

Manager's project update: October 19, 2020 meeting

Below please find a brief summary and update of on-going projects. Highlights:

- We expect to hear on the CDBG grant for Orchard Hills and STEAP grant very soon.
- The reconstruction of the Northfield subdivision roads should be complete this month.

Public Works/Engineering

- 1) Lotcip grants: CDM is continuing minor signal designs to comply with State changes. We are working in earnest on reaching agreements in obtaining the required easements, and the title searches are complete. Construction is slated for April 2021 to August 2021. We are concerned that the lead times on the signal poles are up to 8 months.
- 2) Folly Lane Bridge has started, and the bridge spans are actually made but the abutments aren't ready. We still believe a December completion is on track. We continue to work on the load rating of Pucker Street Bridge. What we believe are final design calculations that meet code have been forwarded back to CTDOT from their consulting engineers. We are waiting for final word. We will then close that grant out.
- 3) Northfields final phase binder paving was completed last week. Curbing, with back filling and seeding is planned for the week of Oct. 19th. All areas will get final paving in late October. Paving of end of Pine Lake Shores Drive, and shimming on Nathan Hale Rd, will be done while the paving crew is in Town. Line striping should happen soon and a couple of crosswalks redone. Crack sealing was completed. This will pretty much finish up the summer roads for this season.
- 4) Town tree work continues and we are working well with Eversource to get them to take down trees. We are already using up this year's tree money. We will try for some FEMA funds now that our county has qualified from the recent storm event.
- 5) We have preliminary design work completed for the Community Connectivity grant for sidewalks on Main from Hemlock Point Lane to approximately Winterberry Lane. We still need to meet with a handful of other property owners. This will slip to a spring project. We hope to have a public involvement meeting in a few months.
- 6) The softball committee has prioritized the WTTP parcel as their preferred location. We received the plans, which includes additional design work to look at the whole parcel for a future river access, other community uses and to fine-tune pricing. I had a follow up meeting with the abutter concerning access rights. The committee went

on a field visit and is almost ready to come back to the Council with a request to proceed to a referendum. The Recreation Commission reviewed the park master plan.

- 7) Todd Penney submitted a revised plan for the crosswalk light on Main at Ripley Hill and received a response requesting a couple minor tweaks. Todd has resubmitted and once again we wait.
- 8) Laidlaw Park deep hole tests were conducted and look good. A septic system using the toilet trailer, which we acquired through State surplus, should be possible to install. Permits to allow the existing irrigation well to be used for the bathrooms were submitted to the State Department of Public Health on June 6th. We are in a slow-moving well permit process.
- 9) LOCIP-funded field irrigation of the Miller Richardson baseball infield on the major league field is complete, waiting for the town to have time to move and set up the water tank. It is moving up the list and we hope to get the tank in place over the next couple of weeks so it can be ready for spring.
- 10) The Public Works and Recreation Department has finished the 9-hole disc golf course at Creaser Park. A couple issues like benches and three more signs are in progress. So far it has been well received. We are getting ready to use Locip funds to fix one of the cabins. It is likely two will need to be torn down if the State allows. They have rotten floors inside.
- 11) We have been awarded a LOTCIP grant for the intersection of Swamp and South including the South Street curves, and a dip in Swamp Road. We will need to hire an engineering firm and appropriate funds for that task. We are waiting on the formal award letter. Construction in summer of 2022.
- 12) We have the second submittal for the South Street road reconstruction and sidewalks near the Homestead. We should planning a public information meeting for November 23 in conjunction with a Planning and Zoning Commission meeting to also address the scenic road impacts on the project.
- 13) To repair the turf issue at the Miller Richardson football field we applied for a STEAP grant based on Anchor Engineering's report. We have State permits and have asked Anchor Engineering to prepare bid specs pending the now Oct 15 grant announcement. I expect the bid specs this week. Anchor Engineering has recommended some vent piping be installed and the clay cap in the damaged areas be repaired. COVRRRA funds will be required to implement corrective action to provide a venting system. It will be done in a manner to enhance the playing fields. The budget would not allow for including an all-purpose softball field in the base bid, but we can add it as an alternative.

Grants

1) The DEEP Microgrid project (\$4,000,000 grant) continues to move forward. We are still a bit away from a point where pricing can be finalized. All parties will then need to reach an agreement for the power purchase. We continue our weekly conference calls with all parties. A virtual net metering application for the two school solar arrays was accepted as complete and is in the queue. It is likely that we will need to wait until more projects are authorized by the State. A PURA application was accepted to allow a different metering system to have all buildings under a main meter with sub meters for each building. A technical review hearing was held on July 1 and follow-up responses are still underway. We are looking at options that could transfer some capital expenses to Eversource and lower project costs. We received a 90-day extension to the process and tried to get clarifying legislative relief. Revised design plans have been submitted to DEEP for review and we await comment. The team met with the Housing Authority Board this week to go through tenant impacts. It seemed to be a productive meeting.

2) Public Safety:

Police: Both new cruisers have been ordered (one from last fiscal year and one this year) and are not expected until January. We are actively training new dispatchers and searching for two police officers. This week we conducted another round of 9 interviews and will keep the screening process going for the January/February class. We are also looking for one recently retired officer or transferring officer since we are running thin. One of the old cruisers will be deployed at DPW to free up the red Suburban which can be reassigned to Fire Police.

