

Manager's project update: Feb.6 meeting

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

Highlights:

A flurry of grant work for submissions this month. A new section is being added to this report to help you keep track of them all.

Economic Development has kicked up with the opening of Scrub Scraps, Woke, and progress on Burger Pies and Fries, and movement on new uses for Pelletier Builders, Coventry Collision, significant progress on construction on Jenkins Dental office on Route 44, a dog groomer near Woke, and a small land purchase on Bread & Milk for relocation and expansion of a local business, and possible new ownership of an existing significant local establishment.

The Grand list is out and has growth of 1.8% which could bring in around \$614,500-equal to around .6 mils...auto pricing adjusted downward a bit from last years' spike so that will give some a bit of taxpayer relief.

Grants:

I thought it would be helpful to start tracking all the grants we have in the various stages of preparation, award, permits/bid, construction and close out. This will be enhanced and updated over the next several months, but this will give an idea of the work your staff is doing to bring in outside resources to enhance the Town. This list does not include ARPA federal funds currently underway or to be determined by the Council.

Pending:

- Car chargers (16 car chargers) waiting for second part of grant decision (in conjunction with Schools)
- CHS HVAC: late February/March decision
- DEEP Resiliency grant for town wide drainage study; \$615,000
- BRIC \$1.4 million for Microgrid electric grid 1 ...to be matched by State grant/private sector
- 2 Federal Bridges 100% funding: Brigham Hill and Depot Road
- Neglected Cemetery grant: \$5,100 for wall work (commission match)
- 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...
- Tourism Grant for 4 Town Ct Countryside.

Underway

- Daly Road LOTCIP; Roads and sidewalk from Rt 31 to Lakeview: waiting for notice to proceed with design (100% grant)
- Hop River Road Bridge replacement to be rebid soon for 2024 construction 100% grant (over 4 million)
- Swamp/South Street LOTCIP 100% grant: in design (over \$3 million)

- 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, we need to conduct an archeological study before restarting. Staff prepared another trails grant due in February to go from South Street to the Skungamaug River to restore lost fishing access.
- Softball field 2 (\$500,000 STEAP), Waiting for contract signature, ready to bid
- State bonded ADA/Equity Bonding project for Miller Richardson (\$500,000). Waiting for paperwork. We submitted answers to several rounds of questions.
- Federal Sewers to Bolton 1.2 million waiting for paperwork
- Sewer expansion study (WPCA will provide match)
- Microgrid initial grant for 4 Million in conjunction with Coventry Microgrid LLC
- Coventry Housing authority renovations: CDBG grant – no match
- Creaser buildings LOCIP
- Booth Dimock Library addition: early summer completion
- Community connectivity: Sidewalks on Main Street/ Ripley Hill Rd ...north till money runs out (possible TRIP grant is hoped to get us to Lisicke Beach)
- Close out Swamp/44 Lotcip and South LOTCIP-100% funded
- Close out South Street to Homestead LOTCIP- 100% funded
- Curve signage grant
- 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.

Application in application development and/or concept stage

- Aid to Firefighters grant for possible replacement Quint fire/ladder truck-due this month: large match required if we proceed
- TRIP Grant: Pedestrian safety: South Street ADA sidewalk upgrades, Crosswalk signals on Main Street at various locations, 2 conventional crosswalks and sidewalks to Lisicke. Due this month – 100% funding
- Federal Lake grant for treatment and monitoring. Due soon.
- CEN Broadband grant to extend Internet to Patriots Park
- Sustainable community projects challenge (Patriots Park ADA)
- T mobile grant (creaser building rehab)
- GHR and transfer station for solar
- Grants for food waste diversion
- Land acquisition for attainable/senior housing
- Community de-fib grant
- Resubmission of two local bridge grants when the next round comes up (Parker Bridge and Bunker Hill), keeping eyes open for Broad Way culvert funding

Public Works/Engineering

LOTICIP grants: Awarded South/Swamp Lotcip design to VHB. Survey is underway. Jacobson Engineering is designing Daly Rd II LOTCIP grant application with the application due toward the end of February.

This scope will continue the Daly road project from where the funded LOTCPIP grant ends (entering design stage) through and including the rotary.

