



# Town of Coventry

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**To:** Town Council  
**From:**  James Drumm, Town Manager  
**Date:** November 2, 2023  
**Ref:** Project/Issue Updates

**CHS Roof Project:** Though the project is mostly completed, the contractor is still working on a punch list of work to be complete/corrected.

**CHS HVAC Project:** The low bid by Pro-Mech, Inc. of Bloomfield at \$11,897,800 has been approved. The Contractor and the Town are working with Connecticut Human Relations Office (CHRO) and we are currently preparing contract documents for signature. The low bid price of the project is over the earlier estimated amount of the project, however with the voter approved funding and the State grant, this project will be funded sufficiently and in compliance with Section 8-8 of the Town Charter.

**Revaluation Project:** The contract was awarded to the low bidder, Vision Government Solutions, at the October 16<sup>th</sup> Town Council meeting. The contract has been executed and the firm engaged. Vision is widely used by local governments in Connecticut and throughout New England. They were used the last two times the Town conducted property revaluation. The Town has authorized \$65,000 for work completed in this fiscal year for this project. The Town will need approximately \$86,400 more to fund the low bid price. This project will be funded partially in this fiscal year and partially in the next.

**Police Officer recruitment:** Two new recruits have been hired and were sworn in by Town Clerk Lori Tollmann at a ceremony on October 26<sup>th</sup>. They will be attending the police academy starting next week. After the academy they will be in field training, riding with another experienced officer until next August. We recently had a third vacancy, due to an officer leaving for a position in another police department. However, I am pleased to announce that Officer Michaud requested reinstatement to CPD earlier this week and is already back on the job. CPD is at full staff.

**Planning and Development Director Recruitment:** I am pleased to announce the appointment of Jana Roberson, AICP, as the new Director of Planning and Development for the Town of Coventry. She comes with an excellent education and much work experience in Connecticut local government. She currently is the Community Development Director for the Town of Brooklyn and previously was Town Planner for Chapin and Columbia. Prior to that she was on staff as a Planner with the Windham Council of Governments. She will be a great addition to our staff. She is scheduled to start with us on Monday November 13<sup>th</sup>. Robin Newton of Tyche Planning and Policy Group (Vernon, CT), has been serving as the interim Director, since the retirement of Eric Trott.

**Building Official recruitment:** The Town has interviewed two qualified candidates for the position and is in process to finalize the hiring of a Building Official. Former Coventry Building Official Joe Callahan has come back out of retirement to serve as the interim Building Official, until we fill the position. Former Building Official Tim Brennan has continued part-time employment as an Asst. Building Official so he can complete the Coventry High School (CHS) roof project inspections and a couple other larger projects that are near completion. It is expected we will have this position filled before the end of the month.

**Public Works Operations Superintendent-retirement:** Mark Owens has informed us of his intent to retire in the weeks ahead. He has done a great job organizing the work of DPW crews for our Town during his tenure. He will be missed. Public Works Director Bill Watkins has been working on a plan for leadership restructuring in the Department that includes the reclassification of three existing staff members to the level of Maintainer 4/Crew Leader. This plan recognizes the knowledge and leadership ability of long-term staff. This plan was set to begin in January, but will be launched a little early due to Mark's retirement plans.

**Plains Road/Salt Impacted potable Wells:** A preliminary report has been received by the Town Engineer and it indicates that the best option to correct the salt contamination of the wells is to consider extending a water main to the area. The Town Engineer, engineering consultants, DEEP representatives and I did meet to discuss possible next steps. This project will take negotiation and much coordination with the Connecticut Water Company to set up and to complete. We currently have State grant funding approved for 25% of the construction of this water main. We are exploring if we can increase our grant funding to 50% of the project cost. A meeting with the impacted residents is scheduled for November 16<sup>th</sup> to discuss the issue and the possible resolution to the problem. Staff is also continuing to explore other sources of funding that may be available. After meeting with residents and collecting needed data, it is our goal to present the final report, and possible funding sources to the Town Council by early December.

**Connecticut Countryside-Video:** This promotional video, resulting from the fourtown partnership has been presented to the CT. Countryside steering group as well as the Coventry Economic Development Commission (EDC). Edits are being made and a final product is expected by December.

**Booth & Dimock Library:** the Town Council has accepted the Library property and the documents have drafted and have been recorded transferring the property to the Town. The Town, in accordance with the planned improvement project, is still preparing to add the eight parking spaces at the rear of the current parking lot. We are reducing our expenses by using Town crews to prepare the sub-surface in preparation of paving. The project calls for a pervious type of paving, which is a difficult product to prepare and apply, so we have sought out proposals from a qualified contractor to apply the final surface. Works is expected to be completed in November.

