

Manager's project update: Jan. 3 meeting

Below please find a brief summary and update of ongoing projects.

Highlights:

It was announced that the 1.2 million dollars for our Rt 44 sewer project was included in the National Budget reconciliation vote.

Completed background checks for a Certified Police Officer and awaiting an acceptance.

CHS walls work is underway for the final phase with completion of the whole project scheduled for this month!

CT DEEP is funding ½ of the cost of the Sewer feasibility study of treatment plant options to deal with our capacity issue.

Public Works/Engineering

LOTICIP grants: Awarded South/Swamp Lotcip design to VHB. Awarded Daley RD II grant application to Jacobson Engineering.

Todd Penney will be able to get back to work on getting the plans and specs for the Community Connectivity grant for sidewalks on Main Street from Hemlock Point Lane to approximately Cheney Lane. A spring 2023 construction is now planned.

The State-designed Hop River Road Bridge replacement bids were rejected and it will be rebid in a few months for construction in 2024.

We did not receive either grant applications for this year's Local Bridge grant round, one located on Bunker Hill Road and the other on Parker Bridge Road. We will need to evaluate whether to fix one with the bond funds, or try for grants again next year since a lot of our competition is out of the way, and our bond is for 4 years. We also have to fully replace the Broadway culvert and found a new 100% rural minor connector grant (TRIP) which we are thinking about submitting through CRCOG.

We received a report from Jacobson Engineering on a study of the 16 larger Town bridges. Two appear to qualify for the 100% funding level; Depot Road and Brigham Hill (both over the Willimantic River). The Council gave us funds to proceed with applications. We have submitted both pre-applications. Brigham Hill is \$5.2 million and Depot Road is \$7.4 million. We await to hear the results of these submissions.

We continue to have productive meetings with Greenskies, the company considering acquiring the Microgrid project including the \$4,000,000 grant. We submitted a full application for a Federal FEMA BRIC grant on the December 2 deadline for over a million dollars for the underground wiring for this project. Prospects for this grant are unknown but DEEP suggested we apply.

Construction of the first girls' softball field is on hold for winter and the top soil has been stockpiled for spring spreading and seeding to allow fencing and possible irrigation to be installed. The STEAP grant application paperwork for the second softball field arrived and we are processing most of it to get approval to bid. We expect a January bid to allow spring construction. We also need to plan the best uses for the

\$500,000 of anticipated State bonding for Miller Richardson park, ADA and equity projects. The Recreation Commission will be spearheading this grant.

Our wetlands permits for the Nathan Hale Rails grant was withdrawn do incomplete survey work, it will be resubmitted. Jacobson Engineering was hired to conduct a design study for a small bridge to cross Rufus brook on Bear Swamp Road as part of the trails grant.

Public Safety - Police: The Chief is nearing a January decision on the promotion of one Sergeant. We have made an offer to a certified Officer thinking of retiring from another department.

Fire EMS: The replacement fire truck ordered last year is now in state adding a few features. It should be ready for service in a few weeks. Work continues to develop cost reductions or revenue enhancements to make the ambulance service more financially sustainable. A strategic plan conducted by the department was adopted and committees are being set up for implementation.

Finance: The high school roof is now ready for solar which may merge into the Microgrid project. The possible middle school renovate-as-new concept discussion was set aside awaiting the outcome of the new HVAC grants. The new grant round was much more competitive than we thought they would be. An adjourned Town Meeting to authorize the reallocation of surplus roof funds and to borrow a bit more to allow us to implement the grant is scheduled for January 10th vote. If we do not get the grant we will only complete the high school unit ventilator work, but will need to go back for another vote for the reallocation of funds only. We expect to be able to get some projects out to bid for work next summer. School walls work is underway and expected to be finished by the end of December. We continue to work with the Finance Committee and Town Council on the complicated American Rescue Plan funding planning. The draft of annual audit has been received for initial review.