Todd Penney is making progress on finishing the plans and specs for the Community Connectivity grant for sidewalks on Main Street from Hemlock Point Lane to Old Tolland Turnpike. A late 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. The State flood plain permit was just issued.

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 Broad Way culvert and will look for grant funding or need to use bond funds. We reviewed the new 100% rural roads grant (TRIP) which has a February application date and based on the scoring matrix will be looking at a pedestrian based project of making the South Street sidewalks ADA accessible and adding pedestrian activated cross walk lights on Main Street and at GH Robertson School, and a couple traditional crosswalk and sidewalk extensions from the community connectivity sidewalks. This also is due late February.

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 \$1.4 million grant for a Federal FEMA BRIC grant in December and provided some additional information requested in January. Prospects for this grant are unknown but DEEP suggested we apply and wrote a letter of support. We expect to hear soon. Our attorneys are working on a revised draft Microgrid agreement. The Board staff is reviewing a similar agreement and a solar agreement on the high school roof was agreed upon. We also are looking at proposals for additional solar at other locations with GHR and transfer station the priorities.

Construction of the first girls' softball field is on hold for winter and the topsoil 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 was completed and we are waiting for the DAS commissioner to sign it to be allowed to go out to bid allow spring construction. We also need to plan the best uses for \$500,000 of anticipated State bonding for Miller Richardson park, ADA and equity projects. The Recreation Commission will be spearheading this grant. We are waiting for State paperwork on that too.

Our wetlands permits for the Nathan Hale trails grant were withdrawn due to incomplete survey work; it will be resubmitted soon. 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. An archeological study is now required and is scheduled for the next few months to allow spring work.

Staff is preparing a new trails grant from South Street to the Skungamaug River to replace the lost fishing access. This is also due in February and is in the final public information stage.

Public Safety - Police: The Chief is nearing a decision this month on the promotion of one Sergeant. A certified officer who retired from another department is starting and we lost one officer to CT DEEP.

Fire EMS: Our new fire truck is in town and has a few items before going into service. Work continues on reviewing ways 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 and possible future HVAC grants. This new HVAC grant round was much more competitive than we thought, but we should hear in February or early March. Since the vote passed to authorize the reallocation of surplus roof funds and to borrow a bit more to allow us to implement the grant passed on January 10th, we are working to get the unit ventilators replaced this summer and if we get the grant, the chilled air the next summer. If we do not get the grant we will only complete the high school unit ventilator work. 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 and will be presented in February.

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 and have it on the agenda for a vote this week. The Federal budget includes \$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 or expansion. We have hired Tighe and Bond to update a sewer facilities plan. DEEP agreed with the scope of work and will cover around 50% of the cost of the study, with the WPCA paying the rest. 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 consideration of a phase two to focus on food waste...and an offer to sell the Town discounted power. We expect applications to PZC in a couple of months. PZC's cannabis regulations are complete and were adopted. The four-town Economic Vitality group (now CT Countryside) continues to meet to work out a regional events calendar and submitted a marketing grant. Construction is making progress for the new dentist's office next to Dollar General and an oral surgeon is also moving into the building. Two new businesses have opened in the village and two more are in process. 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. Other business interest is strong and we are running out of space for reuse.

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 finalized a promotion to a Mechanic II. We have hired a part time Senior Center Assistant and a Certified Police Officer and a 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 Council interviewed 3 executive search firms for the Manager recruitment and will make a decision soon.

Other projects:

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 demo permit has been issued. The fire department may do some training there before they are taken down. 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 but we are looking at a T Mobile grant. 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. Draft contracts are being finalized. We submitted a FEMA BRIC grant for over a \$1.4 million for wiring and electrical work. We await hearing the results. We are trying to coordinate the CHS solar into the project to reduce the amount of natural gas used and believe an agreement between parties has been reached. 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 and we think GHR with its new roof is a good target too. Also have an offer to buy power from the anaerobic digester at below market price. Just locked oil in for under \$3.00 per gallon.

A meeting with the Library contractor to push them along has produced results. The foundation is finally complete and walls are going up and elevator is available for installation. It is likely we will move Library services to Millbrook for a few weeks to avoid driveway conflicts and internal work conflicts.