

**Town of Haverhill
PUBLIC MEETING
Airport Safety Study
Monday, July 12, 2021, at 6:00 PM
R.E. Clifford Memorial Building
65 South Court St.
Woodsville, NH 03785
Or on ZOOM**

PUBLIC MEETING opened at 6:00 PM.

Town Employees Present:

Town Manager: Brigitte Codling
Assistant Town Manager: Jennifer Boucher

Members of the Public Present:

In Person

Susie Tann	Dan Freeto
Howard Hatch	Abby Freeto
Doug Henson	Cliff Batchelder
Greg Mathieson	Miguel Vasconcelos
Rick Henson	Matthew Bjelobrk
Melissa Henson	Joe Longacre

Online

Mary Patridge	Jen Ricciardi
Paul Hayes (<i>Caledonian Record</i>)	Aprille
C. Moulton	
Alex Nuti-de Biasi (<i>Journal Opinion</i>)	

Airport Runway Safety Study Results with Guy Rouelle from Dubois & King

Rouelle noted that this meeting is the first of the set of meetings for the public on the Dean Memorial Airport Runway Safety Study. Rouelle explained that the study evaluated the runway feasibility analysis and provided alternatives and solutions for the FAA's concerns, and what the airport currently is and what it could be. Rouelle noted that the runway option ultimately selected will be approved by the Select Board and the townspeople. Rouelle stated that this meeting will discuss the current condition of the airport.

Rouelle noted that on the Town's website, residents and interested parties can find the report on the Airport Feasibility Study, Chapters 1, 2, and 3 at https://www.haverhill-nh.com/index.asp?SEC=775EE069-765A-4632-8CFD-86C8EB09712D&DE=D30D2DDA-D2DC-44EB-ABDB-57CB5A5722F0&Type=B_PR

Rouelle provided an overview of the project for the attendees, including the federal funds used for the study, the overall purpose of the study, existing conditions at the airport, five alternatives

or options for correcting the safety concerns, public access to the study process and results, NH DOT and FAA classification and design criteria for the airport, and aquifer and wetlands analyses. Rouelle noted that the layout plan for the airport is currently conditionally approved by the FAA.

Rouelle noted that the June and July public meetings provided valuable input from the public, which helped Rouelle revise the report.

Rouelle provided a detailed background of the initial evaluation and airspace validation processes. Rouelle explained the objects of the study based on instrument approach procedures for the runways are to: 1) improve safety by providing unencumbered runway and approach surfaces, 2) provide runway layouts that are approved by the FAA, 3) provide landing length on Runway 1-19 for design aircraft, 4) protect airspace from current and future obstructions, and 5) improve all-weather safety of the airport.

Rouelle highlighted the current runway layout with property lines, obstructions, FAA airspace, roadways, and an aquifer boundary. Rouelle provided discussion of the airport from the south with the roadway too close to the runway and to the north with buildings within the approach surface.

Rouelle provided detailed discussion on the alternatives for correcting the airport safety issues:

- *Alternative 1.* No build, and the airport remains as is, which will make the airport out of compliance.
- *Alternative 2.* Displace Runway 1.
- *Alternative 3.* Property acquisition for runway safety area and Runway 1 extension.
- *Alternative 4.* Property acquisition for runway safety area and no Runway 1 extension.
- *Alternative 5.* Acquire easements for runway safety area and remove 1,100 feet of Airport Road.

Rouelle summarized by stating that once the option is decided upon, the remainder of the report can be completed, and the airport layout plan can be updated, and that today's meeting is mainly about Chapter 3, which details the five alternatives.

Public Questions and Comments:

- [38:12] An audience member commented that it was interesting to see how the poles and other obstructions impacted the runway.
- [38:45] Greg Mathieson asked if a PC-12 could land on that airport right now because they need 2500 feet. Rouelle replied that a PC-12 could land, but there are many considerations, like the temperature or how the plane was loaded. The speaker asked if the airport were to have commercial aircraft land, how would the airport have to change to be in compliance. Rouelle replied that commercial airport is certificated under FAA Certification Part 139. The speaker asked if there would have to be a fence. Rouelle stated that the Lebanon airport is not Part 139 certificated, but does have a perimeter fence because at one point that airport was commercial airport certificated.

