

Manager's project update: November 16, 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 grant very soon. The STEAP grant for the landfill methane venting and recreational improvements was approved and we await a contract from CT DEEP before it is bid.
- The reconstruction of the Northfield subdivision roads should be complete this month. At this point the curbing backfill is complete with reseeding planned for spring. The Contractor is now scheduled to complete paving on November 11.
- The recount on the library vote is complete and both questions passed.
- The close out documents are almost complete for the Stewart property acquisition and we are closing in on a closing.
- The Microgrid project PURA hearing is still in process but the State DEEP and Office of Consumer Counsel is now on record as being opposed, so we are amending our settlement agreement to remove a request to have Eversource subsidize the process and make it clear the project will not violate their franchise by having a private vendor cross the road with power...it will be the Town as allowed by State statutes.
- Public information meetings are set up for the South Street reconstruction under the LOTCIP program November 23 at 7:00 and the Hop River Road Bridge replacement for December 15th at 7:00.

Public Works/Engineering

- 1) LOTCIP grants: CDM has completed the minor signal designs to comply with State changes. CRCOG will be reviewing the 90% plan submissions and we are continuing to work on finalizing agreements in obtaining the required easements. Construction is slated for April 2021 to August 2021.
- 2) Folly Lane Bridge is still on schedule with the deck beams installed. We still believe a December completion is on track. We continue to work on the load rating of Pucker Street Bridge and await a State decision. We will then close that grant out. We also are waiting for feedback on closing out the Safe Routes to School project.
- 3) The Northfields final paving needs one more day of good weather to complete (Nov 11 targeted). Back filling of curb and seeding is complete. Paving of the end of Pine Lake Shores Drive, and shimming on Nathan Hale Rd, is hoped to also be done while the paving crew is in Town. Crosswalks signage on Lake Street is now done. This will pretty much finish up the summer roads for this season.

- 4) 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. Todd Penney is finally able to get back to this project.
- 5) The softball committee is reconsidering the WTTP parcel as their preferred location. They held a Zoom meeting with the full WPCA staff and leadership and have concerns about odor and what happens if the plant expands. I don't believe that will ever be an option. The draft concept plans will be tweaked to add additional distance to the plant. The committee may want to consider other options which do not include the landfill parcel. Julie is suggesting they re-start a dialogue with the Finance Committee at their December meeting. Federal Grants are in process of being given to the States for disbursement at a 60% funding level. Wendy Rubin is monitoring and Lisa Conant has offered to assist in a grant application when they become available.
- 6) Todd Penney submitted a revised plan for the crosswalk light on Main at Ripley Hill, and once again we wait a decision from CTDOT. We have heard they have reached a decision and we await hearing.
- 7) 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.
- 8) 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 still hope to get the tank in place over the next couple of weeks so it can be ready for spring.
- 9) The Public Works and Recreation Departments finished the 9-hole disc golf course at Creaser Park. The benches and trash basket are in and the last three hole 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. I have met with the contractor to tweak the scope of work. I am waiting for revised pricing.
- 10) 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.

- 11) We have the 90 percent design submittal for the South Street road reconstruction and sidewalks near the Homestead. We are 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. CRCOG is also reviewing the plans.
- 12) To repair the turf issue at the Miller Richardson football field we have been awarded a STEAP grant based on Anchor Engineering's report. We have State permits and have Anchor Engineering's bid specs, but we are waiting for a contract with CT DEEP for the grant and any mandatory language required in the bid. 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. I asked about the option of including irrigation lines for the future and since they are plowed in it is not a real cost saving.
- 13) The State is looking at curve warning signs changes on State Roads. Due to the concerns raised after the installation on Town roads, we are asking for a public information meeting, which will likely be in January.
- 14) The State design of the Hop River Road Bridge is almost complete with a few other State agency reviews needed. A public information is being planned for December 15. It will then go into final design and in spring seek permits over the summer, and bids late fall of 2021 for summer 2022 construction.
- 15) We are looking at a couple of culverts for the Local Bridge grant round. We have two expensive culverts on Bunker Hill and Parker Bridge road, which are in our CIP budget. This grant pays 50%.