**Softball field #2:** This project construction is now complete with re-seeding having recently been done. The grass has successfully taken. With the project now complete, we held a ribbon cutting on this new addition to Miller Richardson Park on October 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Patriots Park Improvement Project:** A Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP) grant has been awarded by the State to the Town in the amount of \$315,000 for Patriots Park improvements. The project totals to \$350,000, including a \$5,000 donation from the Coventry Lions Club and the municipal

match of \$30,000. The project involves improvements to the band shell, a playground replacement, fencing and also geese deterrent measures. Due to this and other proposed improvements to Patriots Park, the Town will embark on a master planning process for the Park, inviting all stakeholders and residents to participate in sharing ideas and concepts. This process will begin in early 2024, after the selection of a professional consultant has been selected. The master plan will be developed prior to any permanent improvements being constructed in the Park.

**Miller Richardson Park priorities:** The engineering firm of Barton & Loguidice discussed possible park improvements with key stakeholders at the September 14<sup>th</sup> Parks and Recreation (P&R) Commission Meeting. There was much discussion about how best to use the \$500,000 grant to improve the park for better compliance with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). Potential park amenities were discussed and a rough draft park plan was reviewed. The P&R Commission conducted another public information meeting at their October 12<sup>th</sup> meeting looking for additional citizen input into the future development plans for the Park. The P&R Commission will review the latest draft plan at their November 16<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**Curve Signage Grant:** Received letter of approval from the Connecticut Department of Transportation (DOT). This grant funds curve warning signs on locally owned roads. A public information meeting will be scheduled this fall, once the State informs the town of the portions of the grant that were approved.

**Main Street sidewalk project:** this is a Community Connectivity grant. This project will begin at Hemlock Point Lane and go northeasterly to Winterberry. Construction plans are in the final stages and will be completed by January.

**Hale Trails Project:** This is a Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) grant. The project budget is \$500,000 and is funded 50% State and 50% local. The project design is currently paused to evaluate the wetland impact and possible alternative crossings on Bear Swamp Road at Rufus Creek.

**HOP River Bridge Project:** The contract has been signed with Rotha Contracting Company, of Avon, CT. Prep work has been done and steel bridge parts have been ordered. Utilities have been moved, with the exception of Frontier cable. Depending on the weather, the contractor is considering an early bridge demolition in March of 2024. The closure will last through summer as the new bridge is constructed. Grant is 100% funded at \$3.6 million.

**Depot Road Bridge replacement:** The Town has been awarded a \$7.4 million grant for 100% funding for this project. The State has agreed to provide engineering with one of their consulting engineers. The Town is awaiting the assignment of the engineering firm to the project.

**Brigham Hill Bridge replacement:** The Town has been awarded a \$5.2 million grant for 100% funding for this project. The State has agreed to provide engineering with one of their consulting engineers. The Town is awaiting the assignment of the engineering firm to the project.

**Bunker Hill Bridge Replacement (Rufus Creek):** In design with Jacobson Engineering. Construction tentatively summer 2024.

**South Street/Swamp Road Project:** this is a major project that will improve safety on these roads and will raise the elevation of the intersection of South Street and Swamp Road. Preliminary plans are complete. This project was reviewed by the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) last month. The comments caused minor adjustments to be made to preliminary plans. The revised plans were presented at the public involvement meeting that was held on October 24<sup>th</sup>. It was well attended by the residents of the area. Public involvement meetings are required by the Connecticut Department of Transportation (DOT) for funding from the Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program (LOTICIP). Good feedback from residents/property owners was received by staff and the project engineers. Design plans will now be amended further. Bids will be received in spring 2024 with construction planned for summer 2024 and summer of 2025. A pledge was made by Town staff that no road surfaces on South Street and Swamp Road would remain gravel during the 2024-25 winter season.

**Daly Road construction project:** This is a road and sidewalk construction project from Rt. 31 to South Street. Two Local Option Transportation Capital Improvement Program (LOTICIP) grants have been approved and will be combined into one project. Funding for construction is 100%. Design will be done by one of the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) pre-selected engineering consultants. The Town will request proposals from the list. Funding for design will be by the Town.

**Road resurfacing/drainage Improvements:** Public Works staff continues to replace drainage catch basins throughout Town. There has been much work in the last month in the neighborhoods along the south side of Coventry Lake. The 2023 resurfacing program has progressed through the summer and early fall. The cooler weather may soon end our efforts for 2023.

If there is a project or issue not on the Update that you wish to learn more about, please do not hesitate to contact me.