

Present: Chairman Dan Haskins, Selectman Seth Alexander, Town Administrator Ronald Boucher, Mass DOT District 1 Highway Director Francisca Heming, and Mass DOT Representative Scott Stevens.

Absent: Selectman Colton Andrews.

I. Call to Order.

Chairman Dan Haskins called the meeting to order at 5:10 p.m. and noted that the meeting was being recorded using artificial intelligence for note-taking purposes.

II. Pledge of Allegiance.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

III. Approve meeting minutes from July 20th.

The Board reviewed the Select Board meeting minutes from July 20th, 2026.

MOTION: Chairman Haskins motioned to approve the meeting minutes from July 20th.

SECOND: Selectman Alexander seconded.

VOTE: All were in favor.

IV. Bid Openings for North Eagle St. Sewer.

The Board opened bids received for the North Eagle Street Sewer Project. Highway Foreman Kyle Hurlbut assisted with the bid opening and read the submitted bid amounts.

The bids received were as follows:

Vanzandt, Inc. – \$59,300.00

Ludlow Construction – \$171,950.00

Reiffenberg Construction – \$72,420.00

D.R. Billings – \$99,500.00

W.M. J. Keller & Sons Construction Corp. – \$208,331.00

Following the bid opening, Mr. Hurlbut informed the Board that the bids would be reviewed with the project engineer to ensure the lowest responsive bidder met all project specifications. A recommendation for award would be presented to the Select Board at a future meeting after the review process was completed.

V. DOT informational meeting for Route 8 bridge closure.

Chair Haskins welcomed everyone in attendance and explained that the purpose of the meeting was to provide residents with an update regarding the emergency closure of the Route 8

(River Road) Bridge over the Hoosic River and to allow MassDOT and the project team to present the emergency repair plan.

Representatives from MassDOT and TEC, Inc. presented an overview of the bridge inspection findings that led to the emergency closure. It was explained that structural deterioration discovered during inspection required the immediate closure of the bridge to ensure public safety. Because of the bridge's condition, MassDOT initiated an emergency procurement process to expedite repairs.

The project team outlined the proposed construction schedule, explaining that a temporary bridge would be installed to restore traffic while permanent repairs are completed. The contractor has been authorized to begin work immediately under emergency procedures, allowing construction activities to proceed without the standard bidding timeline. Every effort is being made to complete the work as quickly as possible while maintaining safety standards.

Representatives reviewed the anticipated phases of construction, including site preparation, utility coordination, installation of the temporary bridge structure, demolition and repair of the existing bridge components, roadway reconstruction, and final paving. They explained that weather conditions and field conditions could affect the construction schedule but emphasized that the contractor would be working an aggressive timeline to reopen the roadway.

MassDOT also discussed traffic control measures and the established detour route. Local emergency services, school transportation officials, and other agencies have been coordinated with throughout the closure. Residents were advised to continue following posted detours and to exercise caution while traveling through the construction area.

Carl McKinney of 500 River Road expressed frustration regarding the condition of the Route 8 bridge and the timing of the emergency closure. He stated that the bridge has had ongoing issues for many years, including previous concerns regarding road deterioration, visible damage, plate separation, and deterioration of bridge components. He questioned why the current emergency situation was occurring now despite prior inspections and reported concerns.

Mr. McKinney also raised concerns regarding the proposed temporary traffic configuration and impacts to his property along East Road. He expressed concerns that the roadway modifications would bring traffic and guardrails close to his home, resulting in the loss of landscaping and trees that he has maintained for approximately 40 years.

Additional concerns included:

- Increased vehicle exhaust and dust from traffic near his home.
- Snow storage and snow management challenges during winter storms.
- Potential impacts to his property value.
- The estimated timeline for a permanent bridge replacement and concerns that the project could take many years before completion.

Mr. McKinney stated that he was extremely frustrated and concerned about the impacts the temporary traffic changes would have on his quality of life.

Mass DOT representative Francisca Heming responded that the audio was difficult to hear but acknowledged that the concerns appeared to relate to the property located near the south and East Road and the proposed temporary roadway layout. It was explained that the work limits are based on the emergency response needed for the bridge closure and that the situation requires action due to the current condition of the bridge.

Ms. Heming acknowledged that the situation is difficult and stated that the goal is to respond to the emergency while minimizing impacts as much as possible.

Dan Tanner of 901 River Road raised concerns regarding emergency response access for residents located on the opposite side of the bridge closure. The resident explained that their mother lives on the other side of the bridge and expressed concern that emergency responders, particularly the Fire Department, may face delays due to the closure.