Fire EMS: We continue working on rebranding issues for Department 18. Signs changes are ordered and are due very soon. The Association contracts are now under review for submission to the Town Attorney. The refurbishment of the engine tanker is now underway and on schedule but will be out of service for at least two more months. We have ordered the replacement of the small rescue truck, maybe due by Thanksgiving. The old truck may be converted to a bush truck to replace the current vehicle which is having electrical problems. Door locks have been ordered and will coordinate with the Town Hall system, and the IT issues for them have been resolved. Work by the transition committee continues with plans for a Council update on October 19th on incentive plans for consideration in the upcoming budget process.

Finance: We have notified taxpayers that the lower interest period is up. Finance asked for the lost income impact of that offering. The audit has started and will be virtual and remote this year. We are now ready for them. FEMA and State forms are taking up time from other projects. The banking RFP will be restarted. New door locks are mostly complete, but we are adding two key pads (annex and backdoor) for ease of outside users. We will need to look at camera upgrades next year. We are making progress with the grant final reimbursement for Safe Routes to School, and we are working on closing out the Lake Gate grant and Pucker Street Bridge grants too. Looking into applying for the GFOA budget award this year. The office has hired a company for cyber security training and review.

Development group: EDC continues working on follow up to several business visits and outreach to landowners and interested developers. Several Nichols College interns are back working with new businesses to help with marketing, social media and financial planning. We continue to prepare additional information to address CT DEEP's requests on the connection to the Bolton Lakes sewer system. CERC (now AdvanceCT) has given us the final draft of the regional Econ-dev multi town study. The four towns are kicking off the action plan and my UCONN intern will be helping on this. Caprilands was approved for sale and seems to be making progress on a new future. Dollar General is under construction on Rt. 44 across from CVS and plans to be open by Christmas. We are still waiting on word of a possible medical building next door to this site, but it does not look likely. COVID financial impacts may put this on a back burner, but the former office may come back on the market with a financial business. The former Muldoon's is being occupied by Nathan Hale Farm and Feed. Lizzy's catering will be there for a few months for breakfast and lunch. CLCC have opened their farm stand and will start with weekend hours. They are also are looking at going back to Planning and Zoning for plan changes to reduce construction costs and create a more village-style complex or small hamlets.

Staff has met with DEEP and the landowner on Woodbridge Road to attempt to resolve the ongoing fishing easement conflict. Hull Forestry has submitted a proposal for forestry management of several of the Nathan Hale Greenway (Rt. 6 parcel). It is being reviewed. This should bring in limited funding for signage and amenities, but not really trail development. A skid road, which would allow emergency access, is all that is anticipated. But that is not far from our well-worn path goal. At this point Bolton will also participate and Andover will survey and forest but using a different approach.

We interviewed for the ZEO position and have a new employee starting on October 19.

The Annual Lake Forum is being scheduled as a Zoom meeting this fall. The final Hydrilla treatment was conducted. We now await the final lake survey

HR issues:

Personnel rules appendices are being working on with the draft of an updated Affirmative Action plan completed by our UCONN intern. We have started negotiations with the Town Hall and completed them with the Supervisors unions for July 1, 2020. We will start with all Afscme groups for pension. We have hired a Planning Tech/ZEO who will start Oct. 19. We are recruiting for a Public Works Director and extended the recruitment until November 9. Several other positions are also in process, including the part time Senior Center program position as we move toward reopening slowly. A public works vacancy is also anticipated with the resignation of a Mechanic I. We are in internal testing this week. We recruited for the part time position in the Town Clerk's office and decided to wait until January since we brought back Susan Cyr to help out, and have another part time summer help working too.

These are being covered by grants. We are starting the annual health insurance sign-up. Many issues on COVID-19 leave and travel policies are being digested and information distributed.

Other projects:

We continue to work with CRCOG and neighboring towns on the crumbling concrete foundation issue. We now have over 154 households tested under the CRCOG program.

The Walls Committee met and decided to ask for proposals from DiBlasi Engineering to move on to the smaller areas of the complex and look for solutions. This appears more complicated than we envisioned. More testing may be the first step. The School Building Committee has approval for the fire door projects, and the bid came in on budget and was awarded. We awaited scheduling. The HVAC RFP bids were received, evaluated, and rejected due to pending changes in the codes due to COVID. We have awarded bids for just the middle school gym units and CHS front office controls to be replaced. There is an 8-week order time for the units. We will be going out for HVAC design services for the balance of the project. The Special Town Meeting was held on 8/27 and a vote scheduled for 11/3 for two questions: 1) school roofs and alarms, and 2) library renovations. We will start the search for an architect for school roofs so if it is approved we can get moving.

The Stewart parcel agreement was also approved, so after a bit of final survey work, due within a week, we can close that deal.

Our new Town Hall sign should is mostly installed. It will provide drive-by information on important issues. Public Works has ordered the radio replacements for the fleet and it should be operational by December 15th. We have awarded roof replacement for the Community Center to a Vernon firm. Evaluating pricing to fix up one building at Camp Creaser under LOCIP. Staff spent a lot of time with the installer of the new video broadcast equipment. It seems to be working.