

## Manager's project update: June 21, 2021 meeting

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

- Various bills at printer reflecting revised tax rate. Continue to monitor American Rescue Plan funding use. Working on year end close out.
- Returned grant documents for the 1.5 million dollar Orchard Hills renovation project and waiting for authorization to get the project out to bid this summer.
- DPW is working on roadside mowing and catch basin cleaning. Other crews continue prep work for summer roads. The end of North Farm Rd is curbed, Highmeadow is curbed and backfilled, Ridgebrook is being curbed. We are scheduling the finish paving course. Almost ready for the Train recycling for Carpenter, Trowbridge and South River and trying to get it scheduled for early August.
- A successful site visit at the Library was held with the State Historic Preservation Office and revised plans resubmitted. We expect approval on June 18<sup>th</sup> and expect full contract documents now by August. The project is likely to be bid out late fall/early winter. Wetlands approval is set for next week for the parking lot tweak to add 8 spaces in the regulated area.
- On Friday June 25, Human Services will have a sixth drive-through food distribution event in the Town Hall driveway loop. This may be the last one since numbers are dropping. Summer school food distribution has started up.
- We continue to evaluate our COVID response and are also working with our Health District and Region on vaccination plans for younger aged folks. Town Hall is fully reopened, Senior Center and Senior Rides are almost ready.
- Swamp/Rt. 44 intersection final plans are edging closer to bidding. We are waiting for the final letter to proceed. Bid documents can then be finalized with a July bid opening and August contract start. A long production delay for the traffic signal poles is anticipated, which will require that portion of the project to lag over into spring of 2022.
- The State replacement of the culvert crossing RT 44 in front of Highland Park Market is underway.
- The forestry management project on drier sections of the former Route 6 corridor in the northern section of town is on-going. No complaints or non-compliance issues so far.
- Congressman Courtney accepted our Community Funding project for the extension of the Main Street Sidewalk from Daly Road to Cheney Lane. It was approved by

the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. So now we wait for the Federal Budget process which is scheduled to be in place by Oct. 1.

- I reformatted the Microgrid submission for Sen. Murphy's consideration which was submitted this week.
- We have hired a new Recreation Director who will start on July 19<sup>th</sup>.

### Public Works/Engineering

- 1) LOTCIP grants: The Swamp Rd/Rt. 44 intersection project plans are almost ready for bid. We await final authorization. The project is currently planned to be bid out in July with construction starting in August and a spring 2022 completion.
- 2) We continue to work on the load rating of Pucker Street Bridge. The revised recalculations were submitted, and we again await CTDOT's review.
- 3) Todd Penney has held very positive project information meetings with abutting property owners on the preliminary design work completed for the Community Connectivity grant for sidewalks on Main from Hemlock Point Lane to approximately Cheney Lane. We believe current funding will only get us as far as Winterberry Lane. This is slipping to a spring project. We submitted a Federal grant request to get the sidewalk extended to Daly Road. The project was selected by Congressman Courtney and submitted and accepted by the Transportation Committee for consideration. Likely will not hear a final decision until October.
- 4) The girls' softball field committee has continued to meet with Finance and is now moving back to the full Council. Their preference remains the former gravel pit site, vs. the former landfill site. Side-by-side cost comparisons for the locations, and one or two initial fields, and core facilities versus a fully built out facility were prepared and amended. Federal grants seem to be targeted for urban areas only. Still waiting on the STEAP grant paperwork.
- 5) LOCIP-funded field irrigation of the Miller Richardson baseball infield on the major league field is complete. The water tank has been moved and installed and we are chasing the contractor to finish the installation. He was here one day so getting closer.
- 6) We have decided that the cabin we were going to fix is too far gone and have asked to have our deposit returned. Working on a different plan and may seek to demolish several of them instead.
- 7) We are still waiting for authorization to proceed on the LOTCIP grant for the intersection of Swamp and South, including the South Street curves, and a dip in Swamp Road. Construction is hoped for the summer of 2023. The Council has funded a portion of the design fees. We have split the project into two phases:

preliminary and bidding/construction to fund over two fiscal years. It is expected to be a significant amount since this is a \$3,000,000 grant.