Mr. Tanner asked whether alternate emergency response plans were being considered, including possible assistance from neighboring communities such as Stamford or North Adams, to ensure timely response in the event of an emergency.

Concerns were raised about potential emergency situations involving severe weather events or other circumstances where travel routes could become limited.

Chairman Haskins stated that the Fire Department has an established procedure in place for responding during the bridge closure. The response plan has been provided to the Town and reviewed. The Fire Department was asked if they wished to provide additional information regarding emergency response procedures.

Highway Superintendent Kyle Hurlbut explained that emergency response procedures are already established with surrounding communities. The response process will operate similarly to previous emergency events, including during Tropical Storm Irene. If a structure fire or

emergency call occurs in the affected area, mutual aid departments, including North Adams and Stamford, will automatically be notified and dispatched as needed.

Mr. Hurlbut provided additional background regarding the decision to pursue maintaining one-way access on East Road during the bridge closure. He explained that when the Town was initially approached in January regarding the emergency bridge situation, the expectation communicated was that East Road would be closed for a minimum of five years. After discussions with Town boards and administrators, the Town determined that a full closure was not acceptable for the approximately 115 residents living on that side of the bridge. Mr. Hurlbut stated that maintaining one-way access was pursued to provide continued access for residents, school transportation, snow removal operations, and—most importantly—emergency services. The Board also recognized Kyle's efforts in advocating for the one-way access plan and ensuring that emergency services and snow removal needs were considered.

Steve Lascarbo of 64 East Road, thanked the Town for pursuing the one-way access solution. He explained that his neighborhood includes only four homes, with several elderly residents and a family with young children. Mr. Lascarbo shared concerns based on his experience during the Route 8 closure following Tropical Storm Irene. He stated that despite the closure, many motorists ignored restrictions, traveled onto the closed roadway, slid on the bridge area, and created dangerous situations for residents. His primary concern was increased traffic volume and speeding on East Road and Daniels Road during the closure.

Mr. Lascarbo raised concerns that:

- Traffic will increase significantly on narrow roads without sidewalks or shoulders.
- Many families with children, pedestrians, and pets live along these roads.
- Logging trucks and other large vehicles already travel through the area.
- Drivers may not follow the posted 25 mph speed limit.
- Increased traffic could result in serious accidents.

He asked whether there would be police presence or traffic enforcement in the area to help address speeding and safety concerns.

The Select Board responded that the Town has been coordinating with the Massachusetts State Police regarding traffic control. Funding had already been included in the Town budget for police details, and officers will be assigned to monitor traffic concerns. The Board stated that

traffic enforcement details are scheduled to begin the following week, with a focus on areas impacted by increased traffic, including East Road and surrounding routes.

The Select Board clarified the expected traffic pattern during the bridge project for approximately the first two months that area will remain closed while the temporary bridge is installed. Residents will need to access their homes via Daniels Road or East Road. After the temporary bridge is installed, one-way traffic will be established. Residents will be able to enter from River Road but will not be able to exit back onto River Road from that direction.

The Board confirmed that this one-way configuration will remain in place until the permanent bridge solution is completed.

Mary Tanner of 71 Brooks Heights expressed concerns regarding increased traffic and speeding concerns in residential neighborhoods that may be impacted by the Route 8 bridge closure. Ms. Tanner shares concerns similar to those previously raised regarding traffic speed and pedestrian safety. She explained that Walker Street is narrow, has sharp corners, limited visibility, and no sidewalks. She expressed concern for residents, including families walking with children, due to vehicles traveling at unsafe speeds and drivers not being aware of pedestrians.

Ms. Tanner stated that speeding is already an existing issue in the area and that increased traffic due to the bridge closure creates additional safety concerns. She asked whether additional traffic control measures could be considered, including:

- Electronic speed feedback signs (“Your Speed Is” signs with flashing displays).
- Additional warning signage.
- Increased visibility of speed limits and traffic hazards.

Ms. Tanner emphasized that the concern goes beyond occasional police enforcement and that permanent or highly visible reminders are needed to encourage drivers to slow down. She also raised concerns regarding large trucks and increased traffic on narrow residential roads, noting that some homes are located very close to the roadway. She expressed concern about the potential impact of tractor trailers and heavy vehicles traveling through these neighborhoods.

The Select Board acknowledged the concerns and agreed that additional measures may be necessary beyond occasional police enforcement. It was also stated that they would explore whether additional speed feedback signs or similar traffic control devices could be made available through the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT).

