

## **Manager's project update: Sept 19, 2022 meeting**

Below please find a brief summary and update of ongoing projects. (As of 9/15)

### **Highlights:**

The Annual Lake Forum for September 20<sup>th</sup> in CHS Veterans Auditorium and live broadcast.

Two excellent candidates for a new Building Official and will be making offer today.

The girls' softball field bids have been awarded as the bid was amended and a project meeting is scheduled to start the project working around the current transfer station.

The transfer station construction is slightly behind schedule but we hope to be operational for Oct 1.

We have two bridges which appear eligible for the new 100% funded local bridge program and the Council will need to consider how to assist with submitting applications.

### Public Works/Engineering

LOTICIP grants: The Swamp Rd/Rt. 44 project is paved and temporary detour in place. Still waiting on fall delivery of the traffic signal posts. Minor make-ready work is still underway. Looking at options for temporary signalization to supplement the existing system to allow the 4 way intersection to be opened.

Loomis and Carver Lane road work continues. The contractor did not have a working truck to apply a tack coat for Carver so we did not allow them to proceed, and it is still being rescheduled. Good progress continues on Lakewood Road and we hope it will be done by end of September, but may go into October.

Major tree work is ongoing. After many outages in the Silver street area effecting 125 homes we got the attention of Eversource again and a tree crew continues on South Street. This area has experienced over 8 outages in the last several months.

Todd Penney continues to work toward getting the plans and specs for the Community Connectivity grant for sidewalks on Main Street from Hemlock Point Lane to approximately Cheney Lane. Starting to seek the required easements from the State and neighbors. It is still hoped to be a fall 2022 construction project, but time pressures are a concern. We asked for and received an extension until June 30, 2023.

We are trying to select an engineer for the LOTICIP grant for the intersection of Swamp and South, including the South Street curves, and a dip in Swamp Road. Construction is hoped for the fall of 2022, but more likely 2023. Waiting for design proposals. The balance of the engineering expense will come from the savings from the Hop River Bridge match or CNREF.

The South Street road reconstruction and sidewalk project near the Homestead is underway. We are considering extending the sidewalk to the Strong Porter museum with some savings of the local match for Hop River Bridge. Milling and paving expected over the next several weeks. Ran into a pavement depth surprise which core samples did not pick up so extra milling was required causing a slight delay and extra expense but the contingency can handle it. Todd found an alternative sidewalk treatment which is more historically appropriate which is less expensive than the option we were looking at and falls within the State-set maximums.... so no local funds will be required.

The methane venting project for the Miller Richardson football field was hydro-seeded, but due to the lack of rain it will need to be redone.

The State-designed Hop River Road Bridge replacement has been authorized to go out to out to bid. They did not make their targeted date but should be out soon. After bid award the project will start with utility work in fall and materials ordered for a spring construction. GM2 will be our construction inspectors. The State will be using Federal funds to pay 100% of the project costs including inspection. Since the construction budget estimate now far exceeds the funds we allocated from the last road bond this is fantastic news. This will free up the balance of the past bonding for eligible projects covered by the scope of the bond. This is likely in the \$700,000 range. We will evaluate alternative eligible projects. After our first pre-bid meeting we discussed concerns of needing assurance that this will be a one-season bridge closure. We have agreed to allow longer work days to assist in reaching that goal.

We still need to replace two culverts, one located on Bunker Hill Road and the other on Parker Bridge Road. We have submitted two grant applications for this year's Local Bridge grant round and are still waiting for a response - now expected in September. The grants, if we are awarded one or both, require a 50% match. Our share is included in the proposed bonding. We also have to fully replace the Broadway culvert, which is not currently eligible for State funds. We will need money for this design and future funding in 4 years or so. There is a possibility CROG will have a LOTCIP culvert round which covers 100% of construction costs.

We just received a report from Jacobson Engineering on a study of the 16 larger Town bridges. It appears we have two which appear to qualify for the 100% funding level; Depot Road and Brigham Hill (both over the Willimantic River) appear to qualify. We will need outside assistance in submitting the applications for this unique 100% funded program. Moving swiftly has been advised since this will be a very popular program which will be over subscribed. Rough estimate for the application process is 4 to 6 thousand per bridge. We can take this out of CNREF.

Had another productive meeting with the company considering acquiring the Microgrid project (\$4,000,000 grant). They have asked for a meeting with CT DEEP to discuss modifying the project to include the solar now anticipated on CHS roof and right sizing the CHP units. Will now explore some Federal FEMA BRIC money and have started discussion with Sen. Murphy's office.

The new transfer station is under construction and walls are up. We awarded the revised bid for the first girls' softball field after reduction to get to the budget with the supplement funding provided by the Council. Staff/consultants worked to lower the request for supplemental funding and the Council authorized additional funds. We have signed the contract and work is starting. A STEAP grant application for the second field has been submitted. We expect to hear either way this week. We also need to plan the best uses for the \$500,000 of anticipated State bonding for Miller Richardson park, ADA and equity projects.

