

Manager's project update: May 15, 2023 meeting

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

Highlights:

Productive couple of weeks of progress. Over a hundred trees were removed on Wrights mill in a partnership program with Eversource. Paving was completed on Pucker and Babcock Hill, and Forest road drainage is ready for paving work.

Lt. Governor Bysciewicz came out again for the anaerobic digester ribbon cutting. We also have a June 4 20th anniversary gathering of Farmers market at 11:00 at the Homestead, and softball #1 ribbon cutting on June 19th at 6:30. Several other are in the planning stage.

Softball field #2 is scheduled to start in a week with a completion date in August.

Hop River Road Bridge bids were opened and we are waiting for a contract signing.

The summer roads work list has been compiled and started.

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 June) – 100% funding.
- EV Car chargers (16 car chargers) waiting for second part of grant decision (in conjunction with schools). Still waiting for notice.
- 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.
- 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. We have selected GZA as an engineering firm selected through a screening process.
- Chief Peterson submitted a request 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).
- LOTCIP: Daly 2 was awarded to complete the reconstruction of Daly Road to round-about and to add sidewalks. We will try to combine the two Daly Road projects.
- Depot Road Bridge replacement (7.4 million) 100% funded. Brigham Hill bridge (\$5.2 Million)
- The Tourism grant for the four town CT Countryside collaboration was awarded – a marketing video will be produced and completed by June 30.
- Community connectivity grant: Main street sidewalks from Hemlock to Winterberry almost ready for bidding for summer construction.
- Congressman Courtney accepted and pushed our request for a congressional directed spending grant for a water tower. It made it out of committee and on to the appropriation committee. Funding will allow construction of 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 and maybe for housing. This is in conjunction with the CT DPH water grant/loan.
- Neglected Cemetery grant: \$5,100 for wall work (commission match) was awarded and paperwork received.
- CHS HVAC: We were awarded the largest state grant for \$6.6 million. [Link to press release](#). The building committee has met and authorized final HVAC engineering and set a schedule calling for bids to be out in early June for work which must be completed by December 2024.
- Hop River Road Bridge replacement bids were opened and CTDOT is evaluating. Prep work and parts ordering only this summer. Bridge closure likely April 2024. 100% grant (3.6 million).
- Swamp/South Street LOTCIP 100% grant: in design (over \$3 million). Expect a June 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 and wetland permits.
- Booth & Dimock Library. Reopening to in-person services planned for May 16. Very significant progress will be made before the full July re-opening.
- Softball field 2 (\$500,000 STEAP) has been awarded to Earth Dynamics with work to start soon. Work on Field #1 is mostly complete.
- State bonded ADA/Equity Bonding project for Miller Richardson (\$500,000). Have a signed State contract. Now it is up to the Recreation Commission to set priorities. Likely that bathroom ADA work will be the first step, then ADA walkway/pedestrian safety second. Having our Building Official sketch up a bathroom plan.
- 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 a match for CTDEEP grant). July completion goal.

- Microgrid is funded by a DEEP grant for \$4 million in conjunction with Coventry Microgrid LLC: an agreement on project transfer approved by Council, Housing Authority, and the Board of Ed, and was signed by all parties. Final design work will proceed. Have CT DEEP progress call next week.
- Close out of Swamp/44 LOTCIP and South LOTCIP is underway and almost complete-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. Funding has been promised.

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: intern working on Ag grant.
- Land acquisition for attainable/senior housing
- Community de-fib grant
- Looking at another potential State grant for several projects including land for housing.

Public Works/Engineering

Summer road work has been planned, and South Street, Skinner Hill, Pucker, and Babcock Hill completed. Working in the lake area now. CT Water work in Pilgrim Hills is underway and we will follow them... likely next summer. Planning underway for School St. and North School St.

LOTICIP grants: Awarded South/Swamp LOTICIP design to VHB. The survey is complete. A community information meeting is planned for June. 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 summer 2023 construction is now planned.

The State-designed Hop River Road Bridge replacement bids were opened and we are waiting to sign a contract. Major construction and bridge closure in 2024. This will allow the utility work to 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 resubmitted our grant applications for this year's Local Bridge grant round, one located on Bunker Hill Road and the other on Parker Bridge Road. Pending the 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 to have 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 were able to turn our Council funded, contracted reports from Jacobson Engineering, studying the 16 larger Town bridges for possible grants. Two qualified for the 100% funding level: Depot Road and Brigham Hill (both over the Willimantic River). We received both: Brigham Hill for \$5.2 million, and Depot Road for \$7.4 million. We have requested the State to do the design work and are waiting for a response.

We continue to have productive meetings with Greenskies, the company considering acquiring the Microgrid project including the \$4,000,000 grant. The planned CHS solar has expired so we will need to seek other options. 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. We expect a final 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 is complete. The STEAP grant application paperwork for the second softball field was completed and bid awarded with a planned mid-May start and August completion. 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.

Our wetlands permit for the Nathan Hale trails grant was withdrawn due to incomplete survey work; the survey is now complete, and a permit 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. We are planning to meet with the impacted neighbors soon to look at options.

Public Safety - Police: We are recruiting for vacancies. Will now have 3 vacancies. Held interviews for certified officers and hired one person who quit after 3 days. Have another in the review process. We 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. A CT Water grant for \$1,500 was received.

Finance: The budget and CIP plan were unanimously approved by Council and by the voters on the May 2 vote. We received the HVAC grant which was very competitive, and we have a rough plan to proceed. ICDS has been hired to complete the bid specs and the State is waiving the normal plan review process. We believe we will be out to bid in June and can order and do some prep work this summer. The complicated American Rescue Plan funding planning continues.

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 we are waiting for a signed approval. Now Vernon needs to – a meeting with them is set for May 16. 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. 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. A very nice open house was held this week.

The four-town Economic Vitality group (now CT Countryside) continues to meet to work out a regional events calendar and received a marketing grant. A presentation will be given at the consortium in June.

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.

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 a signed agreement with the Public Works union, and making progress with town hall and supervisors union. We hired a DPW Maintainer and a new Inland Wetlands Agent. We interviewed Assistant Rec Director applicants and have decided to go out again because: the top person took a job elsewhere, and we learned the State Recreation Association failed to send out the job opening notice. 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 hired an executive search firm for the Manager recruitment and the recruitment notice is on the market. We have interviews scheduled for the Finance Director opening.

Other projects:

The Creaser cabin nearest to the pavilion is planned to 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.

Getting pricing for pickle ball court repair and other funded park projects. Additional work at the Miller Richardson football field is needed in fall, so it remains out of play for the season. We do not have staff to repair it.