Ms. Heming noted that MassDOT periodically has portable speed display trailers available for communities to use; however, installation may be challenging depending on location and available space. She also agreed to check with their traffic section regarding whether additional speed signage or equipment could be provided and would follow up with the Town. However, Ms. Heming acknowledged that while official detour signage will direct motorists to approved routes, not all drivers will follow designated detours. Local drivers may seek alternate routes based on familiarity with the area.

Jane Wilson, a resident living at the corner of Middle and West Cross Road at 551 West Cross Road, expressed concerns regarding existing traffic conditions and the anticipated increase in traffic resulting from the Route 8 bridge closure. Ms. Wilson described current traffic in the area as aggressive, fast, and loud, and stated that she is concerned the additional traffic will create unsafe conditions and increase the likelihood of accidents. She asked whether the intersection of Middle Road and West Cross Road could be converted into a four-way stop to improve safety. The Select Board acknowledged the concern and stated that they were unsure of the process required to implement additional stop signs but would look into the matter.

Chris Woodcock of 161 Henderson Road, raised concerns regarding roadway signage and infrastructure impacts from the bridge closure. He reported that the stop sign at the intersection of Henderson Road and Route 8 is currently difficult to see due to overgrown trees obstructing visibility, and newly installed detour signage blocking the view of the stop sign.

He stated that the intersection is already dangerous and referenced a previous fatal accident at that location. The Select Board acknowledged the concern and stated they had recently received information regarding the blocked stop sign and were working to have the issue corrected, hopefully by the following day.

Mr. Woodcock also asked what plans exist for repairing roads impacted by increased traffic during the bridge closure and whether the State would rehabilitate roads after the temporary bridge period or permanent replacement. He expressed concern that increased heavy truck traffic could significantly damage roads that are currently in poor condition.

Chairman Haskins stated that MassDOT has indicated they will perform necessary patching work in areas impacted by the increased traffic. At this time, the information provided by the State includes patching and repairs as needed.

Highway Superintendent Kyle Hurlbut noted that roadway markings have already been observed along portions of the detour route, including Daniels Road, areas toward Cunningham and East Road, at approximately 4,000 feet of roadway.

It was noted that the observed markings may indicate upcoming pavement work, although Mr. Hurlbut clarified he was not speaking officially on behalf of MassDOT.

Susan Brandon, participating via Zoom and identifying herself as an East Road resident at 818 East Road, asked about the condition and rating of the Henderson Road Bridge. Ms. Brandon expressed concern that increased traffic during the Route 8 bridge closure could place additional stress on the Henderson Road Bridge and asked whether there were any known concerns regarding its condition.

Ms. Heming indicated that, from the information currently available, there are no posted restrictions or identified concerns with the Henderson Road Bridge within the planned detour route. She stated they would verify the bridge information and follow up if additional details were available.

Ms. Heming stated that while the roads require improvements, the timing of the bridge project makes it important to address necessary pavement work after the increased traffic period so that improvements can better address the impacts caused by the detour. It was explained that MassDOT is reviewing roadway conditions and identifying areas that require attention. Due to the high cost of roadway improvements, work will likely focus on the most critical areas. A preliminary estimate identified approximately one and a half miles of roadway requiring significant pavement patching, with an estimated cost of approximately \$300,000–\$361,000. The specific locations and scope of work are still being finalized.

Mr. Stevens stated that delaying the bridge project to complete additional roadway analysis or repairs would not be advisable due to the urgency of the bridge replacement and the need to restore safe access. He also clarified details regarding the temporary bridge installation stating that:

- The temporary bridge will have a **24-foot-wide roadway**.
- The temporary bridge will include **two travel lanes only** and will **not have a sidewalk**.
- The existing bridge sidewalk will remain open during construction and will continue to be available after the project is completed.

- The temporary bridge is expected to be approximately **four feet higher than the existing bridge**, although the final design and elevations are still being developed.

Mr. McKinney continued to express concerns regarding the impacts of the temporary roadway configuration, particularly snow removal and winter conditions. He questioned where snow would be placed with the proposed changes to the roadway layout, noting that:

- Snow accumulation is already a significant issue in that area.
- The existing roadway receives snow buildup from multiple directions, including Route 8 and East Road.
- The proposed guardrail and roadway changes may reduce available snow storage space.
- He has maintained his property for many years and is concerned that snow storage, traffic, and exhaust impacts will significantly affect his home and daily life.

Mr. McKinney stated that he is physically unable to manage large snow removal challenges and expressed frustration that residents are being placed in a difficult situation due to circumstances outside their control. He asked who would be responsible for addressing the snow management concerns.

