Written by Steve Ostermann
Wednesday, 06 October 2010 18:39

Grafton trustees balk at signing agreement until options for razing structure in Lime Kiln Park are explored

Reiterating its concerns about the cost of razing the Lime Kiln Park dam, the Grafton Village Board on Monday tabled a proposed agreement that calls for the village to pay budget over-runs for the Ozaukee County project.

Trustees received a memorandum of understanding from the county this week outlining shared costs for the dam removal, which the county is overseeing as part of a $7.2 million project funded by a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and other grant money.

The NOAA grant, which will also pay for the construction of a fish passage for the Bridge Street dam in downtown Grafton and other river restoration work, includes $133,700 budgeted to remove the Lime Kiln dam. That project is expected to be done by the end of this year.

However, three bids received last month for the work all exceeded the budgeted amount, ranging from $193,000 to $852,000. Last week, the Ozaukee County Public Works Committee tabled acting on the bids until officials take a closer look at the condition of the dam and removal options.

Village Engineer Dave Murphy urged the board to delay acting on the memorandum, which the county sent to the village to clarify cost sharing.

“My recommendation is to table this until we know more about the Lime Kiln Dam,” he said. “Ozaukee County and NOAA portrayed this as 100% NOAA-funded.

“The money was stipulated in the grant application, but now that the project is over budget, they are asking for money from the village.”

Village President Jim Brunnquell said he was concerned about receiving a memorandum written by county officials without consulting the village.

“It seems there is a little disconnect here,” Brunnquell said. “I think there’s a little concern that we’re not working together.”

Andrew Struck, the county’s planning and parks director, told the board the NOAA grant budgeted a specific amount of money for the dam razing and any associated restoration work and that figure cannot change.

“The NOAA grant is capped,” he said. “We anticipated it would be sufficient, with no additional funds needed from the county.

“We need to know what the numbers are before we decide on the bids. We’re happy to discuss it.”

Struck said county and village crews will begin dewatering the dam next week — a process that will allow a closer inspection of the dam, which has been in disrepair for years. The water in the dam basin will be lowered six inches per day for about three weeks to expose a large part of the structure, Murphy said.

Although the budget called for removal of the entire dam, Murphy said other options — including leaving the spillway intact — could be considered to pare the cost.

However, Struck said any option other than complete removal would have to meet all requirements in the NOAA grant. Those include approvals from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ozaukee County and NOAA.

Because the county has 60 days to act on the bids, there is enough time to explore alternatives and determine more precise costs for the project, Struck said.

“The county will not accept a bid that cannot be funded,” he added. “I apologize if any of this caught the Village Board by surprise.”

Village officials, Brunnquell said, are willing to work with the county to resolve cost concerns in razing the dam.

Murphy said the NOAA grant agreement requires the village to contribute $2,700 in cash to the project and another $27,300 in-kind for labor and equipment.

Bonestroo Inc. has been paid $81,760 for engineering studies and permit processing work for the dam removal, Murphy said.

An update on the project is expected by late October, he told the board.

VILLAGE OF GRAFTON and Ozaukee County officials are working to resolve cost concerns associated with the planned removal of the Lime Kiln Park dam. Photo by Sam Arendt