

Roche de Boeuf Committee Meeting

Friday, April 17, 2026, 8:15 pm; ODOT District 2 Office

Attendees: Pat McColley, David Geckle, Joanie Cherry, Mayor Tim Pedro, City Administrator Jon Gochenour, Councilman Todd Borowski, John Pautz, Bill Vermes, Rex Childers

Meeting Minutes

- Pat McColley and Tim Pedro thanked everyone for coming together
- Introductions around the table
- Tim Pedro discussed his meeting with the governor and his decision to provide 30 days for City of Waterville, STBA and ODOT D2 to investigate an alternate way forward. Tim stated the governor asked for regular updates from the City and Pat McColley stated the governor requested the same from ODOT D2.
- Pat discussed how ODOT is a de-centralized department and how D2 has completed multiple rehabilitation of historic bridges. This includes several bridge projects dating back to 1842 that carried the Miami-Erie Canal over streams that were repurposed to carry US 24 as well as maintaining the only suspension bridge on the state highway system.
- Pat McColley stated that ODOT continuing to own the Roche de Boeuf bridge does not fit the mission of the Department of providing safe and reliable transportation system and a new owner for the bridge (public entity) needs to be determined. All agreed with this statement.
- Rex Childers introduced himself and provided his background and roll with the STBA.
- Pat McColley explained the history of the Roche de Boeuf bridge, the Feasibility Study completed by ODOT and past efforts to find a new owner. Project funding was discussed and how on August 5, 2025, ODOT told City of Waterville (Tim and Jon) ODOT could transfer the \$4 million budgeted for demolition to the City of Waterville if they took ownership of the bridge.
- Rex Childers explained some of the issues with the City of Waterville taking the \$4M environmental commitment to take the structure "as-is". Primarily, no insurance carrier would accept the risk as is, based upon a "future" planned stabilization. This is one of the points he made directly to the governor in the meeting on April 14, 2026. However, he described a path forward - the State uses the funds to stabilize if engineering determines the piers and arches can support a future structure that City of Waterville can vote for, with confirmation of Bill Vermes and John Pautz. This is a handoff that accomplishes both the State of Ohio/ODOT need to transfer the bridge and allows Waterville to go forward with all responsibility.

- Bill Vermes introduced himself and provided his background. He discussed the design of the bridge and how it was constructed. He presented a bridge condition inspection report of the arches and spandrel walls he performed.
- Dave Geckle discussed the concrete deterioration shown in the provided inspection report and the ODOT Bridge Inspection manual guidance on deterioration. The presence of efflorescence is an indicator of concrete's deterioration.
- Bill Vermes discussed his proposal for rehabilitating the bridge into a functioning pedestrian bridge. He stated he is in contact with a couple of prefabricated bridge suppliers about the project.
- John Pautz presented cost estimates and scope of work for multiple options (Stabilizing the Bridge, Bridge over Bridge Concept and Bridge Rehabilitation). He worked with Bill Vermes on the scope of work and costs.
- Pat McColley started the conversation of a new owner. ODOT D2 stated in the first meeting with the City of Waterville and STBA that a new owner needs to be found to save the bridge. The City of Waterville is in the best position to take ownership of the bridge. Other entities, such as the Toledo Metroparks, are not interested in owning infrastructure such as the Roche de Boeuf Bridge. Time Pedro stated time is needed for the decision. Pat McColley stated there is enough time to make the decision and all the information needed to make the decision has been presented and additional information from Bill Vermes will be provided within a month.
- Pat McColley continued to discuss ODOT is moving forward with the contract to demo the bridge. Kokosing Construction Company has been awarded the demolition contract. The first day the contractor is allowed to start work in the Maumee River is June 1, 2026. An ownership decision by City of Waterville can happen up until that date. It was emphasized and agreed upon by City of Waterville, STBA and ODOT that the City of Waterville needs to act and cannot keep delaying the decision on taking ownership of the bridge.
- Pat McColley brought up the possibility of ODOT working with Kokosing Construction Company to alter the demolition contract to only demo the spandrel walls and remove the fill from the concrete arches. This would greatly reduce any current liability of the bridge. It was stated for it to happen; City of Waterville would need to take ownership of the bridge first. This option would help stabilize the bridge and take advantage of the causeway that needs to be built to perform the demolition work.
- After some discussion on liability if the City of Waterville takes the bridge prior to demolition commencing, Pat McColley and the ODOT D2 team explained a contractor has the liability and responsibility of any construction site once the contract is awarded. The ODOT team explained that this is the case in road and bridge projects and is part of the contract with the contractor. Pat McColley also explained that if it makes the City of Waterville feel more comfortable with taking ownership prior to the actual demolition commencing the state could lease back the site for \$1 until the end of the contract.

- Pat McColley stated funding could still be provided to the City of Waterville for taking ownership, however, it would be the original \$4 million minus any costs associated with cancelling a contract with the contractor or costs involved with performing partial demolition. ODOT would still have to work with Kokosing to determine if it is possible.
- Next meeting was set for Monday, April 27 at 8:30 am at ODOT District 2 Office
- Meeting Adjourned