The DPW Director responded that the Town would work to manage snow conditions through normal plowing operations. He explained that:

- Plow trucks can angle blades and make multiple passes to move snow away from driveways and entrances.
- The Town would make every effort to push snow away from Mr. McKinney's property as much as possible.
- The Town does not anticipate snow being pushed directly to his front entrance.
- Snow removal operations would be monitored once the roadway configuration is in place.

Mr. Hurlbut stated that the Town would address conditions as they arise and make adjustments in the field as necessary. Mr. McKinney reiterated concerns that the proposed guardrail and roadway alignment could eliminate existing snow storage areas. Ms. Heming acknowledged that the concerns raised by residents are valid and that the Town has been advocating for residents throughout the process.

Clebe Scott of 47 Cross Road, stated that he felt many of the concerns surrounding the Route 8 bridge closure had been addressed. Mr. Scott stated that he believed most residents and

the Town would see some benefit from the project, but expressed concern that Carl McKinney appeared to be the only resident receiving the greatest negative impact.

Mr. Scott stated that Mr. McKinney would essentially be living in the middle of a construction zone for several years and expressed concern that insufficient consideration had been given to the impacts on his property. He noted concerns including construction noise, daily construction activity, potential weekend work, and long-term impacts from the temporary bridge and eventual permanent bridge project.

Mr. Scott stated that MassDOT should consider additional assistance for Mr. McKinney and other nearby residents who will be directly affected by the project. He suggested that possible options could include temporary relocation assistance or other accommodations during construction.

The discussion acknowledged that approximately three homes would be significantly impacted by the project, including Mr. McKinney's property and nearby homes on the opposite side of the bridge. Officials acknowledged that while the impacts may differ between properties, the concerns of all affected residents should be considered.

The MassDOT representative Francisca Heming explained that for emergency bridge repair and temporary bridge installation projects, there is generally not a process for property compensation or relocation assistance. She explained that emergency bridge work is handled differently than a full bridge replacement project. During the future permanent bridge design process, a formal right-of-way review will occur. If permanent easements, property takings, or significant property impacts are required, those issues would be evaluated during that process. Ms. Heming acknowledged that the temporary bridge project will create inconvenience, noise, and construction impacts, but stated that the immediate emergency work is expected to be temporary. She further explained that longer-term property impact discussions would typically occur during the permanent bridge replacement design phase. Mass DOT could investigate the matter further but were not aware of an existing mechanism to provide payment for temporary relocation, purchasing a property, or other compensation during emergency bridge work.

Mr. Scott responded that, given the significant roadway repair costs being discussed, some funding could potentially be considered to assist affected residents, particularly Mr. McKinney. He noted that if hundreds of thousands of dollars are being spent on roadway repairs, providing temporary assistance for a directly impacted homeowner should also be considered.

Ms. Heming reiterated that they would need to review applicable policies but could not commit to such assistance under the current emergency repair process.

Mr. McKinney continued to express concerns regarding the long-term impacts of the project, stating that the issue extends beyond the initial temporary bridge installation period.

He raised additional concerns regarding ongoing construction activity after the temporary bridge is installed, continued impacts to his property during future bridge work, and access for necessary deliveries. Mr. McKinney specifically noted that he receives propane deliveries and expressed concern that a propane truck may need to stop in the limited roadway area on East Road, potentially blocking the only travel lane for several minutes. He questioned how deliveries, access needs, and daily activities would be accommodated under the proposed configuration. Mr. McKinney expressed frustration that the Town and State have known about bridge concerns for many years and stated his belief that more planning and resident input should have occurred earlier.

Karen Baumbach, a resident of 345 East Road, stated that she understands the concerns raised by other residents and appreciates the Town's efforts to maintain East Road access, particularly for emergency vehicles. Ms. Baumbach expressed similar concerns regarding increased traffic and speeding on East Road during the bridge closure. She asked whether a flashing speed feedback sign could be installed in the area to encourage drivers to slow down. She offered the use of her property if necessary to provide a suitable location for the sign, acknowledging that available space along the roadway may be limited.

The Select Board thanked Ms. Baumbach for the offer and stated that the Town would look into options for obtaining a speed feedback sign. The Board noted that MassDOT may have resources available, or that another municipality may potentially be able to loan the Town a sign if needed.

Trish Wilson, a resident of 625 Middle Road, suggested additional traffic calming measures based on her experience living in other areas. Ms. Wilson stated that some communities use speed bumps in residential neighborhoods to reduce speeding and asked whether that type of measure could be considered.

