



Town of Coventry

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To: Town Council
From: *JD* James Drumm, Town Manager
Date: August 28, 2025
Ref: Project/Issue Updates

Most of our projects are in engineering and/or permitting. There has been new information to update you on the progress of the CHS HVAC Project. As usual, underlined sentences within this memo indicate more recent 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. In spring, the Town Council expressed 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be committees that may need their charges updated; and there may be committees that need to be discharged as they are no longer active or required. I have planned to present my findings to the Town Council Steering Committee in groupings for review and possible recommendations. The first report was on the Parks and Recreation Commission, which is currently being reviewed by the Steering Committee.

Finance Director: Former Mansfield Finance Director Cherie Trahan is currently serving as interim Finance Director. She has agreed to come out of retirement and join our staff full-time. Town Council will consider ratifying the town Manger's appointment of her as the Town Treasurer/Finance Director.

Senior Center Assistant: We had two strong finalists. Both candidates declined the job offer. An interview opportunity presented to a second round of candidates also was not successful, with one declining based on salary level and the other having recently accepted another position. We are reviewing the recruitment materials and will re-launch a new ad the week of 9/2.

Dumpster Cover at Transfer Station: Casella has provided dumpsters with covers for the Transfer Station at the Town's request and at no cost to the Town. This will reduce the chance of rain water contaminating the waste and recyclable materials. It will also reduce the weight that the dumpsters will have in them when waste is weighed and dumped as there will be less chance of rain water in the dumpsters. The lower weight equates to lower dumping fees.

EMT Live-in Program: The new three Live-in EMTs are now in residence. They have officially become volunteer EMTs with the Department. Due to the Fair Labor Standards Act we cannot compel them to

work a required amount of hours (as the housing would be considered compensation for hours worked), however we predict that they will on average work at least two 8-hour shifts per week. Being on-site frequently when not on duty, they will likely be available and willing to provide a response for a second or third call, when those calls occur.

Materials Management Infrastructure (MMI) grant: the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection has announced that Town has been awarded the MMI grant to construct a food waste/leaf composting facility at DPW. Preliminary site planning is underway. Tree removal will begin in fall. This program will also include the purchase of counter-top collection containers, which will come in 2026 when the program is implemented with the public. The total amount of the grant is \$202, 895. The Town Council has pledged up to \$5,000 in NIPS funding for the containers.

CHS Roof Project: The Roofing contractor (Greenwood Industries) and the HVAC contractor (Pro-mech coordinated roof cuts over the fall and winter. All roof work has been satisfactorily completed. The BOE is in process to request a reimbursement for grant funding. The portion of grant funding for the architectural services has been found to be in jeopardy, as it was determined that the Town did not follow State Statutes regarding the selection process in 2022. The Statutes called for not more than four vendors to be interviewed and evaluated. The Town/BOE at that time interviewed and evaluated five engineers. In July of 2024, this requirement which stifled competition was repealed. In fall of 2024, the Town made an official request to the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) to waive the Statue on the record in 2022, when this evaluation process occurred. Since we have not had any determination to our response after several months and inquiries, we have asked Rep. Ackert to sponsor special legislation to waive the application of the old requirement on our project, so that the Town could recoup the grant funding that was awarded. We believed that this was especially appropriate as the General Assembly found in 2024 that this policy restricting competition needed to be removed. A bill unfortunately was not filed in time for this past session, and so we have asked for one next session to recover the grant amount toward the engineering. It is estimated that the grant will be approximately \$10,000 for the GHR roof project and \$12,000 for the CHS roof project.

CHS HVAC Project: Our contractor Pro-Mech, Inc. of Bloomfield is still on the job. Coordinating with the wishes of the BOE, they completed installations with larger rooms like the science labs, cafeteria, and math classrooms over summer 2024. The work on classroom installations extended into the school year as was expected and completed at the end of January. An A2 Survey for an easement for Eversource has been completed. A legal description is being prepared for an easement for Eversource. A change order was approved so to replace the support railing on the roof for new equipment. Additionally, we expect another change order to build a pad for the new transformer, since we now know there will not be a change out of transformers but there will be an additional transformer placed onsite. We have learned that the addition of a transformer, instead of a replacement, will require additional electrical work not originally anticipated. Eversource has identified the size of transformer needed and we understand one is currently available. They have indicated that the transformer can be delivered in about three weeks after the site is ready and the order is placed. The placement of the transformer has been decided after the need to move it was required due to finding underground utilities that conflicted. The utility easement is now being detailed to match the new location. The contractor has begun removing the older ventilation/heater systems. Even though the transformer is not in place, temporary power can operate the new system if they are needed prior to the installation of the transformer. The Engineer is currently working with Eversource to alter plans to connect the system to a smaller transformer than originally planned. This involves the need to adjust a 4000-amp breaker so not to potentially overload the transformer. The Town has recently found that the breaker can be

