



Town of Coventry

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To: Town Council
From: *JD* James Drumm, Town Manager
Date: November 13, 2025
Ref: Project/Issue Updates

I have some updates to provide you with our projects. As usual, underlined sentences within this memo indicate more recent updates.

Vision Government Solutions rounding up issue: The Assessor's Office has sent out letters regarding the "rounding up issue" that was inadvertently caused by Vision Government Solutions (VGS) in the revaluation study. In these notices, some Property owners will see a reduction in their assessment and taxes owed, which will be applied to the second billing. Impacted property owners and their mortgage companies have been contacted. The issue is that by State law a municipality cannot assess property values greater than 70% of the market assessment for the purpose of taxation. VGS, which has been contracted by 80% of municipalities statewide, used software rounded up or down when mathematically calculating the assessed value of properties. Rounding up unfortunately increases the assessed value by a small fraction above the 70% requirement. In some cases, this impact is only a few cents and in others it can be in dollars. This issue, recently detected and confirmed, occurred with all their client municipalities statewide. As the company is at fault, they have corrected the calculations at their expense and have paid for the notices being mailed out to everyone. Chances are you may be one of these property owners with a minor amendment to the tax bill.

CT COST Conference: I attended the Council of Small Towns Conference in Meriden on October 22nd. The conference provided good information on climate resiliency, emerging housing issues, practical and cybersecurity tips. Secretary of State Stephanie Thomas spoke about improvements to our election process, additional State funding to towns to implement new rules, and the need to get our voices heard in the General Assembly if towns want to shorten early voting.

Sustainable CT Silver Designation: We have received the results of the most recent Sustainable CT designations. We submitted enough points on eligible actions over the last three years and points for approved policies to earn the Silver designation. Our staff has worked hard on these projects and was careful to document successes along the way. This is the third time we have achieved Silver. The last time was 2022. Prior to that we achieved Bronze once. It remains staff's goal to achieve Gold, but only if the projects and policies fall within our normal course of operating the Town. As I have said in the past, we want to be conservative with our spending and do not want to spend extra money just to achieve the designation. However, we celebrate our Silver designation as great achievement. Council Chair Thomas, Special Projects Coordinator Alex Taylor, Environmental Planner Lindsay Buetler, and I traveled to East Haddam Tuesday evening to receive our Town's plaque. We were inspired by the other projects completed by some of the other towns and cities.

Charter Revision Commission: The Town Council appointed the members of the Charter Revision Commission (CRC) on September 2, 2025. The Council appointed Michael Petro as the Chair on September 15th. The first meeting of the CRC was on Monday October 1st. They selected Justin Murphy as the Vice Chair and Monica Gallegos Ramirez as the Secretary. They set their meeting schedule as the first Wednesday and the third Thursday of the month, starting on November 20th. At their meeting on October 23rd, the CRC was briefed by Attorney Rich Roberts (Halloran and Sage: Town Attorney's Office) on the Charter Revision process as established within State Statutes. They were also briefed on State regulations related to public meetings, public records and the FOIA. The first part of the process, before they can review and deliberate on sections of the Charter, is to hold a Public Hearing to accept comments on the existing Charter and to accept suggestions for possible amendments. The Public Hearing is set for November 20, 2025 at 6:30 PM at the Town Hall Annex. They will begin reviewing the Charter immediately afterward within their meeting.

Committee/Commission and ad hoc Committee Review: Upon coming on board as Town Manager, I 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. 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 remains under review by the Steering Committee.

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. The Preliminary site planning is under review for permit by DEEP. Tree removal will begin in early winter. Construction will occur after permits are received in Spring of 2026. This program will also include the purchase of counter-top collection containers, which will come in summer 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 remains 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. Construction of the overall system is now complete, but they are working on a punch list. The project passed final inspection in mid-October. They are working with Aramark, the commissioning agent, to test and to adjust the system. Lt. Governor Susan Bysiewicz and Department of Administrative Services Commissioner Michelle Gilman joined Town and School officials in cutting the ribbon on October 29th. This was a great opportunity to thank State officials for their support in providing over 50% of the funding for this project. The School Building Committee and key project staff were recognized. Also recognized were ICDS (design engineer), Pro-Mech Inc. (contractor), and Eversource for their help in bringing it over the finish line before the weather got cold. 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 \$12,642,000. Voters within the Town on November 4, 2025 approved the referendum question that will transfer previously approved unused bonding debt that was saved from recent school projects to cover the cost increases for this much-needed project.

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. We are close to reaching an agreement as a final draft is being reviewed.