Dave Emery of 802 River Road raised concerns regarding traffic patterns and signage at the Four Corners area. Mr. Emery asked whether signage would be installed indicating local access only and helping direct traffic appropriately. He also supported previous concerns raised

by residents regarding speeding, stating that River Road already experiences significant speeding issues and that increased traffic due to the bridge closure could worsen conditions. Mr. Emery stated that he was concerned about the impact on East Road residents and believed additional enforcement would be necessary.

The Select Board referred the question regarding River Road signage to the MassDOT representatives. Mr. Stevens explained that detour signage plans are being developed and stated that signage would likely include road closure information, detour route directions, and “Local Traffic Only” signage where appropriate. Mr. Stevens clarified that the intent is to direct through traffic appropriately while still allowing residents and local users to access their properties.

Chairman Haskins discussed previous conversations with Massachusetts State Police regarding speeding concerns on River Road. He explained that State Police officers cannot simply choose locations for enforcement without coordination through their barracks. Residents are encouraged to continue reporting concerns so the barracks are aware of problem areas and officers must coordinate where and when details or patrols can occur. The Select Board reiterated that State Police details and additional patrol efforts are being coordinated, and traffic enforcement will continue to be monitored as conditions change.

An unidentified resident asked whether there had been any consideration given to restricting large commercial vehicles, including tractor trailers, logging trucks, and tankers, from using the designated detour route. The resident expressed concern about the impacts of heavy vehicles on East Road, Henderson Road, Walker Road, and other local roads included in the detour route. The resident clarified that the concern was not about the permitted vehicle route for the temporary bridge itself, but rather the increased use of surrounding local roads by large trucks during the closure. Concerns included road deterioration, impacts to culverts, safety concerns related to large vehicles traveling through residential areas, and increased traffic near businesses requiring deliveries, such as the local gas station.

Ms. Heming explained that the selected detour route was reviewed by the MassDOT traffic department evaluated for truck turning movements, vehicle maneuverability, and ability for standard commercial vehicles to safely navigate the route. She stated that traffic engineers reviewed the route multiple times and determined that trucks could successfully complete the necessary turning movements.

Selectmen Alexander continued the discussion regarding speeding concerns throughout Town. He stated that speeding has been an ongoing issue throughout Clarksburg for many years. Residents have raised speeding complaints over time, and the Town has been in communication with the Massachusetts State Police regarding enforcement. The Select Board recognizes the concerns regarding increased traffic during the bridge closure, and acknowledged requests for additional patrols, flashing speed feedback signs, and increased traffic enforcement.

However, officials noted that enforcement resources are limited and the Town does not currently have its own police department, leaving enforcement efforts dependent on State Police availability. The Board stated that it will continue working with State Police to request patrols and details in areas where speeding concerns are greatest.

A question was submitted by Sonja Marlene, a resident of 528 River Road, regarding transportation access and construction impacts related to the Route 8 bridge closure. Ms. Marlene asked how school bus access will be handled for students traveling to and from McCann Technical School and Clarksburg schools as well as how close construction activities will occur to her home so she can prepare for impacts, particularly while caring for a family member with Alzheimer's disease. It was clarified that Ms. Marlene's property is located directly across the bridge from the proposed work area.

The Select Board stated that they have been in communication with David Suki from the bus company, who was present at the meeting, regarding transportation planning during the closure. The Board noted that the bus company is actively developing a plan and that additional details would likely become clearer after considering the concerns raised during the meeting.

Mr. Suki explained that the bus company is working to develop the safest and most practical transportation plan possible during the bridge closure. He stated that the goal is to maintain the best possible service for students. The bus company is working with surrounding communities, including Stamford and other transportation partners, and plans to use smaller side roads and alternate routes is not preferred due to safety concerns and increased travel times. Longer bus routes would increase the amount of time students spend on buses, which the company wants to minimize. Mr. Suki explained that during the initial two-month bridge closure period, a temporary plan may involve establishing bus stops at accessible locations, as well as having parents transport students to designated pickup points, such as Boss Arts or Town Hall. He emphasized that the goal is to balance safety, efficiency, and minimizing additional travel

time for students, families, and bus drivers. The Select Board thanked Mr. Suki for his work and coordination.

Dan Tanner of 901 River Road, raised concerns regarding roadway maintenance and responsibility for repairs during the bridge closure and detour period. Mr. Tanner asked whether there is a plan in place to ensure that if side roads along the detour route experience damage or become unsafe, repairs would be handled by MassDOT or a contractor rather than placing additional demands on Town resources. He specifically raised concerns regarding culvert failures, significant potholes caused by increased traffic and heavy rainfall, and roadway deterioration due to increased vehicle volume.

