

Manager's project update: April 3, 2023 meeting

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

Highlights:

Grants and budget remain the priorities for this month. The updated section below helps keep track of them. Highlighted news: our submission to Congressman Courtney for directed spending was accepted by his office. We needed to change funding sources and reapply but our submission matched with other funding sources and could pay for the full water tower if approved. It was a very fast turnaround requiring a very early visit to the office...but I got it in and figured out how to increase the grant percentage from 25% to 75%.

We just received notice that our two Federal bridge replacement applications have made it through screening and we should be receiving letters of awards for two 100% funded bridge replacements: Brigham Hill road (\$ 5.2 million) and Depot road (\$ 7.4 Million).

We have accepted an invitation by Lt. Governor Bysciewicz to conduct a recognition for Vietnam War veterans on Monday April 24th at 5 PM in Veteran's auditorium (save the date). [Link to flyer](#).

Softball field #2 is out to bid with an opening date of April 11. We also have a signed grant agreement now for Miller Richardson bonding, so planning can proceed.

An agreement on the transfer of the Microgrid project to Greenskies was submitted to the three town agencies for consideration. The Housing Authority and Council have authorized signature, with the Board of Ed considering on 3/30. Greenskies has accepted the modifications.

Grants:

Here is a grants tracker to show what we have in the various stages of preparation, award, permits/bid, construction and close out. 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:

- Aid to Firefighters grant submitted for possible replacement of Quint fire/ladder truck- Submitted for \$1.7 million project, \$1,000,000 grant
- TRIP Grant: Pedestrian Safety: South Street ADA sidewalk upgrades, Crosswalk signals on Main Street at various locations: submitted and ranked 2nd in our region and submitted to CTDOT for review (Final decision expected in April)– 100% funding
- LOTCIP: Daly 2 submitted to complete the reconstruction of Daly Road to round-a-bout and to add sidewalks. Very competitive this year. Our application scored pretty well but there may not be enough money this round and it will be resubmitted next year if that's the case.
- EV Car chargers (16 car chargers) waiting for second part of grant decision (in conjunction with Schools)

- CHS HVAC: Decision anticipated at end of March/first week in April: Statements from agency on priorities fit with our application. More funds are in the Governor's budget for next year if we don't get it this year.
- DEEP Resiliency grant for town wide drainage study: \$615,000
- FEMA BRIC grant: \$1.4 million for Microgrid electric grid underground wiring ...to be matched by State grant/private sector. We understand the State has accepted our application as part of their set aside and is asking FEMA for approval.
- Two Federal Bridges 100% funding: Brigham Hill and Depot Road: CTDOT just indicated the we will be getting an award letter for both projects (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/loans we submitted with CT Water. We are evaluating them with CT Water and CTDPH. Both are on the funding list. The Village interconnect grant ties into a Congressional Directed Spending Grant request for a water tower. The Nathan Hale water system eliminated the system interconnection and greatly reduced the expense to address the five contaminated wells. Our goal is to have an engineering firm selected through a screening process in early April.
- The Tourism grant for the four town CT Countryside collaboration was submitted. It was awarded – a marketing video will be produced and completed by June 30.
- The Hunt Preserve Trails grant was submitted on March 1. If awarded, it will go from South Street to the Skungamaug River to restore lost fishing access. We expect a decision by the end of April.
- Two congressional directed spending grants were submitted: 1) for a water tower under the RDA water/sewer program to provide water pressure for hydrants and sprinklers in Coventry Village which will assist in keeping businesses, allow for adaptive reuse of old mills, allow increased density on contaminated properties maybe for housing. This is in conjunction with the CT DPH water grant/loan. 2) For police technology upgrades and replacements.

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 is out to bid with an opening date of April 20th. Prep work and ordering only this summer. Bridge closure likely April 2024. 100% grant (over \$4 million).
- Swamp/South Street LOTCIP 100% grant: in design (over \$3 million). Expect a May public involvement meeting.
- We started some work on the Hale Trails grant, but winter set in. We 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 complete an archeological study before restarting.
- Booth & Dimock Library. We have reached the 50% payment benchmark and will submit for our first reimbursement. Closure extended through April with some services provided at Mill Brook Place. Very significant progress will be made before the June re-opening.
- Softball field 2 (\$500,000 STEAP) went out to bid on 3/16. Bid opening date is 4/11.