- 8) We have submitted the 90 percent design for CRCOG review on the South Street road reconstruction and sidewalks near the Homestead. Bidding has slipped to winter with a spring construction start.
- 9) To repair the turf issue at the Miller Richardson football field, we were awarded a STEAP grant based on Anchor Engineering's report. We have State permits and have Anchor Engineering's bid specs, but we are still waiting for a contract with CT DEEP for the grant and any mandatory language required in the bid. Understand the draft contract is in the Attorney General's office. Now fall construction.
- 10) The State preliminary design of the Hop River Road Bridge is complete. The project will now go into final design and in summer seek permits, with bids in late fall of 2021 for summer 2022 construction. The State hired Benech Engineering for the final bridge design and permitting.
- 11) We are looking at a couple of culverts for the next Local Bridge grant round in fall. We have two expensive culverts in need of repair on Bunker Hill and Parker Bridge Road, which are in our CIP budget. This grant will pay 50% of construction. We hired Jacobson Engineering for concept plans and applications for an anticipated fall grant round. Funds for these plans are coming from Town Aid for Roads. Construction may be included in a future road bond. Preliminary plans due in July.
- 12) The DEEP Microgrid project (\$4,000,000 grant) continues to move forward. We received the necessary PURA approvals and had a good meeting with the Office of Consumer Counsel as required, and DEEP approved the revised plans. They also now want to engage in a review of pricing. We are still a bit away from a point where pricing can be finalized, but project financing seems very viable. A virtual net metering application for the two school solar arrays was accepted as complete, and is in the queue with hopes of award soon. The Town will need to have ownership interest in at least the power line crossing Route 31. We submitted a Community Funding grant request to Sen. Murphy's office. A FEMA BRIC grant round is coming up in a few months so we can also try that option.
- 13) In a surprise development, we learned that the State has found money to replace the Hop River Trail Bridge over the Hop River in the vicinity of Kings Road. Funds will be available this spring, with a year to be spent on design and permitting. Construction is envisioned starting in 2022 and completion in 2024. There is no Town funding or oversight of this project. We may obtain sections of cast concrete culverts currently under Flanders River Road for repurposing.
- 14) CTDOT's replacement of the culvert going under Rt. 44 in front of Meadowbrook Plaza is underway. The road will be widened to allow two lanes of traffic during much of the

construction. We were able to convince them to include stone facing on the parking lot side of the outlet structure. The project has started and should be complete by October. The project office is where Swiss Cleaners was.

Public Safety: Police: The department is working on the changes required by the Police Accountability Act. Chief Palmer has put together a tracking plan including expenses. Officer Provost has completed field training and is on the street. Officer Santiago will be completing the Academy in July 23rd. We again recruited trained officers and interviewed six candidates last week, and are vetting three for further consideration. We ordered a leftover 2021 cruiser for a July delivery. Justice Assistance Grants are again available since the ban on “Sanctuary States” has been removed. Final proposals for installation of the camera system for the conference room are being obtained and pricing for the Sergeant’s exam encumbered.

Fire EMS: The revised Fire Association contract with CVFA has been signed. North Coventry is considering dissolving the Association instead, and we expect a letter to the Council to address some important legacy issues related to this. Work by the transition committee is complete and they are asking to be dismissed. I have ratified the appointments of Deputy Chiefs and Chief Meyers is scheduling a swearing in ceremony for June 30 at Patriots Park at 6:00 PM.

Finance: The Budget passed so we are getting tax bills out at the revised mil rate. Top priority is end of fiscal year matters. We will continue to work with Munistat to develop a borrowing schedule which may be delayed since school roof replacement has been pushed back a season. We now have pricing for ventilation at the high and middle school too. We will also consider possible refinancing at the same time. We have made significant progress with the grant final reimbursement for Safe Routes to Schools. FEMA grant work has been submitted. We will be getting more than expected, and President Biden retroactively waived the 25% match. Now on to very complicated American Rescue Plan funding planning, and insurance renewals.

Development group: The Governor has signed the bill to authorize the proposed connection to the Bolton Lakes sewer system. We also continue to also pursue formal DEEP approval and submitted additional information last week. It appears that we will have a dual track approach of finishing the process this month. The four-town Economic Vitality group is meeting to work out a regional events calendar. The property next door to Dollar General is again under option but we do not know by whom. Hytone Farm had a positive discussion with the Planning and Zoning Commission, and are meeting with the Wetlands Commission. The PZC Commission is working on any necessary regulation changes and permitting for their digester project.

