



# Town of Coventry

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**To:** Town Council  
**From:**  James Drumm, Town Manager  
**Date:** February 1, 2024  
**Ref:** Project/Issue Updates

**Committee/Commission and ad hoc Committee Review:** upon coming on board as Town Manager I have had the need to review some of the Ordinances and Charges of our various committees. In that limited review I found that some committees were not in compliance with their charge. The Town has numerous standing committees that cover many facets of municipal government and community interests and issues. Recently at the Town Council meeting it was expressed by Council members that Committee charges and ordinances need to be reviewed and updated. There may be committees with similar overlapping charges; there may be committees that are not in compliance with their charges; there may be committees that may need their charges updated; and there may be committees that need to be discharged as they are no longer active or required. It is my plan to do this review this winter and to report my findings to the Town Council Steering Committee for their review and possible recommendations to the Town Council.

**CHS Roof Project:** Though the project is mostly completed, the contractor is still working on a punch list of work to be complete/corrected. Some final improvements are delayed as there are asbestos pipes that need to be removed before work can be done. The contractor scheduled additional testing during the Christmas/winter holiday break, but has not yet scheduled the removal.

**CHS HVAC Project:** The low bid by Pro-Mech, Inc. of Bloomfield at \$11,897,800 has been approved. The contract has been signed, and the project has kicked off. The contractor visited CHS on MLK Day to look above ceiling tiles and to prepare work schedule plans. Materials for the project will be ordered in January-February 2024. The project kick-off meeting has been held and the contractor has surveyed the work areas in preparation of the project. The contract price of the project is over the original 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.

**Fiscal Year 2022-23 Audit:** The Auditors have been working with Finance staff over the last few months and have completed much of the work for the report of FY 22-23. It is projected that the 2022-23 Audit will be completed in early February and reported at a joint Finance Committee meeting (Town and BOE) in March. Delays on this report have been due to the Audit firm being short of staff.

**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.

**Town Hall Radio Tower-Telecommunications contract:** Staff is currently negotiating with T-Mobile on a new contract replacing the outdated contract which was approved in 1996. There is no additional telecommunications equipment being placed on the tower.

**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 private potable wells is to consider extending a water main to the area. The Town Engineer, engineering consultants, the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) representatives and I did meet in October to discuss possible next steps. This project will take negotiation and much coordination with the Connecticut Water Company to set up and to complete. I have had a preliminary meeting with them as well, and they are receptive to this extension from their existing system in the Nathan Hale Drive area. We currently have State grant funding approved for 25% of the construction of this water main. We have been actively exploring if we can increase our grant funding to 50% of the project cost. A meeting with the impacted residents was held on November 16<sup>th</sup> to discuss the issue and the possible resolution to the problem. Matt Cassidy, Connecticut State Lead, with Community and Environmental Resources-RCAP Solutions, Inc. (a State approved consultant) prepared and sent out a survey to the impacted residents to determine if the Town is eligible to receive the additional 25% subsidy for this project. All residents completed the survey, and Mr. Cassidy reported that the income data meets State and Federal guidelines for the State to consider offering the additional funding. Officials with (DEEP) are reviewing the information and looking into the availability of the additional 25% subsidy and loan funds that will be needed for the remaining 50% cost of the project. The project is estimated to cost \$2.8 million. Engineering is estimated at \$119,000. Our plan is to present the proposed project with possible funding sources to the Town Council at the February 20, 2024 Council meeting.

**Connecticut Countryside-Video:** This promotional video, resulting from the four town partnership has been presented to the CT Countryside steering group as well as the Coventry Economic Development Commission (EDC). Edits have been made and a final product will soon be released in February.

**Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) -Sewer Pipelining Project:** Bids were received on December 5<sup>th</sup> for the project of lining 12-inch gravity sewer lines. Two companies bid on the project: 1) Insituform Technologies of Charlton, Massachusetts- \$131,839. 2) Green Mountain Pipeline Services of Bethel Vermont- \$215,215. Both vendors were deemed qualified, and the bids complete. The WPCA voted at the December 14<sup>th</sup> meeting to accept the low bidder and to authorize the Town Manager to execute the contract. The contract has been signed and work will begin soon. This has been a planned project for the WPCA. The lining will extend the life of the current sewer lines and will address the problems of inflow and infiltration within the wastewater system. Like many wastewater systems we have surface and ground water entering our system. This impacts our wastewater treatment plant by having unexpectedly higher levels of flow, especially during rain events and when the ground is saturated. These improvements, once completed, will improve our lines, lessen operation impacts at the plant, increase storage capacity at the plant, and reduce treatment costs.

**Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) -Plant upgrade vs. Willimantic Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) connection:** The engineers, Tighe & Bond, have completed their review of the costs to connect our wastewater system to the Willimantic WWTP. The study shows that the connection to the treatment plant in Willimantic will be nearly the same cost as the upgrade to the existing Coventry

WWTP. However, with that reported, it is likely that the Town would be eligible for more grant funding for the Coventry WWTP upgrade than a line extension to the Willimantic WWTP. The study has been forwarded to the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) for their review and comment. Upon receiving comments on the report from DEEP, the Town will be able to evaluate the grant funding opportunities for both alternatives. The town must take action one way or the other as the Coventry WWTP does not meet current State wastewater treatment standards. The WPCA will present the outcome of the engineering study to the Town Council at its next meeting.

