

Coös County Commissioners
Special Meeting
Coös County Nursing Home – Berlin, NH
December 4, 2013

Present: Commissioners Tom Brady, Paul Grenier and Rick Samson; County Administrator Jennifer Fish; Representative Herb Richardson; Representative Leon Rideout; Representative Robert Th  berge; Representative Yvonne Thomas; Representative Larry Rappaport; Representative Marcia Hammon; County Treasurer Fred King; members of the press and public.

Commissioner Brady opened the meeting at 10:07 am. Representative Th  berge announced that there was a quorum present for the Delegation. Representative Th  berge also requested everyone stand for the pledge of allegiance.

The purpose of the meeting was for the Commissioners to update the Delegation on the issue with the eroding riverbank on Chapel Hill Road in Wentworth Location. Commissioner Grenier described the area on Chapel Hill Road that is being washed away every year by the Magalloway River. The owner of the road and the riverbank, US Fish & Wildlife Service (US F&W) gave the camp owners a price quote of \$800,000 to fix the road and that they did not have that in their budget. Mr. Ray Cyr, a representative of the camp owners on Chapel Hill Road approached the Commissioners several months back asking for assistance from the Commissioners to help maintain the road and protect their camps.

Commissioner Grenier stated that in his opinion this was not about repairing a private road but that it was about protecting the taxable property in an unincorporated place.

Commissioner Samson thanked Mr. Cyr and Mr. Rick Lessard for being so persistent in this matter and thanked Treasurer King for working on several options to finance the project. The County Commissioners requested proposals to fix the riverbank and the bid was awarded to NNEFS, LLC of Colebrook for the contracted price of \$88,000. Commissioner Samson further stated that there is a contractor that is willing to do the job so all that is needed is the funding.

Commissioner Brady opened up the meeting for questions and comments from the public.

Ray Cyr spoke to the panel and described that they are losing 2 to 5 feet of river bank a year. Mr. Cyr explained that they started working with the US Fish & Wildlife Service's Umbagog Refuge three years ago to solve the issue with the riverbank. Representative Rappaport questioned whether the County has authority to fix the road since the Wildlife Service owns the road.

Representative Richardson stated that for him personally he feels that the road is not a private road that it is a public road and the camp owners of Wentworth Location are tax payers.

Representative Rideout commented that he was supportive of the project but he just felt that it was setting a precedent that concerned him.

Treasurer King recommended that the County apply for a 10 year note to finance the project. The payment in lieu of taxes that is received from the US Fish & Wildlife Service would be used to pay off the loan.

Al McLain, camp owner, spoke to the panel to state that the erosion of the riverbank is a safety concern. The road is getting narrower and if it continues vehicles will have a harder time to pass.

Ed Deblois, camp owner, stated that the camp owners have been putting down gravel and plowing the road themselves. The taxes have gone up in Wentworth Location and they have not asked the county for help previously to fix the road. He stated that he has seen the road lose 6 feet of riverbank in one spring. If that happens again he won't be able to access his property and there be others that will be in the same situation. He is just asking the Delegation to work with the camp owners so that they can keep their camps and continue to be tax payers.

Representative Th  berge called for a straw poll of the delegation with the stipulation that the county will get a legal opinion on if public funds can be expended to fix a private road. Representative Rideout suggested that the Delegation take a vote on the project. Representative Th  berge said that that could be done if a motion was made to do so. Representative Rideout made the following motion, to take a vote and move forward on the project subject to a legal opinion forthcoming. The motion was seconded by Representative Hammon. Representative Th  berge called for the vote. The motion passed by roll call vote 5-1 (Hammon).

There being no further business to discuss, a motion was made by Representative Th  berge, seconded by Representative Rideout to adjourn the meeting at 10:51 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Samson, Clerk