Grants

- 1) The DEEP Microgrid project (\$4,000,000 grant) continues to move forward. It has been challenging to work with the various State bureaucracies and explain the necessary cost points all parties need to meet. 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. We will need to wait until more projects are authorized by the State since the annual cap was reached. 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 giving up on options that would transfer some capital expenses to Eversource and lower project costs. We received a 90-day extension to the process and are running out of time. Revised design plans have been submitted to DEEP for review and we await comment.

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 have made conditional offers to two police officers. One will start classes in January. The other is a police officer from another State and we will need to see what State-required training he will need, but he can start and needs to fulfill those requirements within a year. One of the old cruisers will be deployed at DPW to free up the red Suburban, which can be reassigned to Fire Police. In-car computer upgrades and server upgrades are underway.

Fire EMS: We continue working on rebranding issues for Department 18. Signs are installed on the buildings. 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 it will be out of service for at least one more month. We have ordered the replacement of the small rescue truck, which may be complete by Thanksgiving. The old truck may be converted to a bush truck to replace the current vehicle, which is having electrical problems. New firehouse door locks are installed and will now coordinate with the Town Hall system. Work by the transition committee is pretty much completed, but they will remain in place to serve the fire team and Council. The Council will consider recommendations in the upcoming budget process.

Finance: The audit has started and is well toward completion. FEMA and State grants have been submitted and awarded for expenses through June 30. 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 which is now underway with monthly online lessons for employees.

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. It has been suggested that we have an unveiling of the web sites as a Zoom event. We are a couple weeks away from that being ready. We continue to prepare additional information to address CT DEEP's requests on the connection to the Bolton Lakes sewer system. Jacobson's engineering report is due this week. 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 the closing should occur this month. Dollar General is under construction on Rt. 44 across from CVS and had planned to be open by Christmas, but has a permit issue with the State on their well, which has slowed the progress. A possible medical building next door to this site 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 has started 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). We are going on a walk this week to review. 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.

The Annual Lake Forum is being scheduled as a Zoom meeting later this fall or early winter. We now await the final lake survey results to conclude the report.

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 implemented the contract with the Town Hall Union and are implementing insurance changes with non-union and the Supervisors unions for Jan, 1, 2021. We will start with all Town and School AFSCME groups for pension. We are recruiting for a Public Works Director and extended the recruitment until November 9. Several other positions are also in process. The part time Senior Center program person has been hired. Tiffany Lazur will be starting soon as we move toward reopening slowly. A public works vacancy is also anticipated with the resignation of a Mechanic I. We withdrew the vacancy announcement and may re-post at a later date for a lower grade Mechanic's Helper for a few years to save some money. We recruited for the part time position in the Town Clerk's office and decided to wait until January. 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:

Staff has spent a lot of time on the elections. Preparing for a COVID-safe experience has involved a lot of planning, purchasing and IT support. We had a high turnout and the two borrowing questions passed.

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 over Christmas vacation is planned for the classrooms and

the Media center in spring. This may allow some summer corrective work. The School Building Committee has approved bids for the fire door projects, and we await scheduling the installation. The recent 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 HVAC units and CHS front office controls to be replaced. There is an 8-week order time for the HVAC 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 the vote took place on 11/3 for two questions: 1) school roofs and alarms, and 2) library renovations. Since the roofs were approved we will go for architects. On the Library we need to reach out for a design build firm.

The Stewart parcel agreement was also approved, the survey work is complete, and closing paperwork is being prepared. It is scheduled for Friday the 13th or Monday the 23rd.

Our new Town Hall sign is installed and will be used as part of our communications plan. It may qualify for CARE act funds. A side note is you would be stunned at the number of visitors who have told us they drive by the Town Hall thinking it is part of the schools. I know it has a name up by the roof, but drivers don't look up that high. 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. We are evaluating pricing to fix up one building at Camp Creaser under LOCIP.