**Bolton/Coventry Sewer Extension:** The Town has planned for a sewer line extension project from the existing sewer service in the Town of Bolton eastward along US Route 44 into the town of Coventry. This was planned in the expectation that the Town may attract additional commercial growth along that corridor, which currently has some commercial development. The project has some hurdles ahead as we are waiting for the Bolton Lakes Regional (BLR) WPCA to send us a draft agreement for connecting into their sewer system. The agreement will include buy-in fees, maintenance requirements, annual use fees, billing, permitting, service area, flows, etc. The BLRWPCA Attorney is working on the details of the agreement. The project is funded through the passage of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023, Community Projects grants. The Town is waiting on the United State EPA to prepare the grant contract. It has been reported by the Regional EPA staff (Boston) that they are still working on 2022 grants. Congressman Courtney's Office has been asked to check on when we may be expecting the EPA to forward the grant contract.

**Coventry Lake/Lake Wangumbaug Hydrilla Control Project:** Since 2015 the Town has worked with Dr. Kortmann, the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), and consultants to combat the growth of hydrilla. Hydrilla is an invasive aquatic plant, that was not originally within the lake until it was spotted 9 years ago. The Town has been active in working with aquatic plant experts in treating the lake to attempt to eradicate the plant. The lake has been treated with Fluoridone (aquatic herbicide) from 2017-2022. Survey work has been frequently done on the lake by Northeast Aquatic Research (NEAR), which is a limnological research and lake management company, to locate invasive plants. No herbicide treatment occurred in 2023. Though no hydrilla appeared above the surface of the lake in 2023, it was spotted growing in limited areas below the surface at points along the north shore. In some areas where it had been present, it did not return. Staff have been meeting with Dr. Kortmann, DEEP, and our consultants to prepare an herbicide treatment for summer 2024 so we can eradicate the hydrilla or at least keep it from spreading. NEAR is recommending treatment of the entire Lake with Fluoridone again at an annual cost of \$119,750 each year for three years. Treatments that focus on specific areas were recommended as alternatives if funding is not available. The Coventry Lake Advisory and Monitoring Committee reviewed the report and has recommended that the full lake treatment be continued. The Town has applied for a grant from the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) for Aquatic Invasive Species Control on Lakes, Ponds, and Rivers in the amount of \$75,000. The Town has the needed matching funds available as funding was budgeted in FY 2024 for treatment that was not completed.

**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 \$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 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 a professional

consultant has been selected. Proposals were due on December 21<sup>st</sup>. Seven proposals were received: 1) LaGuardia Design Group, New York, NY for \$50,100. 2) TPA Design Group, New Haven, CT for \$50,000. 3) FHI Studio Inc., Hartford, CT for \$49,993. 4) Barton & Loguidice, Glastonbury, CT for \$48,800. 5) CHA, Rocky Hill, CT for \$48,660. 6) Linden Landscape Architects, Weathersfield, CT for \$45,000. 7) Benesch, Glastonbury, CT for \$35,000. Staff members are currently reviewing/evaluating the proposals. Three firms will be selected for interview in mid-February. The successful firm is expected to complete the master plan within a 5-7 month period. 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> and October 12<sup>th</sup> Parks and Recreation (P&R) Commission meetings. 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 reviewed the latest draft plan at their November 16<sup>th</sup> meeting. It is expected that the P&R Commission will approve the final plan in January 2024.

**Curve Signage Grant:** Received letter of approval from the Connecticut Department of Transportation (DOT). This grant funds curve warning signs on locally owned roads. The State held a public information session and will schedule and manage the project of installing these signs. The following streets will see new signage marking curves:

Coventry

- Cedar Swamp Road
- Dunn Road
- Grant Hill Road
- Hop River Road
- Riley Mountain Road
- Woodbridge Road
- Cooper Lane
- Lewis Hill Road
- Talcott Hill Road
- Daly Road
- Flanders Road
- South Street
- Wrights Mill Road
- Lake Street
- Snake Hill Road

**Main Street/South Street Pedestrian Crossing Project:** The Town has just been awarded a Transportation Rural Improvement Program (TRIP), a newly created state grant program designed to support rural municipalities, which are often ineligible for many federal transportation programs. The grant is for \$498,000. This is a 100% funded grant for construction, with engineering being the responsibility of the Town. This project will provide crosswalks and pedestrian safety features along Main Street in the Village and along South Street. Improvements will include signage, flashing lights and curb ramps (sidewalk bumps) that are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). More details on the project and a proposed project schedule are to come in the near future.

**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 late 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 Town's match is primarily in-kind services and in-house engineering. The project design is currently paused to evaluate the wetland impact and possible alternative crossings on Bear Swamp Road at Rufus Creek. Staff is

meeting with the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) to explain project difficulties in working with the wetland component of the project and to see if we can secure additional funding or to see if we can phase the project with the current award and apply for additional funding within a later cycle.

**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. The Contractor is planning on an April demolition so not to close the road for an extended time. 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):** Though this project is described as a bridge, it is described more accurately as a large culvert structure that is constructed under the roadway. The project is in design with Jacobson Engineering. Construction will not be very lengthy with extended road closings, and it is tentatively scheduled for 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 (CROG) 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 (CROG) pre-selected engineering consultants. The Town will request proposals from the list. Funding for design will be by the Town.

**Road resurfacing/drainage Improvements:** The Public Works Department has a list of streets that will be resurfaced in 2024 on our website. Work will resume in the spring as the weather permits.

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.