

Town may face \$200,000 bill to move bridge

Written by KRISTYN HALBIG ZIEHM
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It could cost the Town of Port Washington almost \$200,000 to remove and replace a small bridge over the Ozaukee Interurban Trail, officials learned last week.

The concrete on the Highland Road overpass is spalling and small pieces have fallen onto the trail below, prompting Ozaukee County and the town to take action to replace the structure — a large box culvert that serves as a bridge.

But the cost estimate compiled for Ozaukee County by the engineering firm of Gremmer & Associates surprised officials.

“This is likely the worst-case scenario,” Town Chairman Jim Melichar said.

That’s because the estimate includes, among other items, almost \$4,000 for curbs and gutters — something not typically installed on town roads, he said.

The cost of replacing the bridge is considerable for a township whose annual highway expenditure budget is \$250,000. Of that, about \$140,000 is earmarked for construction.

“We have to do something about it,” Supr. Mike Didier said, noting the options are to close the bridge, which he said is impractical, replace it or remove it.

The town, fearful that repairs will be cost prohibitive, has been looking at removing the overpass and creating an at-grade intersection.

Ozaukee County plans to do work on the bike trail in the area, and it would make sense for the town to do its work at the same time, Melichar said, noting it will minimize the mobilization costs.

“That would make the most sense,” he said. “I just don’t know where the dollars will come from.”

The town could potentially remove the bridge and lay a base for its replacement this year, then replace it next year, Melichar said, noting this would spread the cost over two years.

“We’re going to do something, we just don’t know what,” he said.

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