



Town of Coventry

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To: Town Council
From:  James Drumm, Town Manager
Date: March 14, 2024
Ref: Project/Issue Updates

Presidential Primary Election and Early Voting: the Connecticut Presidential primary election will take place for both districts on Tuesday April 2nd at the CVFA Fire House (across from Town Hall). I wanted to remind everyone of the option for early voting that will take place this year on March 26th, 27th, 28th, and 30th from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM at Town Hall.

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be committees that may need their charges updated; and there may be committees that need to be discharged as they are no longer active or required.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-spring and to report my findings to the Town Council Steering Committee for their review and possible recommendations to the Town Council.

CHS Roof Project: The project is mostly completed, the contractor is still working on a very small 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 conducted 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 awarded and the company has been contracted. Materials for the project were ordered in January-February 2024. The contractor has surveyed the work areas in preparation of the project and is preparing to start the project in late April 2024.

Fiscal Year 2022-23 Audit: The Auditors have been working with Finance staff over the last few months and have completed the work for the Audit report of FY 22-23. A draft report has been sent to Town staff for review and comment. It is projected that the 2022-23 Audit will be finalized this month and reported at a joint Finance Committee meeting (Town and BOE) in April. It has been reported that delay of this report has been due to the Audit firm being short of staff.

Revaluation Project: The contract was awarded to Vision. They are widely used by local governments in Connecticut and throughout New England. They were used the last two times the Town conducted property revaluation. Data mailers are being prepared to be mailed out to property owners in March to verify the assessment information. On-site inspections with Vision staff have begun this week and will continue as needed. 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 by this firm at this time. A new contract is being developed with the assistance of the Town Attorney's office.

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 16th 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) and the CT Department of Health (DPH) 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. Town staff will present this issue and proposed project to Town Council at the April 1, 2024 Town Council meeting.

Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) -Sewer Pipelining Project: The Town has contracted with Insituform Technologies of Charlton, Massachusetts for \$131,839 to clean and line sewer lines around Coventry Lake. 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. The project is expected to be finished by the end of March. These improvements will improve our lines, lessen operation impacts at the plant, increase wastewater 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 presented the outcome of the engineering study to the Town Council at its February 4th 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, and it will soon come before the BLRWPCA Board. The project is funded through the passage of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023, Community Projects grants. The Town is waiting on the United States EPA to prepare the grant contract. It has been reported by the Regional EPA staff (Boston) that they are still working on 2022 grants.

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 is preparing to 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 April. Proposals to complete the project were due on December 21, 2023. Seven proposals were received and evaluated by the selection committee. All firms were deemed qualified. Three firms were interviewed. FHI Studio Inc., of Hartford, CT was chosen due to their qualifications and experience with park projects, but mostly because of their creativity shown in development of parks for the State and other towns. The

contract for services is being developed and they are expected to meet with key staff for a kick off meeting in late March or early April. The master plan will be developed prior to any permanent improvements being constructed in the park. The project is expected to be completed by early September.

Miller Richardson Park priorities: The engineering firm of Barton & Loguidice discussed possible park improvements with key stakeholders at the September 14th and October 12th 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 16th meeting. The P&R Commission is expected to approve it within the next month.

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 project is funded by a Community Connectivity grant. This project will begin at Hemlock Point Lane and go northeasterly to Winterberry. This project had been delayed due to engineering, but this month the construction plans have been completed and the project is now being prepared to procure the services of a contractor. Upon completion of this project the Town will be eligible to apply for another Community Connectivity grant to extend the sidewalk further on Main Street to Lisicke Park and additionally westward to Daly Road. This will eventually connect to planned (in design) sidewalks along Daly Road. When all complete there will be sidewalks in place that circle Coventry Lake.

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. All utilities have been moved. The Contractor has announced an April 1st road closure and the demolition of the existing one lane bridge soon after. They will then begin construction. The bridge is expected to be re-opened in late November 2024. The State/Federal grant is 100% funded at \$3.6 million.

Depot Road Bridge replacement: The Town has been awarded a \$7.4 million State/Federal grant for 100% funding for this project. The State has agreed to provide engineering with one of their consulting engineers. CHA Engineering of Rocky Hill, CT has been assigned the project by the Connecticut DOT.

Brigham Hill Bridge replacement: The Town has been awarded a \$5.2 million State/Federal grant for 100% funding for this project. The State has agreed to provide engineering with one of their consulting engineers. CHA Engineering of Rocky Hill, CT has been assigned the project by the Connecticut DOT.

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 is tentatively scheduled for summer 2025.

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 the preliminary plans. The revised plans were presented at the public involvement meeting that was held on October 24th. 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%. Funding for design will be by the Town. Barton and Loguidice of Glastonbury is conducting the engineering on this project.

Road resurfacing/drainage Improvements: The Public Works Department has a list of streets that will be resurfaced in 2024 on our website. The Public Works Director is reviewing lists and is preparing to schedule work for late spring. Work will resume 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.