Development Group: We are following up on meeting with the Town of Manchester on the local agreements required to allow an extension to the Bolton Lakes sewer system. The Bolton Lakes Sewer Authority discussed it favorably, but we are awaiting final action. The Federal budget voted on included 1.2 million to assist in funding the work. We are also paying attention to the treatment plant in hopes of getting Federal Rescue Act funds for a connection to Windham, with a positive first meeting held. We have hired Tighe and Bond to update a sewer facilities plan. The first meeting with DEEP was held to further detail the scope of work for the plan. The State has offered a grant to fund of 50% of the cost of the study. This study could lead to future Federal Infrastructure funding. We continue to meet with developers and finance groups interested in the Bolton town line area. Construction for the Hytone Farm anaerobic digester project is underway with an exciting tour and follow up on a proposed phase two to focus on food waste...and the offer to sell the Town power. We expect applications to PZC in a couple of months. PZC's cannabis regulations are complete and going to public hearing. Some minor changes are expected. Two citizens in town received State licenses and are expressing interest in establishing some type of related business in town. The four-town Economic Vitality group is continues to meet to work out a regional events calendar and submitted an ARP grant for economic development consulting. A new logo was selected. Construction is making progress for the new dentist's office next to Dollar General and an oral surgeon is also moving into the building. The Economic Development Commission created a subcommittee to focus on the future development at the Bolton town line. New regulations by both towns will be required. The house at Caprilands was purchased for relocation and reconstruction in New York. Disassembly is almost complete.

HR issues:

We have conducted several negotiations sessions for all Town and School AFSCME groups for pension and now have revised cost estimates which will allow us to re-engage. We are running out of time for negotiations with the Public Works union. We hired a Planning Technician/Zoning Enforcement Officer,

and Maintainer/Custodian. Selected a Lead Mechanic and made an offer to a Mechanic II (not accepted at this time). We are considering candidates for the part time Senior Center Assistant position. Made an offer to a Certified Police Officer. Considering the two applicants for the part time Engineering Tech. My UConn MPA intern is helping on several personnel issues (evaluations, salary study, and job descriptions), programs/events, and special projects such as a community orientation guide, web site updating, BRIC grants and assisting on a crowdfunding project through the Sustainability program to make some improvements to the band shell and nearby area. The Lion's Club will assist in getting the number of donors to match the \$7,500 grant. The RFP for an executive search firm for the Manager recruitment is out.

Other projects:

Work is underway for the housing unit renovations at Orchard Hills under the CDBG grant. The sewer line replacement is mostly complete and they will be moving into the unit renovations now.

We received CT DEEP's permission for work at Creaser Park. We have awarded the bid for the demo of the front two cabins. The cabin nearest to the pavilion can be converted into public bathrooms and a small meeting space, and can be rented out with the pavilion to provide a better level of service for events like weddings. It may be something to consider if ARPA money is available. The final building will be stabilized while the condition is further assessed, options discussed, and funding allocated.

The Microgrid project continues to be analyzed for financial viability and discussions are underway with a new financing partner. Greenskies came out for a productive site visit and we submitted a full application for a FEMA BRIC grant for over a million dollars. We are trying to coordinate the CHS solar into the project to reduce the amount of natural gas used. CT DEEP is still supportive of the project. We also met with a vendor who is interested in installing solar over our dumpsters at the transfer station. Also have an offer to buy power from the anaerobic digester at below market price.

We started some work on the Trails grant, but winter set in. Hired Jacobson Engineering to review alternatives for a stream crossing on Bear Swamp Road. Spazzarini Construction did a few days of work on the Nathan Hale Road section of the trail. The improvements to the trails near Laidlaw Park are complete with volunteer labor from the Protected Spaces Stewardship group and some funds from the Health District. Looking at another trails grant due in February to go from South Street to the Skungamaug River to restore lost fishing access.

Had a meeting with the Library contractor to push them along since they are behind schedule. The foundation is finally complete and walls will start soon.

We were awarded some funds for the two water grants we submitted with CT Water. We are evaluating them with CT Water. In related news CT Water reaffirmed they will be replacing water mains in the Pilgrim Hills neighborhood ahead of our road work.