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 was 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 coordinated with Connecticut Water Company on possible locations. The Town had planned to seek professional engineering services to evaluate the sites and to see what improvements may be necessary to connect to the water system in Coventry Village. Connecticut Water has since conducted a review themselves and they made recommendations for the siting of the Tower. They presented the findings of the review to the Finance Committee on October 30th. Town Engineer Todd Penney presented their recommendations to Town Council on November 3rd. As the Water Tower Project was found to best be sited on the Stonehouse Road property, the Town Council approved the use of the unspent preliminary engineering funds to be used to evaluate that site. The Town staff has applied for State bonding funds to cover the full cost of the Project, which is now estimated to be \$3 million. 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 expenses 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 now be received in January. DEEP has finished its review of the permits and is consulting with DPH. The Town is standing by to amend the bid package or send it out as prepared. Due to the length of time taken by DEP to review the project, construction is now expected to be in spring.

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 2025. The WPCA has contracted for services for the CEPA project. This study is expected to take one year to complete. The contractor was delayed in their project start time. It is expected to be completed by late 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 learned that this money, if not used for the Bolton project, could possibly be re-directed to another sewer project.

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 in summer of 2024, which included the more difficult DOT right-of-way at \$138,000, which was funded by a LoCIP grant. DPW worked on this project this past summer and early fall and completed the final phase of this project just this last week. The road in the impacted area has been freshly paved.



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. Matching funds and funds for monitoring the lake are held in capital reserves and also some have been budgeted in FY2025-26. Summer 2025 was the second year of the three-year Treatment Plan that has been recommended by our consultants. The work for 2025 is complete. The Town will apply again for the AIS grant for FY202-26. The next AIS grant cycle has opened and the Town is preparing an application for funding for treatments for summer 2026.

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 recently received from the State Historic Preservation Office the grant agreement for our review and consideration.

Lisicke Beach Improvements: LoCIP funds (\$21,000) were budgeted for Lisicke Beach for FY 2024-25 to replace the leaning retaining wall and to construct new stairs. The Town successfully received an IWA permit to work along the lake front. VP Lawn and Landscaping has been contracted to construct the improvements for \$19,500. The project is mostly done, some minor items to be completed in the week ahead.



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. Also, geese deterrent measures are being planned. These plans have been reviewed by the Inland Wetlands Agency. A separate permit will be requested for the geese remediation involving a water circulator. The improvements are expected to begin construction in Fall 2025 and be completed Spring/Summer 2026. Once the Town actively begins construction, we will be eligible to apply for future STEAP grant funding. The Town Council was briefed on this project at their October 20, 2025 Town Council Meeting.

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 being prepared for bidding. The project is planned for construction in spring 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 requested and received additional funding for the acquisition of easements, not originally planned for this project. Upon completion of the easements, the Town will seek bids. Bid packets are being prepared. Construction is expected in summer 2026. 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. This month the State has notified the Town that they have funded design engineering so it can move forward.

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. This month the State has notified the Town that they will be designating funds soon for design engineering so it can then move forward.

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 began construction in 2025, we had 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 a Federal bridge replacement grant. We have contracted and obligated these Federal grant funds. The State has changed the process and time frame of this project. They were hoping to complete multiple bridges with five towns with one design/contractor. That has changed. The State will directly contract engineering and then directly hire a separate contractor. The Towns of Mansfield and Coventry will be included in the design phase and will coordinate efforts. The project is now planned to begin with a public meeting in 2026; followed by design completion in 2028; and then construction to be completed by December 2028 (two years later than first suggested by CDOT). 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 (CRCOG) 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 fall will be easement acquisition from property owners. The Town Council has approved additional funding to complete this process in a timely manner. Bidding for this project will be in 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. This could be funded in a future Road Bond that Town Council has discussed for early 2026.

Road resurfacing/drainage Improvements: The Town is still implementing the Summer 2025 road paving list. Drainage work is along Standish Road and the other streets in the Oak Grove Lake Association. Paving is underway for Standish Road, Lake Road, and other Oak Grove streets this week. Work is underway on Leslie Lane as well. Though we did not expect that we would be able to begin the drainage and paving on Leslie Lane this year because road money was cut from the proposed 2025-26 Budget, we were able to put in new drainage basins with remaining funding. This depleted all paving money for FY2025-26. We will come back to complete the work in July when paving money is allocated from the State Town Aid Road (TAR) program and the Town's General Fund Capital Budget. We will make some patches for the winter, but they will not likely last too long due to the crumbling asphalt.



Lake Rd. paving within Oak Grove Lake Assn. today.



Leslie Lane

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.