- [51:00] An audience member asked about the 500 feet to be added at the end of the runway and why the corners could not be rounded. Rouelle replied that the FAA wants to see the primary surface area without any obstructions, and a road is not something they want to see in the airport safety area.
- [58:02] Doug Henson asked about the amount of acreage in Alternative 4 to expand the airport safety zone. Rouelle replied that he will have to get back to him to give him the correct acreage.
- [58:37] Greg Mathieson asked who will pay for moving Airport Road. Rouelle replied that there is the potential for an infrastructure bill to be approved through Congress, and Rouelle continued that this project is 100% funded by the infrastructure bill or 90% funded by the FAA and the 5% funded by the NH DOT, which leaves a 5% Town match.
- [59:35] Howard Hatch asked why raising the runway or dropping the road 6 feet would not be an alternative. Rouelle stated that funding from the FAA will not allow the road to touch the runway as it currently is because of the need for 240 feet of safety area beyond the runway. Rouelle stated that his team will look at raising the runway elevation.
- [1:02:46] An audience member asked what the slope of the runway is. Rouelle stated that there is a 20-foot difference in elevation from one end of the runway to the other. Audience members asked if there was any room on the runways for a turn-around. Rouelle replied that there are phased elements to the implementation plan, including a full parallel taxiway, which may be 10 years down the road. Rouelle continued that for now, they will consider some “bump-outs” to the runway to allow turn around space.
- [1:04:29] An audience member asked about elevation charts that had heights marked up to 3 miles from the airport. Rouelle replied that there are airspace measurements including seven surfaces that are up to 3200 feet in length. Audience member asked about obstructions such as hills. Rouelle described the horizontal surface (50 feet about the airport elevation). Rouelle continued that the entire area has been mapped and reported to the FAA. Jen Ricciardi typed a message into the meeting stating that the elevation difference in the runway is 35 feet.
- [1:06:43] Susie Tann asked about the impacted adjacent properties. Rouelle stated that depending on the option selected, the parcels that will be impacted may be different.
- [1:07:36] Miguel Vasconcelos asked about the construction element to the project and, in the south section, are there mainly trees that are obstructions. Rouelle explained the appraisal process of the land needed for reconstruction. Rouelle addressed the green area in the map stating that there may be a fee simple sale of parcels or an easement in the airport safety area or no impact at all. Rouelle explained in detail the appraisal, negotiation, and sale process for obtaining land in the airport safety area.
- [1:13:50] An audience member asked if the Town could remove a tree that was planted in memoriam. Rouelle stated that it is the Town’s decision.
- [1:15:28] Tann asked if an aviation easement another way of saying “eminent domain.” Rouelle replied by outline the appraisal process by the Town and, if there are holdouts, the Town will have to decide on the process.

- [1:17:12] Vasconcelos stated that it is important to answer Tann’s question, and stated that this is not a forceful takeover, but an offer to negotiate an agreement to remove an obstruction in the airspace without impacting the rights of the property owner. Vasconcelos stated that property rights are local and state issues with no involvement by the FAA.
- [1:18:24] Tann asked what if the property owner declines the negotiations.
- [1:22:45] Doug Henson asked about the cul-de-sac on the eastern side of the runway and why the road cannot come back from that point to Industrial Park Road. Rouelle noted that something different needs to happen there.
- [1:23:36] Vasconcelos noted that Alternative 5 with the cul-de-sac on Airport Road, drivers may use this as a gathering place, and he suggested, having a turn.
- [1:24:14] Town Manager Codling asked if that answers the questions about aviation easements. Rouelle replied with the acreages for the adjacent lots.
- [1:25:17] Joe Longacre asked whether the impact of the blue- and green-shaded areas are the same and why does the blue area widen on the north part of the runway. Rouelle responded that on the north end, there is an instrument approach procedure, so that’s a different shape, and the FAA wants the Town to secure the airport protection zones. Rouelle provided a detailed explanation of the airspace on each end of the runway.
- [1:27:33] An audience member asked if there has been a traffic survey. TM Codling replied, “Yes.”

Rouelle discussed the **Traffic Study by the Regional Planning Commission** stating that traffic strips were in place for a few weeks and found that one bus from the middle school still traversed Airport Road when they have been told not to and there was transient traffic. Rouelle noted that the traffic data will be tabulated and available.

[1:32:22] An audience member stated that he sees a lot of traffic when there is a school event. TM Codling noted that the Highway Department was hauling sand at that time of the study.

- [1:28:23] Hatch asked if Airport Road was closed, would the water lines be maintained. Rouelle responded that it would be a maintenance issue for the Town because they own the airport.