Woodbridge Road work was completed. Carver Lane and Loomis Drive paving was started but the contractor has some equipment availability issues so needs to return to finish. Waiting for the pavement contractor later this month. Lakewood Road/drainage work continues.

Public Safety - Police: Chief Eric Peterson hired Tracie Johnson as his new Executive Assistant. She will be retiring from Manchester PD. She did many of the tasks we need. The Chief will start working on Sergeant promotions, and we are also very close on the Captain promotion. We are still looking for part time dispatchers. The CALEA evaluation process is starting for this cycle.

Fire EMS: The replacement fire truck ordered last year is expected in September. Our alternative ambulance replacement is in and being outfitted and getting closer to being brought into service. Work is

underway to develop cost reductions or revenue enhancements to make the ambulance service more financially sustainable. A strategic plan for the development conducted by the department is being finalized which is being shared with the Council.

Finance: The school roof work planned for this summer was substantially completed. The high school roof is now ready for solar which may merge into Microgrid. The possible middle school renovate-as-new concept discussion is postponed until fall to allow the State to provide guidance on the new HVAC grants. The new grants were announced with a December application deadline. We are in good shape since our plans are pretty much done. We will be able to get them out to bid next summer. Some school walls work was squeezed in this summer with the balance planned for Christmas break. We continue to work with the Finance Committee and Town Council on the complicated American Rescue Plan funding planning.

Development Group: We are following up on meeting in with the Town of Manchester on the local agreements required to allow an extension to the Bolton Lakes sewer system. A community funding request for this project was selected by Congressman Courtney and passed by the House. It is now up for consideration in reconciliation with the Senate budget. Manchester feels that a decision timeframe of October is reasonable. We are also paying attention to the treatment plant in hopes of getting Federal Rescue Act funds for a connection to Windham, with a positive first meeting held. We have hired Tighe and Bond to update a sewer facilities plan. The first meeting with DEEP was held to further detail the scope of work for the plan. We believe we will get State funding of 50% of the cost of the study. This study could lead to future Federal Infrastructure funding. We continue to meet with developers and finance groups interested in the Bolton town line area. Construction for the Hytone Farm anaerobic digester project is underway. We have held several meetings to discuss a second stage to assist in food waste management and talks will continue. We helped host a meeting of CROG towns on this subject. PZC's moratorium on cannabis retail sales is being extended to allow the Commission to review our attorney's draft regulations. The affordable housing plan was adopted on July 25. The four-town Economic Vitality group is meeting to work out a regional events calendar and submitted an ARP grant for economic development consulting. We held a meeting to fine tune a proposed logo. Cassidy Hill Vineyards was granted a special permit for events with restrictions and check points. Demolition has started at the site of the new dentist office next to Dollar General. The Economic Development Commission created a subcommittee to focus on the future development at the Bolton town line. New regulations by both towns will be required.

#### HR issues:

We have conducted several negotiations sessions for all Town and School AFSCME groups for pension and now have revised cost estimates which will allow us to re-engage. We started negotiations with the Public Works union. We hired a Town Accountant, Youth Services coordinator, Senior Center Assistant, Executive Assistant to Chief and have a pending offer for Building Official. We lost our finalist for the Planning Assistant/Zoning Enforcement Agent, and will readvertise in a few weeks. In the meantime we increased outside consulting by 2 hours a week. My UCONN MPA intern has started and will help on several personnel issues (evaluations, salary study, job description, BRIC grants), programs/events, and special projects such as a community orientation guide and web site proofing.

#### Other projects:

Work is underway for the housing unit renovations at Orchard Hills under the CDBG grant. A persistent issue of lead in the water re-emerged and is being dealt with.

We received DEEP permission for work at Creaser Park. The back cabin is on a slab, and it will be gutted and converted to a storage building some large entry door. Building permits have been issued and will start in a few weeks. We are seeking pricing from multiple vendors for demo of the front two cabins. The

cabin nearest to the pavilion can be converted into public bathrooms and a small meeting space, and can be rented out with the pavilion to have a better level of service for events like weddings. It may be something to consider if ARPA money is available. The final building will be stabilized while the condition is further assessed, options discussed, and funding allocated.

The Microgrid project continues to be analyzed for financial viability and discussions are underway with a new financing partner. We held several very productive meetings, and are looking to propose ways to reduce the upfront capital expense and try to coordinate the CHS solar into the project to reduce the amount of natural gas used. CT DEEP is still supportive of the project and suggested seeking a BRIC grant ....which we did last year through Community funding programs....but now with DEEP backing we may be more successful.....They are very tough grant applications.

We are scheduling DPW for some work on the Trails grant on the Bear Swamp section of road (not the stream crossing) for late summer. Seeking outside engineering on the steam crossing.