- State bonded ADA/Equity Bonding project for Miller Richardson (\$500,000). Have a signed contract. Now up to Recreation Commission to set priorities.
- Federal Sewers to Bolton: \$1.2 million. Received some initial Federal paperwork and meeting on work assignments. Still working on the inter-town agreements.
- Sewer expansion study (WPCA will provide match for CTDEEP grant). July completion goal.
- Microgrid initial DEEP grant for \$4 million in conjunction with Coventry Microgrid LLC: an agreement on project transfer approved by Council and Housing Authority, and scheduled for the Board of Ed on 3/30. Greenskies has agreed.
- Creaser buildings LOCIP: Demo of two buildings completed.
- Community connectivity: Sidewalks on Main Street/ Ripley Hill Rd ...north until money runs out. To be bid very soon.
- Close out Swamp/44 LOTCIP and South LOTCIP-100% funded
- Close out South Street to Homestead LOTCIP- 100% funded
- Curve signage grant: CTDOT has approved and a public information meeting is requested.
- Work is underway for the housing unit renovations at Orchard Hills under the CDBG grant. The sewer line replacement is mostly complete (one repair underway) and they are moving into the unit renovations now.
- Federal Lake grant for treatment and monitoring. On a list for funding.

Applications in application development and/or concept stage

- CEN Broadband grant to extend Internet to Patriots Park. Information submitted
- Sustainable community projects challenge (Patriots Park ADA)
- T mobile grant (Creaser building rehab)
- GHR and transfer station for solar (intern preparing an RFP for competitive offerings)
- 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). Next round will open up on April 1 for June submission. Keeping eyes open for Broad Way culvert funding. Held discussions with CTDOT's new staff.
- Looking at another potential state grant for several projects including land for housing.

Public Works/Engineering

LOTICIP grants: Awarded South/Swamp LOTICIP design to VHB. Survey is underway. 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 is out to bid again with an April 20th opening. Major construction and closure in 2024. This will allow the utility work be conducted this summer and bridge parts ordered for the following summer. All of this is in an effort to have the bridge only closed for one construction season.

We did not receive either of our 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 resubmit in the new round opening April 1. Pending outcome we will need to evaluate whether to fix one with our road bond funds, or continue to try for grants since a lot of our competition may be previously funded. This program is estimated at a 5 year backlog. We also have to fully replace the Broad Way culvert and will either look for grant funding or consider the use of bond funds.

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. Both have made the "to be funded" list and we await formal notification.

We continue to have productive meetings with Greenskies, the company considering acquiring the Microgrid project including the \$4,000,000 grant. They have asked for some guarantees if CT DEEP defaults on contractual payments. We have reached agreement and are in process with getting approvals from the respective boards. The planned solar is expiring and we will need to seek another extension from PURA, which is far from certain. We submitted a full application for a \$1.4 million grant for a Federal FEMA BRIC grant in December and provided some additional information requested in January. The State has decided to include this project under their set aside and is seeking FEMA approval. Prospects for this grant are unknown but DEEP suggested we apply and wrote a letter of support. We expect a decision in June. We also are looking at proposals for additional solar at other locations, with GHR and the transfer station the priorities.

Construction of the first girls' softball field has restarted and the dugouts are in construction. 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 it is out to bid for 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 have cleared up some State paperwork issues.

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. Results are expected very soon so we can engage the neighbors. An archeological study is now required and is scheduled for the next few months to allow late spring work.

Staff submitted a new trails grant from South Street to the Skungamaug River to replace the lost fishing access. We expect to hear in late spring/early summer.

Public Safety - Police: We are recruiting for vacancies. Will now have 3 vacancies. Held interviews for certified officers last week and are also seeking recruits for the academy. One slot will be frozen until January 2024 for budgetary reasons.

Fire EMS: Our new fire truck is in town and we have a few things remaining to do 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 have been set up for

implementation. Making progress on getting the State to increase their share of Medicaid reimbursement, but that will not be the magic bullet to solve the financial issues.

Finance: The budget and CIP plan have been presented and are being discussed with final decisions by April 3rd. 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 later in March/early April. We are working to get the unit ventilators replaced this summer and if we get the grant, the chilled air the next summer. The bid specs are ready for State review and we are seeking a review time so if we get the grant we can do some work this 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.

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 approved it. Now Vernon needs to. The Federal budget includes \$1.2 million to assist in funding the work, through the efforts of Congressman Courtney. 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. The four-town Economic Vitality group (now CT Countryside) continues to meet to work out a regional events calendar and received a marketing grant. Construction is progressing at 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. We hired a company for less than a day of wetland consulting while we recruit for a replacement Inland Wetlands agent – interviews scheduled for 4/6.

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 have an agreement in principle with the Public Works union. We are interviewing for PW Maintainer and Inland Wetlands Agent. We now need to find a Recreation Supervisor to replace Cat Merriam, who accepted a position as Assistant Rec Director in Enfield. 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 has hired an executive search firm for the Manager recruitment and they are wrapping up the community involvement stage.

Other projects:

The front two cabins have been demolished and site cleaned up. The fire department used them for some training before they were 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. A T-Mobile grant is being sought. It may also 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.