Mr. Tanner noted that the Town's Department of Public Works has a relatively small crew and expressed concern that responding to detour-related roadway issues could significantly impact the Town's ability to address other necessary work. He explained that if Town crews are required to work on heavily traveled detour routes, additional staff may be needed for traffic control. A large portion of the DPW workforce could become dedicated to a single repair project and other Town responsibilities could be delayed. Mr. Tanner suggested that MassDOT and its contractor should be prepared to provide repair crews, equipment, traffic control personnel, and an immediate response if roadway issues arise during construction.

The Select Board asked Ms. Heming whether assistance would be available if serious issues occurred on the detour route during the temporary bridge installation period. Ms. Heming stated that if a detour route becomes severely compromised, MassDOT would assist with addressing the issue. She clarified that MassDOT would respond if conditions created a significant problem affecting the safe operation of the detour.

Jim Howell of 88 Mountainview Drive asked whether the Town would be paying for State Police details needed during the bridge installation and increased traffic period. The Select Board confirmed that the Town has funding available in its budget for State Police traffic details explaining that funds were already included in the prior budget year. The Town can schedule State Police details in blocks of approximately four or eight hours with a detail rate of approximately \$65 per hour. The cost is considered more affordable than maintaining a municipal police department. The Board stated that additional details can be scheduled as needed based on traffic conditions and the impacts observed during the bridge closure.

Mr. Howell questioned whether traffic enforcement and control associated with the detour should be included as part of the bridge project rather than being paid for by the Town. He stated that since the detour is directly related to the bridge project, the costs associated with traffic control should potentially be considered part of the project expenses. The Select Board acknowledged the concern and stated that additional traffic details may be scheduled depending on how the situation develops.

Sheila Cooke of 561 River Road raised concerns regarding postal delivery access during the bridge closure. She asked how postal vehicles would access affected areas, particularly where there may be limited space for turning around or maneuvering. The concern was raised to ensure that mail delivery services would not be interrupted or denied due to access limitations.

The Select Board and MassDOT representatives discussed responsibility for notifying the postal service and other service providers. Ms. Heming explained that MassDOT will notify mapping companies, navigation services, and relevant agencies regarding the bridge closure and road restrictions. She also stated that emergency work situations do not always allow for the same notification process as planned construction projects but confirmed that notifications would be made. It was noted that the postal service is already aware of the upcoming closure and that communication will continue due to potential impacts from alternate traffic routes.

Jim Howell continued discussion on whether other law enforcement agencies, such as the Sheriff's Department or neighboring municipal police departments, could assist with traffic enforcement. Chairman Haskins explained that the Town has contacted the Sheriff's Department regarding possible assistance, but they do not provide this type of traffic detail service. The Town explored whether neighboring communities, such as North Adams, could provide police details, but neighboring police departments are not able to provide this type of detail under their current authority. The Board stated that Massachusetts State Police details remain the primary available option for traffic enforcement assistance during the bridge closure.

Mary Giron, 50 Hayden Hill Road, stated that she did not have a question but wanted to speak in support of Carl McKinney and other residents who will be directly impacted by the bridge closure. Ms. Giron acknowledged that Mr. McKinney's frustration and anger are understandable given the circumstances. She stated that while others may have concerns about traffic, noise, and access, Mr. McKinney's situation is unique because the roadway changes will directly impact his property and daily life. She noted that Mr. McKinney has lived at his home

for many years and the temporary roadway configuration will bring significant activity close to his property. Other nearby residents, including those across the bridge, will also experience impacts, though the level of impact may differ. Ms. Giron encouraged the Town and MassDOT to continue exploring ways to support Mr. McKinney and other directly affected residents. She stated that residents should support one another and do what they can to help those most impacted by the project.

The Select Board agreed that the concerns are valid and stated that discussions with MassDOT regarding resident impacts would continue. The Board stated that Mr. McKinney would remain in communication with project representatives throughout construction so that concerns could be addressed as the project progresses.

Ms. Giron noted difficulty locating direct contact information for MassDOT project representatives online and asked how residents could communicate concerns directly. The Select Board stated that project contact information could be provided, including email contacts for individuals overseeing the bridge project. Town Administrator Ronald Boucher also explained that the Town is working to centralize communication and encouraged residents to direct concerns through the Town rather than contacting multiple agencies individually.