altered to reduce the amperage to the 3000-amp level, and this will meet the State Code. The Town has received supervisory approval from Eversource to accept the breaker. Our contract engineers have been working close with Eversource staff to prepare new wiring plans for the new transformer. We have been able to authorize our contractor to now build the transformer pad and to begin electrical work. The Asst. Town Attorney, Rich Roberts, and Eversource has been working with Special Projects Coordinator Alex Taylor to coordinate filing of the easement for the transformer. The total cost of the original construction contract is \$11,897,800. Additional change orders are being processed due to Eversource changing the Transformer size which is increasing the total project cost. An additional \$46,000 has been added to the project cost for the commissioning agent. State grant funding will cover \$6,602,148 of the project, with the remaining amount being financed by bond funds. The total cost of the project is expected to be approximately \$12, 400,000. The Town Council will be considering establishing a referendum for voters to consider the transfer of previously approved unused bonding debt that was saved from recent school projects to cover the cost increases for this much-needed project. The project is expected to be completed by fall 2025.

Town Hall Radio Tower-Telecommunications contract: Staff are 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. The contract is currently being reviewed by the attorneys representing T-Mobile. This has been going back and forth with multiple amendments. Their attorneys have been and remain slow to respond.

Coventry Village Water Tower Project: The Town was notified last year by Congressman Courtney that we have received a Congressional Directed Spending (CDS) grant of \$1 million toward the construction of an elevated water tower to strengthen and improve the village water system. The water tower would provide additional pressure and steady volume of water for the system. This is especially important for fire suppression systems that are needed for new commercial development and historic mill re-development in Coventry Village. This project could also improve the fire suppression systems at the high school, the middle school, and GHR. The total project is estimated to be \$2.5 million. The request made by the Town was for \$1.875 million dollars. The grant requires at least a 25% match. The grant will be administered starting in 2025-26 through the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development Program. The Town is coordinating with Connecticut Water Company on possible locations. The Town will be seeking professional engineering services to evaluate the sites and to see what improvements may be necessary to connect to the water system in Coventry Village. The Town staff is also exploring possible additional funding for construction. The Town Council will have a presentation on capital projects, including this one, at the August 18th Town Council meeting. Local businesses, including Teleflex, have recently shown interest in the extra fire protection the water tower would provide.

Plains Road/Salt Impacted Potable Wells: This water extension project involves much coordination with the Connecticut Water Company to complete. They have tentatively agreed to connect a newly constructed water line to their existing system in the Nathan Hale Drive area. The Town currently has State grant funding pledged for approval for 50%. However, to secure the funding, the project must be ready with design and authorized by a public referendum. CT Department of Health (DPH) has informed us that we have secured a Small Disadvantaged Communities (SDC) grant from the U.S. EPA in the amount of \$787,000 to add on top of the approximate 50% subsidy. This will reduce the Town's expense to less than 25% of the total project cost. The construction cost is estimated to be \$2.6 million. The survey work has been completed. Our contract engineer, GZA Geoenvironmental, Inc., is now completing the engineering and providing services for permitting. The project was presented to the Town Council at the January 21, 2025 Town Council meeting. The Town Council determined at that

meeting that this project should be placed on a future public referendum requesting authorization for debt to construct the improvements. At the February 18, 2025 meeting the Town Council authorized funding for permitting that would allow the installation of a water line along the South Street extension right of way. Application has been made for SRF grant/loan funds so that funding may be designated by the State. The Town has received a DPH notice of funding for the project. This would include additional funding for possible project contingency needs. The funds are now pledged but will be obligated by DPH after completion and execution of the loan documents. Town staff held a meeting with DPH staff and found that the loan documents will be prepared after the permitting is complete and the bids for construction have been received. DPH indicates the loan is a 10 year or a 20-year loan at 2% interest. Staff and our legal team are preparing our construction bid package. It is anticipated that the bids will be received in September or October, however this is contingent on the permits having been approved by DPH and DEEP. DPH has signed off on their permit and has forwarded it to DEEP. We are also continuing to work toward obtaining an easement along the South Street Extension corridor in order to avoid a designated wetland. This easement has been a part of the project and was shown in the engineers' plans that were presented to the Town Council last winter.

Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) - Plant upgrade vs. Willimantic Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) connection: The engineers, Tighe & Bond, 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 was forwarded to the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) for their review and comment. Town staff, our engineering consultants and the WPCA did meet with DEEP representatives in June 2024. DEEP indicated that the WPCA will need to conduct an environmental impact study regarding the preferred option of upgrading the wastewater treatment plant. The Town must take action one way or the other as the Coventry WWTP does not meet current State wastewater treatment standards. The WPCA is selecting an independent firm to conduct the evaluation of the upgrade of the Wastewater Treatment Plant project under the requirements of the Connecticut Environmental Protection Act (CEPA). Request for Qualifications (RFQs) were received December 19, 2024. Only one was received by SLR International Corporation of New Haven, CT. An interview was held in March. The WPCA has contracted for services for the CEPA project. This study is expected to take one year to complete. It is expected to be completed by summer 2026.

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. Town staff are negotiating with the Bolton Lakes Water Pollution Control Authority on the connection fees to their utility system. The BLWPCA will soon be providing a new proposal for the Town's consideration. After approving the connection fees, a separate agreement will be required to address maintenance requirements, annual use fees, billing, permitting, service area, flows, etc. The Town has also been working with the United States EPA to prepare the grant contract. The project is partially funded through the passage of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023, Community Projects grants. Additional funding will be required possibly through bonding and sewer connection assessments. We will continue to explore our options for additional funding for this project. We have recently learned that this money, if not used for the Bolton project, could possibly be re-directed to another sewer project. This came from a Federal Employee is a different Department than U.S. EPA, so we are exploring this possible option further.

School Street Drainage Project: This small drainage project had been delayed for over 10 years due to project complications and lack of dedicated funding. It involves the replacement of a partially crushed drainage pipe that crosses four lots and School Street, which then connects into a drain on Main Street (CT Route 31). In order to save funds on this project, the project was broken into two phases. Gerber Construction completed phase one, which included the more difficult DOT right-of-way at \$138,000 which was funded by a LoCIP grant. The DPW Highway crew will complete phase two this summer replacing the remaining sticks of pipe crossing School Street and within adjacent Town easements. They had hoped to do it this past winter, but the snowy weather kept them from gaining ground on this project. It is scheduled to be completed by fall 2025.

Patriots Park Beach Closure: Patriots Park Beach has been closed by the Eastern Highland Health District **for 33 days this season** due to the high levels of bacteria found in the water. Testing has been done each day. Health Director Robert Miller indicates that the factors are the warm weather we have been having and the large increase in the geese population we have seen this year. There are approximately 80 geese. The Parks and Recreation Department has installed temporary fencing to try to block the geese from the Park, but it has had limited success in stopping them. We will now be adding some water circulation devices which could deter the geese and help the movement of the water to reduce the concentration of bacteria that comes from the geese feces. Our Summer Camp kids have had limited access to the lake this summer. The beach closures have also significantly impacted the gate revenues for the beach this summer. We are hoping the geese deterrents will bring improved water quality for August. Lisicke Beach remains open, as it and the other lake associations beaches on Coventry Lake have not been impacted.

Coventry Lake/Lake Wangumbaug Hydrilla Control Project: The Town has received the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) for the Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) grant for the 2025 fluoridone treatments. I have executed the contract for State funding and expect the work to begin soon. Matching funds and funds for monitoring the lake are held in capital reserves and also some have been budgeted in FY2025-26. Summer 2025 is the second year of the three-year Treatment Plan that has been recommended by our consultants. The first treatment was done this week. Two more treatments will be done, one in August and the other in September.

Booth and Dimock Library Historic Preservation Grant: The Town was selected to receive the \$6000 grant by the State Historic Preservation Office for repairs to the historic portion of the Booth and Dimock Library. The project specifically will make repairs to the framing and joists supporting the floors in the reading rooms under the bookshelves. As you may recall the project is a total of \$12,000 with the library providing the match from their endowment fund. The Town has expected for several weeks to receive the formal award notice and more information from the State Historic Preservation Office about the grant agreement. Library staff have reached out to inquire on the delay.

