

State gives Grafton \$282,695 grant that will defray cost of flood-control work on Bridge Street dam

The Village of Grafton will receive financial assistance from the state Department of Natural Resources to repair the Bridge Street dam.

The DNR last week awarded \$282,695 from its municipal dam grant program to the village to defray the cost of upgrades needed for the dam to comply with state flood-control regulations.

The work includes repairing both dam abutments, replacing a masonry wall adjacent to the east abutment with a reinforced concrete wall, reconfiguring an overlook area on the west side of the dam and raising the riverwalk to reduce flooding.

In September, the Village Board decided to apply for a grant, which can be used to pay 50% for the first \$400,000 of eligible project costs and 25% of the next \$800,000 in costs.

Actual grant totals are based on construction bids, with the maximum award being \$400,000

The final cost of Bridge Street dam repairs will not be determined until engineering work is completed and a construction contractor hired. However, the work is estimated to cost \$320,000, including \$170,000 for west-abutment projects and \$150,000 for the east abutment.

Based on the estimate, the grant would cover \$160,000 of the total cost, with the village obligated to pay the rest. The local share would be covered using funds from the downtown tax incremental financing district, which provides revenue for public improvements.

The village's grant request for the dam repairs was \$228,325. The DNR award includes \$201,925 in funding plus \$80,770 to cover a 40% contingency.

Village Administrator Darrell Hofland said local officials were hopeful the Bridge Street dam would be one of the projects chosen for a DNR grant.

"The village was optimistic about its chances, especially in light of the DNR's past involvement with the dam," he said.

The Bridge Street dam was one of 15 municipal projects chosen by the DNR to receive grant money. Based on a scoring system that prioritized projects, Grafton's grant request ranked seventh among 21 applicants in 18 counties.

The grant award requires acceptance by the Village Board, which Hofland said will discuss the Bridge Street project and finalize repair options and bid specifications in the near future. The project may also be reviewed by the Board of Public Works, he noted.

DNR to help pay village's dam repair bill

Written by STEVE OSTERMANN

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Hofland said the village would then hire a consulting firm and contractor. The work is expected to be completed in 2012.

As the owner of the downtown dam, the village is responsible for its operation and maintenance, including adhering to flood-control regulations. In response to a DNR directive that gives the village until 2019 to conform to the regulations, Grafton officials were initially poised to raze the dam.

However, a petition drive opposing the razing forced the village to hold a binding referendum on the dam's future in April 2010, when residents voted overwhelmingly to save the structure.

The village also gave Ozaukee County permission to build a federally funded fish passage that would have allowed native species to travel upstream around the dam to spawn.

But that project was dropped by the village in September after the DNR decided the passage would have to have a trap-and-sort facility to catch invasive species and disease-carrying fish — a restriction that would allowed only lake sturgeon upstream.