The Select Board provided an update regarding notifications that have been made in preparation for the bridge closure including North Berkshire EMS, the local fire department, Massachusetts State Police, emergency dispatch resources, and other relevant agencies. The Town stated that Mr. Hurlbut has been communicating with North Adams dispatch to ensure they are aware of the closure and emergency response considerations. Officials emphasized that they are working proactively to avoid situations where agencies are unaware of the closure or access changes.

The Select Board noted that the Town was only recently informed that the project would begin on approximately August 10th, and staff have been working quickly to notify all necessary parties.

Mr. Tanner expressed concern that the current situation highlights the need for better communication and planning for future bridge work. He stated that while the current focus is on the temporary bridge and immediate closure, future planning should include an advance notice to residents and businesses, public meetings before major impacts occur, clear timelines and project updates, and a plan for future phases of construction.

Mr. Tanner requested that MassDOT commit to providing the Town with information before future major construction activities occur, rather than residents being surprised by sudden changes. He specifically noted that the temporary bridge will eventually need to be removed, and additional closures or construction phases are likely. Future work should not occur without adequate communication. He also raised concerns regarding the permanent bridge design and requested that future plans consider restoring adequate space for impacted residents, including ensuring that bridge footings and roadway design minimize impacts to nearby homes.

Ms. Heming explained that there is a significant difference between emergency bridge work and a planned bridge replacement project. For a typical bridge replacement project, there is a formal design process, and public review occurs. Informational meetings and public hearings are held, environmental and permitting reviews take place, and right-of-way and property impacts are evaluated. She explained that the current project is different because it is emergency work resulting from the bridge condition. The bridge deterioration was identified through inspection, and the condition was worsening at a rate requiring action. MassDOT provided notice as soon as the need for emergency action was confirmed. The Town needed to move quickly to order materials and coordinate temporary bridge installation.

Ms. Heming stated that, in some emergency situations, bridges must be closed immediately for safety reasons, with limited opportunity for the traditional public process. She emphasized that the goal is to complete the emergency work as efficiently as possible.

Mr. Scott asked about the timeline for removing existing Jersey barriers located on Route 8 near the Clarksburg/North Adams boundary. He stated that the barriers have been in place for approximately two years and asked whether the work could be accelerated.

The Select Board asked MassDOT for additional information regarding the location, but Ms. Heming stated she was not immediately familiar with the specific location but would investigate. It was discussed that the barriers may be related to a slope stabilization project and not part of the current bridge closure project. MassDOT agreed to investigate the specific location and provide additional information.

Alexandra Barker of 590 River Road asked whether residents should use one central phone number or email address to report concerns or issues as the project progresses. Ms. Barker suggested having a single communication channel so concerns can be organized and addressed efficiently.

The Select Board recommended that residents direct concerns through the Town Administrator. Residents were provided with the Town Administrator's contact information and encouraged to funnel questions, concerns, and issues through one point of contact. The Town Administrator stated that this will allow concerns to be tracked and coordinated with MassDOT and project representatives as needed.

Francisca Heming thanked residents for sharing concerns and acknowledged that the project will create challenges for the community. She stated that they understand the difficulties residents are facing, and not every request can be immediately accommodated due to MassDOT procedures and requirements. Notes from the meeting will be reviewed to determine if additional assistance or improvements are possible, and the project team will continue working with the Town. Ms. Heming stated that the goal is to complete the temporary bridge work efficiently, with hopes of reopening access by Columbus Day, assuming construction progresses without major delays. She thanked the Town and residents for their cooperation and recognized the Town's advocacy and communication efforts throughout the process.

The Select Board thanked the MassDOT representatives for participating remotely and thanked residents for attending and sharing their concerns, and acknowledged the difficulty of the situation and stated that the Town will continue working to minimize impacts and support residents throughout the project.

VI. Sign State primary warrant for September 1st primary per Town Clerk.

The Select Board reviewed the warrant for the State Primary Election scheduled for September 1, 2026.

MOTION: Chairman Haskins motioned to approve the warrant for the State Primary Election scheduled for September 1, 2026.

SECOND: Selectman Alexander seconded.

VOTE: All were in favor.

VII. Approve and sign cemetery deed to Linda and Charles Lewitt for Section D, Lot 46B.

The Select Board reviewed the cemetery deed assigned to Linda and Charles Lewitt for Section D, Lot 46B.

MOTION: Selectman Alexander motioned to approve the cemetery deed to Linda and Charles Lewitt for Section D, Lot 46B.

SECOND: Chairman Haskins seconded.

VOTE: All were in favor.