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 pavilion, playground replacement, fencing and geese deterrent measures. In late 2024 and early 2025, the Town conducted a master plan process for the park. The process is now complete. The grant has been amended, and construction plans are being developed. The Town Engineer has prepared a plan for the new playground area. It is currently being reviewed by the Inland Wetlands Agency. The improvements are expected to be constructed in

Fall 2025 and Spring/Summer 2026. Once the Town actively begins construction, we will be eligible to apply for future STEAP grant funding.

Curve Signage Grant: The Connecticut Department of Transportation (CDOT) awarded our Town a grant. This grant funded curve warning signs on locally owned roads. The State held a public information session in 2023 and has managed the project of installing these signs. The State has completed the installation of all signs. The following streets received new signage marking curves:

Coventry

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

Main Street/South Street Pedestrian Crossing Project: The Town has 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 \$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). This project is in engineering. The project is planned for construction in spring in 2026.

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. The design had been reviewed by CDOT for permitting and rejected. Construction plans have been amended to move retaining walls outside of the right of way at the request of CDOT. Work will involve acquiring additional easements for retaining walls. The Town Engineer will be requesting additional funding for the acquisition of easements, not originally planned for this project. This has delayed the planned schedule of going out to bid. Upon completion of the easements, the Town will seek bids. 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 (currently in design) future sidewalks along Daly Road. When all is complete within the next couple of years, 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 had a meeting with the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) to explain project difficulties in working with the wetland component of the project and have found that we can phase the project with the current award and apply for additional funding at a later cycle to address the wetland crossing or bypass. This project has been placed on hold as additional engineering is needed to reflect project changes.

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. Scouring tests have been completed showing that replacement is warranted.

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. Scouring tests have been completed showing that replacement is warranted.

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. The Town is coordinating with the Town of Andover, as they have a bridge project over the Hop River moving forward and we do not want to isolate the residents on this road with two construction projects active at the same time. As Andover's permitting will begin construction in 2025, we will have to delay construction of this project until 2026. CDOT has given the Town an extension on this grant award. The Town was awarded a \$700,000 grant for this project. This is a 50/50 State/Local funded project. The local match was budgeted with existing bond funds. The project is in engineering and is expected to receive a permit from the Inland Wetlands Commission soon. Easements are currently being requested from adjacent land owners.

Parker Bridge Road-Bridge (Culvert) replacement grant: In 2023 the Town applied for Federal/State funding to replace the smaller bridge on Parker Bridge Road. It is actually a large culvert that the adjacent creek runs through. The grant was not funded that year. Staff has again applied for this funding for the 2024 grant cycle. The Town was awarded a \$714,000 grant for this project. The total project cost is \$1,428,000. This is a 50/50 State/Local funded project. The local match was budgeted with existing bond funds. The project is now in engineering and will require adjacent right of way at the crossing of an unnamed creek, so to re-align the crossing. A preliminary design plan is complete. Easements are being sought from adjacent property owners.

Flanders Rd/Cider Mill Bridge: The Town has been awarded another Federal bridge replacement grant. We have contracted and obligated these Federal grant funds. The project is planned to begin with a public meeting in June of 2025; followed by design completion in January 2026; and then construction to be completed by December 2026. The estimated cost of the project is \$7,070, 000. The State/Federal grant award is to be 100% funded.

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 fall. 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 24, 2023. 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. In late 2024, design plans were amended further to include a gap area along South Street and the State awarded an additional \$442,800 to cover this area. The design amendments did not significantly delay the project's engineering, however this addition required the need to acquire multiple new easements. The focus on this project this summer and fall will be easement acquisition from

property owners. This will delay the bidding of this project until spring of 2026. Construction is now planned for summer/fall of 2026.

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 have been combined into one project. Funding for construction is 100%. The project will modify curves and increase pedestrian safety. Funding for design will be funded by the Town. Barton and Loguidice of Glastonbury is conducting engineering on this project. The preliminary design has been reviewed by CRCOG and CDOT. Now that all preliminary plans have been approved, design engineering is the next step. This funding is the match requirement from the Town. There is currently insufficient funds in CNREF. The Town will need to consider possible sources to fund this next step of this project.

Road resurfacing/drainage Improvements: The Town is implementing the Summer 2025 road paving list. Bellview and Jon Hand Drive are currently being paved. Driveway aprons will be added afterwards. Next on the list for drainage improvements will be South Street where it intersects with Silver Street.

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.