NEXT STEPS

Rouelle noted that the Report is on the website under Announcements. Rouelle stated that the revised document will be online in 1 week. Rouelle announced that the next PUBLIC MEETING will be scheduled with the Select Board and will be held on Monday, September 27, at 6:00 PM.

Public Questions and Comments:

- [1:35:05] An audience member asked when moving ahead to buying property, will the Town have a vote on what happens or will the Select Board and the Town Manager decide, and what will the FAA say if the Town says they do not want to do this. Rouelle

replied that if the project cannot go forward, the FAA will determine that the runway will have to be shortened, and the Town voters will have a choice whether to implement the reconstruction or not. TM Codling responded that in 2019 the Town voters approved \$200,000+ in funds for the Airport Feasibility Study. The audience member asked if the Town would vote again as the project moves toward construction. TM Codling replied that the grant match of 5% will have to go back out in the form of a warrant article for a vote. TM Codling noted that the fee simple purchases and the easements have already been approved in the 2019 warrant article. TM Codling noted that this meeting is a Public Hearing and is part of the process to select an alternative plan.

- [1:39:07] An audience member commented that all this work is benefitting a small number of people vs. the entire Town. Vasconcelos stated that nothing proposed is unreasonable, and the alternative proposed gives the Select Board good options. Vasconcelos noted that this project is about enhancing the safety of the existing infrastructure, and the “path forward is one of cooperation.” Vasconcelos stated that this project is bringing the standards of the airport to compliance, just as the roads we travel on are maintained and enhanced every day.
- [1:42:51] Greg Mathieson stated that he agrees with the safety measures, but at the last meeting new taxiways and new hangars were discussed. Rouelle noted that some of those things are on the maps, but they have been talked about for years and should not be considered part of this project.
- [1:43:40] Abby Freeto stated that just saying that this project benefits a few pilots is not a fair representation of the Town interest. The audience member noted that she attended the Airport Awareness Days and there were 100s of people attending, and the airport is an investment and an opportunity for our children and grandchildren.
- [1:45:07] Matt Bjelobrck stated that doing nothing and shortening the runway is the “death knell” for the airport and will increase the likelihood of accidents. Bjelobrck stated that it is an asset to the Town and is strategic to the Northeast region.
- [1:46:42] Cliff Batchelder stated that at the Airport Awareness Day, 104 kids signed up for an airplane ride.
- [1:47:23] Hatch commented that he wonders about the Airport Zoning Commission (AZC) and the Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) in the Town, and he has been told they are one in the same, and he would like clarification. Hatch continued noting that there is 50-foot easement wording on his deed on the land that abuts the airport, so he cannot erect a silo. Tann, airport Zoning Commission Chair, replied that the AZC would work with the ZBA to review appeals and weigh in on airport issues. TM Codling stated that anything related to the aquifer protection area would come before the ZBA, so depending on the issue raised, the appeal is directed to one board or the other.
- [1:51:20] Tann asked about the Next Steps and what is the context of the FAA’s and the Town’s decision-making process and how can the community make comments on those meetings. Rouelle noted that these is one more Public Meeting, and all the information gathered will be forwarded to the FAA. Rouelle meets with the FAA reps, and they

decide on the acceptable alternatives for funding, then those decision are brought back to the Town.

- [1:52:23] An audience member asked if theoretically the Town decides on the fee simple process and what recourse does the landowner have if they do not want to sell. Rouelle stated that the Town's interest is voluntary, which has an appraisal, negotiation, and approval processes. The next level, Rouelle continued, is what we have right now with the safety concerns, and the issues have to be complied with by summer 2022 per the FAA.
- [1:54:31] Doug Henson asked to return to the bird's-eye view of the airport zones on the southern end that shows the tree penetrations. Henson asked if the penetrations in the blue area have to be dwelt with and do they reach the house. If my family allows the easements for the airport approach, what assurances can you give me that you are not going to require more trees to be cut in any number of years. Rouelle stated that the FAA is infrequently willing to fund easements for the transitional area. Henson stated that his family has always tried to work with the Town to cut trees, but have to know exactly which trees to cut. Rouelle stated that the FAA wants airport to have control over the Airport Protection Zone, but the real impact would be for the pilots to have difficulty departing to the south with obstructions and terrain. Rouelle stated that the Henson's have done an exemplary job clearing and maintaining their land adjacent to the airport.

PUBLIC MEETING closed at 8:05 PM.

Transcribed by Joanna Bligh, edited by Susie Tann.