VIII. Approve and sign cemetery deed to Geraldine Brassard for Section D, Lot 48A.

The Select Board reviewed the cemetery deed assigned to Geraldine Brassard for Section D, Lot 48A.

MOTION: Selectman Alexander motioned to approve the cemetery deed to Geraldine Brassard for Section D, Lot 48A.

SECOND: Chairman Haskins seconded.

VOTE: All were in favor.

IX. Approve and sign cemetery deed to James and Bonnie Cunningham for Section D, Lot 86.

The Select Board reviewed the cemetery deed assigned to James and Bonnie Cunningham for Section D, Lot 86.

MOTION: Selectman Alexander motioned to approve the cemetery deed to James and Bonnie Cunningham for Section D, Lot 86.

SECOND: Chairman Haskins seconded.

VOTE: All were in favor.

X. Town Administrator updates.

Highway Superintendent Kyle Hurlbut provided an update regarding the Middle Road project. A meeting was held with the contractor, Rifenburg, regarding the upcoming work. The current anticipated timeframe for construction is the last week of August or the first week of September. The project will require a temporary closure and detour of Middle Road during portions of the work. Updates included that the project meeting went well as the contractor expressed confidence in completing the work. Two failed culverts were identified that will need replacement. A daily road closure may be required during portions of the project and residents will receive advance notice regarding closures.

Mr. Hurlbut stated that weather conditions and contractor schedules may affect the timeline. If rain or other delays occur, the project schedule may be pushed back. Rifenburg is exploring the possibility of completing the project during the current construction season. The project schedule is also dependent on other contractor commitments, including paving availability. If the project cannot be completed before the end of the paving season, the area will be temporarily stabilized. Gravel, cones, and construction signage will remain in place, and a final excavation and paving will occur in the spring. A few minor change orders may be necessary, but no significant changes are anticipated.

The Select Board continued discussion regarding speeding concerns throughout town. Officials discussed the cost of permanent speed feedback signs, noting that they can cost approximately \$3,500 per unit. The Town does not currently have funds available in the regular budget for additional signs. The Board discussed exploring other options including availability of MassDOT-owned speed signs, possible assistance from Massachusetts State Police, and/or grant opportunities for permanent installations. Town Administrator Mr. Boucher stated that he would follow up with MassDOT representatives regarding available equipment and attempt to expedite the process. The Board acknowledged that speeding has been an ongoing concern throughout Town and that increased enforcement and traffic control measures may require additional funding during future budget discussions.

Mr. Boucher reported that the Intermunicipal Agreement for Northern Berkshire School Union Shared Services has been reviewed and signed, and the agreement has been forwarded to the Superintendent's Office.

He then reported that the Second Amendment to the Administrative Consent Order for North Eagle Street has been signed and submitted to the State.

Mr. Hurlbut added an update regarding annual reporting requirements. A request was made for a longer-term contract arrangement to help ensure deadlines and reporting requirements are consistently met. He stated that he has requested a three-year agreement similar to the arrangement used for other Town services but is awaiting a quote.

Mr. Boucher told the Board that cemetery railings are being painted black rather than white. The work was noted to look good. Roadside mowing and culvert cleaning are ongoing, as well as blacktop repairs around the school are underway. Progress will depend on weather conditions.

Mr. Hurlbut spoke to the the Select Board about drainage concerns near the school. He reviewed videos of the water issue, which does not appear to be coming from the previously repaired pipe area. A pipe connection was sealed to prevent water intrusion, and additional drainage improvements may be needed, including installation of perforated drainage pipe, improvement of roof drainage systems, and installation of larger drainage structures and routing water away from the building. He also said that significant water runoff is coming from the rear portion of the school roof and that a larger drainage project may need to be considered by the school.

The Town Administrator provided an update regarding the Green Communities project at the school. Completed work includes installation of insulation in the school wing, installation of mini-splits in the meeting room/library area, and installation of heat pumps at the school. The Town is awaiting additional information regarding remaining mini-split installations and DPW lighting improvements.

Mr. Boucher announced that the Town received a Hazard Mitigation Grant in the amount of \$25,000 with assistance from State Representative John Barrett. The Select Board thanked those involved in securing the grant.

XI. Public Comment.

Chairman Haskins opened the floor to public comment. No public comments were offered.

XII. Adjourn.

MOTION: Chairman Haskins motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:32 p.m.

SECOND: Selectman Alexander seconded.

VOTE: All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Markell Shea, *Town Executive Assistant*

Selectboard,

Dan Haskins, *Chair*

Colton Andrews, *First Vice Chair*

**Seth Alexander, *Second
Vice Chair***