

## **Interim Manager's project update: July 17, 2023 meeting**

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

### **Highlights:**

The Library project is in working on final tweaks and we are close to substantial completion. The Committee is talking about a ribbon cutting in August and Dedication with the Library Board (to thank donors) in October.

We received the local bridge grant for Bunker Hill Road bridge replacement (\$804,000) and will be getting into design. Our match will come from the road bond as planned.

Plans for bidding the CHS HVAC improvements have had outside review and changes are underway. Bidding likely in 2 weeks.

CHS roof is underway and we hired a special inspector to add a quality assurance component, especially when cutting in the HVAC air intakes next summer...to avoid voiding our roof warrantee. The roof should be done by end of August. Working on a Project Manager too and need to coordinate with Dr. Petrone this week.

Road projects are falling behind due to the rain. The good news is Talcott Hill Road is being recycled in place as I type this....and chip sealing is scheduled in the lake region starting on the 14<sup>th</sup>.

Summer camp is running almost at max capacity. The swim area has been closed due to geese impacts and we have resorted to renting a water slide. This is the longest closure and the highest test levels we have experienced.

Received another round of Historic records grants to recreate land records for electronic retrieval and space consolidation in the Town Clerk's Vault.

### **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.

### **Pending:**

- Submitted at \$101,000 Agriculture grant to set up a 2 year trial food waste collection program to reduce waste tonnage and supply fuel to the anaerobic digester.
- 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 2<sup>nd</sup> in our region and submitted to CTDOT for review (final decision now expected in October) – 100% funding.

- EV Car chargers (9 dual car chargers) grant awarded. Goal is to get schools installed before school resumes this fall if possible.
- FEMA BRIC grant: \$1.4 million for Microgrid electric grid underground wiring was not awarded by the Federal government despite State selection. Could impact the Microgrid project moving forward. Considering an appeal.
- 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.
- Neighborhood Assistance act: 3 proposals submitted, but only one is for the Town - to acquire replacement Hurst rescue tools for the fire service.

### Underway

- Daly Road LOTCIP, roads and sidewalk from Rt. 31 to South Street: waiting for notice to proceed with design (100% grant for construction). Two Lotcip grants will be combined into one project.
- Depot Road Bridge replacement (7.4 million) and Brigham Hill Bridge (\$5.2 Million) 100% funded.
- The Tourism grant for the four town CT Countryside collaboration was awarded – a marketing video is being produced and will be completed in August
- Community Connectivity grant: Main Street sidewalks from Hemlock to Winterberry almost ready for bidding for late 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 appropriations 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.
- Historic Documents grant: 16,000 for land records.
- Neglected Cemetery grant: \$5,100 for wall work (Commission match) was awarded and paperwork received. Contractor being lined up.
- 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 late July for work which must be completed by December 2024. Draft plans are almost final.
- Hop River Road Bridge contract has been signed. 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 an August/September public involvement meeting. Todd wanted a minor alignment change.

- We started some work on the Hale Trails grant, but paused due to work load and need for archeological study and wetland permits. We hired Jacobson Engineering to review alternatives for a stream crossing on Bear Swamp Road.
- Booth & Dimock Library: Very significant progress has been made and we are expecting substantial completion by late July.
- Softball field 2 (\$500,000 STEAP) has been awarded to Earth Dynamics with work underway for August completion. They appear to be way ahead of schedule. Work on Field #1 is complete, waiting for grass to become firmly established.
- 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. Todd Penney attended the June Recreation Commission to review past plans and concepts and suggested the need for outside engineering. We have a RFQ on the streets with responses in a couple of weeks.
- Federal Sewers to Bolton: \$1.2 million. Received some initial Federal paperwork and meeting on work assignments. Still working on the inter-town agreements. Had a meeting with Bolton and Vernon to try to push this forward. We await a response from Bolton/Vernon.
- Sewer expansion study (WPCA will provide a match for CTDEEP grant). An August completion goal. A second productive meeting with Windham by the consultant was held.
- 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. Waiting for the impact of not getting the BRIC grant.
- 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 complete, and they are moving into the unit renovations now. Concerns with lead in the water have been resolved with the Department of Public Health.
- Federal Lake grant for treatment and monitoring. Funding has been promised. A detailed plan for a citizen's lake monitoring program has just been received. Great news is that no Hydrilla has found in the grab samples....scuba observations are still scheduled.

#### **Applications in application development and/or concept stage**

- Seeking Council guidance on a fast approaching STEAP grant proposal with the recommendation for a multi-faceted project at Patriot's Park to try to remediate Goose impacts, address ADA and deferred maintenance issues.
- CEN Broadband grant to extend Internet to Patriots Park. Information submitted.
- Sustainable community projects challenge (shifted to Creaser Community gardens enhancements)
- T-Mobile grant (Creaser building rehab)
- GHR and transfer station for solar (intern preparing an RFP for competitive offerings)
- 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. Talcott Hill is underway. 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 August/September. 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 summer 2023 construction is now planned. We received funding for construction for the balance of Daly road so now it is from Main through and including the round-about. Design fees will be significant. Construction is all grant funded.

The State-designed Hop River Road Bridge replacement contract was signed. 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. The pre-construction meeting is scheduled for next week.

The former art shed at Patriots Park is ready for Town demo.

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. We received Bunker Hill Bridge and will get that into design. We will resubmit Parker Bridge Road in the next rounds. 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 be awarded grants for the 100% funding of replacement of Depot Road and Brigham Hill (both over the Willimantic River: 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 did not get the \$1.4 million grant for a Federal FEMA BRIC grant after Federal review.

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 August completion (or sooner). 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. Outside engineering proposals are being sought.

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. We are seeking recruits for the academy. One slot will be frozen until January 2024 for budgetary reasons.

Fire EMS: Work continues on reviewing ways to make the ambulance service more financially sustainable. A plan to request one volunteer night shift to reduce one night Vintech staff is being proposed to members. Making progress on getting the State to increase their share of Medicaid reimbursement and also increase the maximum allowable rate. We submitted for a rate increase, but that will not be the magic bullet to solve the financial issues.

Finance: We have plans for the HVAC grant work and hope to have them out the door within a couple weeks. The next phase of the school roof is starting. Julie Chapman, our new Finance Director, has started and is working on the fiscal year end and start. We are scheduled for a bond rating call and bond sale in a week.

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 was held in May. 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 complete, with consideration of a phase two to focus on food waste. We expect applications to PZC in a couple of months. We submitted a grant for a bit over \$100,000 to assist in food waste collection.

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 for Dr. Jenkins dentist office is at the certificate of occupancy (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. 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 signed agreements with the Public Works and Town Hall unions and are very close with Supervisors union. Just started with Police. My UConn MPA intern has graduated and is now continuing as a summer intern and 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, and assisting on a crowdfunding project through the Sustainability program to make some improvements to the Creaser gardens. We

need donors to match the \$7,500 grant. The Council hired an executive search firm for the Manager recruitment and the process is reaching the conclusion: at the offer and negotiation stage.

Other projects:

The Creaser Park 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. The final building will be stabilized while the condition is further assessed, options discussed, and funding allocated.

CHS pickle ball court repair is scheduled and getting pricing for 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.