

## **Manager's project update: June 20, 2022 meeting**

Below please find a brief summary and update of ongoing projects.

### **Highlights:**

The Town Council revised the proposed budget again and dates are set for the information meeting on June 20 in the Annex and the vote on June 28 at the two Main Street firehouses.

Both the Library renovation project and South Street at Homestead road projects construction starts are being scheduled.

We are awaiting the background report as the final stage of the process for hiring of our next Police Chief and are still targeting a June 20<sup>th</sup> council ratification consideration.... But it needs to come pronto.

The landfill methane project is under construction and should be finished next week. The transfer station bids came in way over and we are looking at solutions, but will need additional funds. The softball field project is almost out to bid.

On new Police Officer Matthew Burns was sworn in on June 15<sup>th</sup>. This leave us with one vacancy in the department.

### Public Works/Engineering

LOTICIP grants: The Swamp Rd/Rt. 44 project is paved and temporary detour in place. Some delays of signal posts is expected which will have to be addressed, but work is expected to be completed this fall.

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 summer 2022 construction project.

The transfer station bid bids came in on June 3 and were significantly over. We are again trying to value engineer and work with the low bidder for cost savings. The local firm we hired to clear trees to speed the project up completed the work. June 30 is the plan for Softball bids going out with construction starting this summer. We have finally been authorized 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. We are still getting proposals from the two firms on the CRCOG pre-selected list. A reminder that we will need additional funds from CNREF this fiscal year. Construction is hoped for the summer of 2023.

The South Street road reconstruction and sidewalk project near the Homestead has been bid with Spazzarini winning the bid. The contract is signed. We are making some materials changes and deleting some guardrail to get this project back on budget. Trees are already marked and we expect a start soon.

The methane venting project contract for the Miller Richardson football field, funded in part by a STEAP grant, is almost complete. This includes a bid alternate for a recreational softball facility in the rear left corner. Some complications occurred due to underground conditions which have been worked out, but costs are up.

The State preliminary design of the Hop River Road Bridge has reached final design stage. The project will be bid in fall of this year with utility work starting in fall and materials ordered for a spring

construction. We hired GM2 to be our construction inspectors. The construction budget now far exceeds the funds we allocated from the last road bond. This will need to be addressed. After our first pre bid meeting we discussed concerns of needing assurance this will be a one season bridge closure. We have agreed to allow longer work days to assist in reaching that goal.

We need to replace two culverts located on Bunker Hill Road and Parker Bridge Road. We have submitted two grant applications for this year's Local Bridge grant round. The grants, if we are awarded one or both, would pay 50% of construction. Our share will need to be bonded and could be over a million dollars. These two projects are complicated by a pending Andover bridge replacement on Bunker Hill Road scheduled for this summer. We need to coordinate the three projects to assure access to houses and proper traffic detours. We also have to fully replace the Broadway culvert, which will not be eligible for State funds. We will need money for design, and this will also need to be added to a future bonding package. There is a possibility CROG will have a LOTCIP culvert round which covers 100% of construction costs, or the use of ARPA funding.

The DEEP Microgrid project (\$4,000,000 grant) is still at a critical juncture. Tritec withdrew their buyout offer but we are working with another firm with greater experience. Time for the grant is running out.

We have hired B & L to design a new transfer station next to the DPW facility using ARP funds. Bids came in around \$250,000 over budget at the June 3 bid opening. We are working on ways to reduce this through scope changes (Meaning the Town may need to do some work taking away from Road work) and materials substitutions. We are looking at a temporary limited transfer station to allow softball field construction to start.

Juniper Drive and Hickory Drive pavement is complete. Three culverts were replaced on Woodbridge Road and the road was recycled in place and will be paved within a month. We are on to Carver Lane/Loomis to do some drainage prior to paving/reclaiming. Tree work on Nathan Hale Rd, Flanders Rd, Plains Rd, and Nathan Hale Drive is mostly complete with the prior transfer of funds that the Council approved. The Town Hall parking lot was line striped.

