain and it took 30 minutes for the ambulance service. He was concerned it could have been a disastrous ending. He asked the DOT to cut through the red tape.

Sherry asked that the Town continue to communicate with her and she will continue to keep the neighbors informed through Facebook. She talked about how she had to scramble with her two kids and the bus situation when they had less than a 24-hour notice that the bridge was closed. Stupi said they will work to keep everyone in the loop.

R. Olson asked if the Town will be using a smaller plow truck because of the narrow roads. Stupi noted they will use the same truck and noted it has worked on the narrow roads in the past.

Kristen Marcou, W6610 Casberg Coulee Road, reported she contacted the Sheriff’s office when the trees were blocking the road but did not have a positive interaction. She noted that cell phone reception is bad and needed to call from her land-line but they wanted information about the site and she had to drive back. Pfaff noted they are working on broadband service.

Stupi thanked everyone for attending and noted the temporary fix item will be on the Town Board meeting next Wednesday and invited the public to attend.

ADJOURN

Motion by Hauser/Weber to adjourn. **MOTION** carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Marilyn J. Pedretti
Town Clerk