

Roche de Boeuf Committee Meeting

Friday, May 8, 2026, 1:30pm; ODOT District 2 Office

Attendees: Pat McColley, David Geckle, Joanie Cherry, Kacey Young, Mayor Tim Pedro, City Administrator Jon Gochenour, John Pautz, Bill Vermes (via Teams), Rex Childers

Meeting Minutes

- Tim Pedro thanked everyone for coming together
- Pat McColley summarized the meeting held with Craig Wing with Kokosing on Monday, May 4 at 11:00am. City of Waterville was in attendance and was able to ask questions. Kokosing expressed safety concerns and equipment access. They shared the simplicity of the demolition option, and a partial demolition required more precision. Kokosing discussed their sequence plan to start the causeway on the Lucas County side, leapfrog over to the Wood County side, then back again for removal. Pat McColley stated ODOT asked ODNR for approval to waste the causeway on the Wood County banks above the ordinary high-water mark. ODNR rejected the proposal because of the Maumee River's status of a scenic river.
- Kacey Young stated one of Kokosing's biggest concerns was if the bridge was to collapse when working on one of the last spans and then additional money would need to be spent to demolish the bridge. She stated Kokosing wants to do well and not disappoint. The contractor is working on a range of costs and should be submitting their estimate to ODOT by Friday May 15.
- Bill Vermes presented his Physical Condition and Preservation Alternatives Report. He mentioned he did not include estimated costs in the report, and it is intended more for guidance. The report is included as an Appendix to the meeting minutes.
- Bill Vermes discussed how he and other members of the STBA visited the bridge and was able to access the first three spans. They did hand excavation to view the top of the arch and TTL was on site to conduct Windsor Probe testing. Results can be found in the Alternatives Report. He mentioned more testing would be beneficial.
- John Pautz spoke about the bridge over bridge option shown in the Alternatives Report. The figure shown in the rehabilitation option will make this option look more like the original bridge. Also, the proposed concrete pathway allows for a second transverse tie between the spandrel walls. John acknowledged the challenges being awarded grant money and the group is looking to the community for support. A long-term goal would be for ODOT and Wood County to incorporate pedestrian paths into their future road projects.

- Rex Childers and Bill Vermes spoke on the Roche de Boeuf bridge and the views it offers. The bridge would be different than the modern bridge in Waterville with pedestrian paths and vehicular traffic. Bill Vermes stated the piers and concrete arches will stand and the arches are in better condition than he previously thought. Rex Childers said the point of Section 106 is if the bridge is a usable structure and has a purpose.
- Bill Vermes stated that a demolition test of the spandrel walls could be done on the first span on the south side of the bridge. This subject was discussed as a possibility in the meeting with Kokosing.
- Pat McColley talked about different options when Kokosing submits their cost range for partial demolition of the work. Based on the previous meeting with Kokosing, Pat McColley stated it should be assumed there will be no leftover funds of the \$4 million. Craig Wing from Kokosing wanted to know the budgeted amount for the partial demolition work. ODOT and Kokosing agreed if his estimates were coming out to be much higher than the budget, no more time or effort should be wasted. If the low end of Kokosing's estimate range is close to the budget, it may make sense for the test demolition on the south span, but only if it can help narrow the cost range. If the cost comes in well over the \$4 million, ODOT would not move forward with the partial demolition unless another entity covers the additional cost.
- Dave Geckle stated per Daniel Luten's book, there is approximately 9,000 cubic yards of concrete in the existing bridge which is approximately the amount in the causeway which will be built for demolition.
- Pat McColley stated three things that need to all align; Political, technical capability and financial.
- Pat McColley stated ODOT would not be paying for any additional cores. ODOT does not want to spend additional taxpayer money if the City of Waterville does not take ownership.
- John Pautz offered his and Bill Vermes expertise about the bridge to Kokosing to help with their partial demolition costs and plan.
- The group discussed possible methods for the partial demolition. Pat McColley ended the conversation by stating Kokosing is a very experienced contractor with many resources.
- Jon Gochenour asked who is responsible for ensuring the restrictions of the environmental permit are being met, more specifically the fill being removed properly instead of entering the Maumee River. ODOT responded that the construction inspector ensures the environmental commitments are being met per the plans and USACE permit. Also, the contractor is responsible for submitting a demolition plan which the inspector enforces.

- Dave Geckle asked about the status of the load rating Bill Vermes was preparing. Bill stated it is started but still needs time to complete.
- Pat McColley stated Kokosing mentioned starting work on July 1. He then explained that the City of Waterville needs to take ownership no later than June 15 so environmental documents can be revised and approved. ODOT does not want to waste money paying for a delay in start of construction from the contractor.
- Rex Childers brought up the benefit of extra testing again. Pat McColley responded it could be an owner directed change order to the contract, but only if the cost estimate aligns.
- Dave Geckle stated if Kokosing's cost estimate range is very high, it is still a possibility for the City of Waterville to take ownership of the bridge as is and the \$4 million offered previously minus any incurred costs for ODOT to end the contract with Kokosing.
- Pat McColley said that ODOT will offer John Pautz and Bill Vermes expertise to Kokosing on Monday May 11.
- Pat McColley asked if the City of Waterville has enough information to decide on how to proceed.
- Tim Pedro responded council is looking at whether it is feasible and if there is money left over to transfer to the City of Waterville.
- Rex Childers spoke about the narrative being presented to the public to gain community support.
- Pat McColley cautioned using the pedestrian access narrative when there are already safety gaps in pedestrian facilities in the community which serve a greater purpose. He gave an example of the lack of sidewalks leading to and at the Anthony Wayne School property.
- Rex Childers also mentioned the current narrative about the liability of the bridge collapsing and it has been proved it will not fall.
- ODOT responded that it is currently falling into the river.
- Rex Childers responded only the spandrel walls and fill are collapsing and not the arch or piers. The Alternative Report by Bill Vermes shows it is not in danger of collapsing.
- Jon Gochenour asked about additional money over the \$4 million dollars ODOT has mentioned being budgeted for overruns in the contract and if that money will be transferred to the City of Waterville.
- Pat McColley responded with the offer has always been \$4 million dollars and no more.

- Tim Pedro listed action items:
 - o Inform City of Waterville council.
 - o Wait for Kokosing's cost estimate for partial demolition.
 - o Possible additional future testing on the bridge.
 - o ODOT to offer Bill Vermes and John Pautz's expertise to Kokosing.
- Pat McColley brought up the potential issue with optics of the City of Waterville citizens for Council to vote on ownership of the bridge in one read.
- Pat McColley presented letters to the City of Waterville from Sean Meddles, State of Ohio Bridge Engineer and Mike Brokaw, former State of Ohio and FHWA Bridge Inspection Engineer. The letters are included as an Appendix to the meeting minutes. Also informed the group ODOT is seeking letters from other parties regarding a very high-level review of the feasibility study and the bridge.
- Tim Pedro scheduled the next meeting to be Friday, May 15 at 1:30pm at ODOT District 2 Office.
- Meeting Adjourned