Public Safety - Police: I am waiting for the required background checks and believe I will have a Police Chief candidate for ratification consideration at the June 20 Council meeting. We swore in Matthew Burns on June 15<sup>th</sup> and froze action on filling our last vacancy. We have decided to wait for the new Chief to be appointed to make the Sergeant appointments, and need to work on the Captain promotion. We hired a Boating Officer and he has been on the lake. We are also looking for part time dispatchers and an Admin for the Police Chief upon the pending departure of the current employee, who is relocating to another state.

Fire EMS: The replacement fire truck ordered last year is expected in September. Improvements at the Merrow Road substation are complete except some bathroom work. Our alternative ambulance replacement has been ordered, with no date for delivery provided. A state law was passed to direct an increase to state Medicaid ambulance rates - we also have a request pending. The department will coordinate with Coventry Cares on CoventryFest and is working with the Farmers Market on parking.

Finance: We held a successful bond sale on June 1. We were approved to bid the two school roofs and need to determine when the work can be done. We have tabled the possible middle school renovate-as-new concept discussion until fall. We need to evaluate the new school HVAC state grants as an option. Yearend close out is the priority. We continue to work with the Finance Committee and Town Council on the complicated American Rescue Plan funding planning. We are recruiting for a Town Accountant. The previous employee's last day was 6/10, so the office is short-staffed.

Development Group: We received the SustainableCT Silver certification for another three years. We held our first two meetings on the local agreements required to allow an extension to the Bolton Lakes sewer system. A community funding request was selected by Congressman Courtney and forwarded to the House Appropriations Committee for consideration. 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 received proposals for engineering consultants to review the Windham connection and are selecting firms to interview. We believe some state funds will assist in this study. We continue to meet with developers and finance groups interested in the Bolton town line area. Hytone Farm is starting construction for the approved anaerobic digester. We held a meeting to discuss a second stage to assist in food waste management and talks will continue. PZC's moratorium on cannabis retail sales is nearing an end and the subcommittee is forwarding recommendations to the whole commission. A brief extension may be required. The four-town Economic Vitality group is meeting to work out a regional events calendar and submitted an ARP grant for economic development consulting. They are looking at creating a logo. SLR, our consultant on Housing Affordability, has submitted a draft plan and the PZC will be having a public hearing and has requested an extension through July. Cassidy Hill Vineyards has hired both an attorney and an engineer to prepare plans and assist them with our concerns of zoning compliance. They also are working to resolve issues with the State Liquor Control Commission. A proposal for a new dentist office is going to a public hearing this month. The Economic Development Commission created a subcommittee to focus on the future development at the Bolton town line.

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 the Public Works unions. We have an agreement with the Police Union for a one year extension. We are finalizing the Police Chief hiring with an anticipated Council ratification vote on June 20<sup>th</sup>. We have hired a Police officer, Senior Center Assistant, Assessor, Cemetery Sexton, DPW Maintainer I and Boating Officer. Second round Interviews are scheduled for Youth Services and we are advertising for a Town Accountant, and now a Planning Assistant/Zoning Enforcement Agent. I remind folks we do not have an HR person.

Other projects:

DiBlasi Engineering completed final design work on wall repairs, but the contractor is not able to fit it into their summer work schedule. It has been turned over to the schools to decide how to proceed. CHS and GHR roof plans are now authorized to go out to bid and timing of that is also a school decision. A final pre authorization to bid with the State was held this week and yet again some issues arose which are being addressed. Our architect found several companies which have materials and time for some August work. It is a race to see whether this is possible.

Bids were opened for the housing unit renovations at Orchard Hills under the CDBG grant. Human Services has reconvened their Advisory Committee and is trying to reinvigorate the Human Rights Commission and also staff the Community Conversations initiative. They are receiving generous food donations.

We submitted a Creaser Park plan to DEEP for review and are still waiting for approval....we have nudged them. It looks like for phase one we will demo the front two cabins since they are not really savable. The back cabin is on a slab, and it will be gutted and converted to a storage building likely with a garage door. 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.