



Shakes to Shingles continues work on the energy upgrades to the Andover Town Library. In November they filled in gaps and added R30 cellulose over the old section of the attic. Photo: Charlie Darling

Supervisors of the Checklist Meet on January 24

Last chance to register to run in the election

Press release

The Andover Supervisors of the Checklist will meet on Tuesday, January 24 at Town Hall from 7:00 to 7:30 PM to make additions and corrections to the checklist. This meeting is timed so that anyone planning to run in the March 2017 Town Election can get onto the checklist before filing begins.

The checklist will be posted at Town Hall beginning on January 13. You can look at it to make sure you are accurately listed or you can check online by

going to the Secretary of State's Web site SOS.New Hampshire.Gov and clicking on the light blue Voter Information Lookup box on the right side.

You must be a registered voter in Andover to run for an Andover town office. The filing period for the March town elections opens on Wednesday, January 25 and closes on Friday, February 3 at 5 PM. In order to be listed on the ballot, you must file with the Town Clerk during that period. If you don't file, you can still run, but you must do so as a write-in candidate. There is no charge to file.

Bridge from page 3

which the town would have to pay 20%.

But the rules for a town that has one or more Highway Department employees are different. If the Select Board and the Road Agent (whether elected or employed) are comfortable with the scope and complexity of the project, they can forgo the engineering study, the approved drawings, the state funding, and the bidding process – and the long delays and high price tags associated with each of those steps.

Instead, as Andover did recently with the Kearsarge Mountain Road bridge, they can simply “get ‘er done” using the Town's and the Road Agent's own resources. The delays are minimal, and the costs are dramatically less.

The only downside is that the Town “owns” the project – if something should go wrong with the bridge in the future, there's no engineer onto whom to try to shift the liability.

Done in a Day

The Kearsarge Mountain Road project took about six weeks from the time the state raised the alarm until the project was complete. The process was straightforward: the Road Agent took all the relevant data about the bridge to Cohen Steel Supply in Concord, where their in-house engineer did the calculations to come up with the products and a plan that would not only fix the bridge, but increase its load-bearing capacity by 6,600 pounds.

DOT was very happy to review the plan, and it found no flaws, so the project was good to go, with no engineering studies, no engineering stamp, and no huge engineering bill – just a plan and a truckload of the appropriate materials.

The construction itself was completed in a single long day. According to Road Agent John “Tiny” Thompson, Highway Department employees Jim

Reed and Keith Blinn and the Road Agent's crew “worked like a well-oiled machine” to prepare for the big day and then execute the plan, wrapping up after nightfall on the day they started.

Tiny also credits the Select Board and Town Administrator Marj Roy for thinking outside the box and trying this new (for Andover) approach to bridge projects. “It was a real team effort,” he says, with lots of good ideas and helpful information sharing.

The Question of Liability

The new approach used on Kearsarge Mountain Road is made possible by the fact that Andover now has full-time Highway Department employees and therefore falls under a different set of rules than it did before, allowing it to skip the formal engineering studies and to treat the Road Agent as part of the Town, rather than as a contractor.

But there's one more difference between the two approaches to consider: liability.

If something were to go wrong with the Kearsarge Mountain Road bridge years from now and the Town were sued, the Town would have no recourse – there's no engineer's stamp and therefore no engineer onto whom to try to shift some or all of the liability; and there's no contractor to blame, because in this new approach, the Road Agent is considered part of the Town.

So while the new approach offers some compelling benefits, it does have its dark side, which leaves the townspeople and the Select Board to contemplate how much risk it's appropriate for the Town to assume, and how much time and money we need to save to make it worth assuming that risk.

As it turns out, there's no free lunch; but even years from now the Kearsarge Mountain Road bridge project will probably prove to have been a pretty tasty morsel nonetheless.



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