

Manager's project update: Nov 7, 2022 meeting

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

Highlights:

The new \$500,000 STEAP grant for the second softball field hit a minor speed bump and we were required to contract a historic resources consultant. We have and expect a report in December and are working in hopes of a December bid with a likely early spring start.

Our timeline for the School HVAC grant application is still feasible for the grant deadline of December 1. We expect all price estimates to be refined by end of week. We will need public authorization to spend the funds via a referendum...but will not need to actually borrow any more money.

Have finalists for positions of Planning Technician/Zoning Enforcement Officer, and Maintainer-Custodian. Interviews are scheduled for next week.

The girls' softball field construction has finished for the season.

The new transfer station is open and electricity installed waiting for scale to be hooked up.

Major road progress: the Lakewood neighborhood project reached the final paving stage and we are scheduled for completion this month. Swamp/44 Lotcip project is substantially complete with some landscaping and fine tuning underway. South St/Homestead Lotcip project is paved with backfilling/seeding and stone dust sidewalk from South to Homestead planned for this month.

Hop River Road Bridge replacement bids were opened and is being awarded.

Two preliminary grants to replace Depot Road and Brigham Hill bridges over the Willimantic River were submitted for consideration for a 100% grant.

Public Works/Engineering

LOTICIP grants: The Swamp Rd/Rt. 44 project paving is complete. Landscaping continues. The new Town of Coventry welcome sign is scheduled for installation next week. Meeting with State for signal transfer set for end of month.

Good progress continues on Lakewood area roads. Drainage is complete and paving started. We hope that it will be done by end of November.

The Depot Rd dam water gate has been repaired and the pond is filled.

Todd Penney will be able to get back to work on getting the plans and specs for the Community Connectivity grant for sidewalks on Main Street from Hemlock Point Lane to approximately Cheney Lane. A spring 2023 construction is now planned.

We are expecting proposals this month for design services for the LOTICIP grant for the intersection of Swamp and South, including the South Street curves, and a dip in Swamp Road. Design completion is expected in 2023 and construction likely in 2024. The engineering expense will come from the savings from the Hop River Bridge match. A public involvement meeting is anticipated in February.

The South Street road reconstruction and sidewalk project near the Homestead is approaching completion. The paving is complete and backfilling along the new sidewalk is expected soon. A stone dust sidewalk from South Street to the Market Field is scheduled for this month. We are extending the sidewalk to the Strong Porter Museum with some savings in the local match for Hop River Bridge. Base paving is completed and final paving expected over the next several weeks. Todd found an alternative sidewalk treatment which is more historically appropriate and is less expensive than the option we were looking at, and it 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, and grass is finally growing but due to the lack of rain this summer it will need to be over seeded in the spring.

The State-designed Hop River Road Bridge replacement bids were opened Oct 27th with 10 bidders. The low bid has been verified and is in the process of being awarded. Bids were within \$40 thousand of our engineer's estimate. The project will start with utility work over the winter with materials ordered for spring construction. GM2 will be our construction inspector. The State will be using Federal funds to pay 100% of the project costs including inspection.

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 - promised in September, but don't know the current status. 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 and found a new 100% rural minor connector grant which we will submit to "widen" the road for bikes and pedestrians which would require culvert work too.

We received a report from Jacobson Engineering on a study of the 16 larger Town bridges. Two appear to qualify for the 100% funding level; Depot Road and Brigham Hill (both over the Willimantic River). The Council gave us funds to proceed with applications. We have submitted both pre-applications. Brigham Hill is \$5.2 Million and Depot Road is 7.4 Million.

We continue to have productive meetings 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 the CHS roof and right-sizing the CHP units. We are now exploring some Federal FEMA BRIC money and have started discussions with the cognizant State agency and Sen. Murphy's office. A local planning meeting with Greenskies, the company considering acquiring the Microgrid project, is being scheduled.

The new transfer station is open. Not everything is fully completed. The scale should be operational next week. Construction of the first girls' softball field went fast. Top soil has been stock piled for spring spreading and seeding to allow fencing and possible irrigation to be installed. The STEAP grant application for the second softball field paperwork arrived and we are processing most of it to get approval to bid in November. The state historical preservation office is requiring a site evaluation for Native American artifacts. While some have been located in the area (treatment plant area) we think that the past use as a gravel pit makes it highly unlikely anything will be found. We hope the study will be completed to allow a December bid for spring construction. We also need to plan the best uses for the \$500,000 of anticipated State bonding for Miller Richardson park, ADA and equity projects. The Recreation Commission will be spearheading this grant.

The Lakewood neighborhood road and drainage work is complete. Milling and paving all the side roads is scheduled for next week and we are waiting for a date for Lakewood. South Street reclamation from the Hale Homestead to South River Road is scheduled for next Wednesday. We completed a cross over pipe replacement ahead of this planned work.

Public Safety - Police: The Chief is nearing a decision on the promotion of one Sergeant. We hired two part time dispatchers to get staffing levels back up. The CALEA evaluation process for this year is complete so we are set for now.

Fire EMS: The replacement fire truck ordered last year is behind schedule and an inspection trip is now planned for mid-December with delivery likely in January. Work continues to develop cost reductions or revenue enhancements to make the ambulance service more financially sustainable. A strategic plan conducted by the department was adopted and committees are being set up for implementation.

Finance: The school roof work planned for this summer was substantially completed. The school fire alarm work is complete. The high school roof is now ready for solar which may merge into the Microgrid project. The possible middle school renovate-as-new concept discussion was postponed to allow the State to provide guidance on the new HVAC grants. The new grants were announced with a December 1 application deadline. We are in good shape since our plans are pretty much done. We need to discuss the funding requirements to submit this grant. 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. The annual audit started.

Development Group: We are following up on meeting with the Town of Manchester on the local agreements required to allow an extension to the Bolton Lakes sewer system. The Bolton Lakes sewer authority discussed it favorably last month. 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. 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 with a tour planned for later this month for stakeholders. We have held several meetings to discuss a second stage to assist in food waste management and talks will continue. PZC's moratorium on cannabis retail sales was extended to allow the Commission to review our attorney's draft regulations. The four-town Economic Vitality group is meeting to work out a regional events calendar and submitted an ARP grant for economic development consulting. A new logo was selected. Construction has started for the new dentist's 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. The house at Caprilands has a buyer with relocation and reconstruction in New York. Disassembly has started.

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 are running out of time for negotiations with the Public Works union. We are at the second interview stage for a Planning Technician/Zoning Enforcement Officer, and Maintainer/Custodian. Will be screening applications for Lead Mechanic. Interviewing some Part time Senior Center Assistant candidates, started recruiting for a part time Engineering Tech. We will also be starting looking for a Project Manager soon. My UCONN MPA intern is helping on several personnel issues (evaluations, salary study, and job descriptions), programs/events, and special projects such as a community orientation guide, web site proofing, BRIC grants and assisting on a crowdfunding project through the Sustainability program to make some improvements to the band shell and nearby area. The Lion's Club will assist in getting the number of donors to match the \$7,500 grant.

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 work is complete. It was gutted and converted to a storage building with a large entry door. 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 provide 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. Greenskies is coming out for a site visit and we need pricing for the BRIC grant application. We held several very productive meetings, and are looking to propose ways to reduce the upfront capital expense and are trying 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 grantwhich 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) this fall. Seeking outside engineering on the steam crossing. The improvements to the trails near Laidlaw Park are almost complete with volunteer labor from the Protected Spaces Stewardship group and some funds from the Health District.

Had a meeting with the Library contractor to push them along since they are behind schedule.