Reid’s has been leased to an out-of-town restaurant owner, but no permits have been pulled. They are now in the process of putting together plans. The new tenants used to run a restaurant named Reverie in Branford CT. <https://www.reveriekitchen.com/>. We had discussions with the owner of Meadowbrook Plaza who has plans for some reshuffling, but

may end up looking for a new tenant or two. Final environmental testing has been completed at the former Coventry Antiques site, which came back as clean. This will help market that parcel. In exciting news, Sanborn Garage has a purchase agreement from a family-owned Japanese car repair and sales company. ZBA has authorized the repairer's license. Commercial land is now on the market on Woodland Road near Lake Street. The house next door to the School Admin Building is supposed to be scheduled for demolition, which will make it more marketable. We are also working with Tardiff Farms on Flanders Road to reopen the farm stand/landscaping center which was there. They have minor permit issues to resolve.

Hull Forestry continues the forestry management project in several sections of the Nathan Hale Greenway (Rt. 6 parcel). This should bring in limited funding for signage and minor amenities, but no trail development beyond the skid road, which would allow emergency access. Hull Forestry has prepared a brochure about forestry management similar to one they used with a recent Joshua Trust project. No calls or complaints so far.

We are gearing up for the summer Hydrilla treatment this month starting with a survey in a few weeks and treatment in early July. We have released an online version of the Watershed Health Pledge to the community, and have a window cling decal for those who complete it. We will push this for Lake Month.

The Senior Housing task force has finished first draft of a report with a final draft expected soon. We finally received the Orchard Hills grant and are waiting for permission to bid.

Farmers' Market is open and things seem to be going well.

#### HR issues:

Personnel rules appendices are still being worked on. Exit interview surveys were sent out to former employees back to 2019. We have conducted several negotiations sessions for all Town and School AFSCME groups for pension and now have cost estimates. Our new DPW Maintainer I employee is on board and fitting in well. I have hired Lesley Munshower as our next Recreation Director. She starts on July 19<sup>th</sup>. We are recruiting for the part time position in the Town Clerk's office with reduced hours per the budget, the part time transfer station operator, and our part time Senior Center Assistant took a full time job elsewhere so that position is also posted. We have hired a part time senior van driver. Many issues on COVID-19 leave, new State laws are being digested and information distributed.

#### Other projects:

DiBlasi Engineering is working on corrective plans with the results of the recently scanned CHS walls. Additional rebar was found in some locations. Engineering is underway for some summer reinforcement in the media center and science wing. The School Building Committee has approved bids for the fire door projects with installation delayed until summer.

ICDS, the HVAC engineering firm selected for the high school/middle school project will be meeting with the school building committee soon. Cost estimates came in dramatically higher than expected. Due to new COVID air standards, we will not have enough money unless grants become available. We have awarded bids for the middle school gym HVAC units and CHS front office controls to be replaced. The units were backordered and have arrived but won't be installed until summer.

Quisenberry was selected as the architect for school roofs. They are recommending that we stop pushing ahead with both projects this year since it will not be likely to get good bids for this summer, and instead seek late fall bids for next summer. Pricing is also exceeding our funding due to rapid product price increases. The high school roof appears to be much more expensive than anticipated due to other issues such as pitch, chimney removal, drainage and square footage, as well as a major cost increase per square foot. Budget estimates are significantly higher and we will need to consider next steps.

It appears that additional bonding will be required for both projects and we will need to consider rapid action in July to allow a November vote.

The State paperwork for the Library was received and has been submitted. The Committee has accepted a scope of work from Ken Best of DRA. We expect State Historic Preservation Office approval this week. In related good news, the Library did get a 100% grant to fund the engineering for the joist replacements. Additionally they obtained some Rescue Act money for furnishings.

We are still seeking permission to use some CDBG re-spending funds to install touchless bathrooms at the Senior Center and Community buildings at Orchard Hills. We also are looking at ADA funds for our three museums in Town.

We submitted a federal Community Funding Projects grant for consideration for the Microgrid road crossing for consideration with Senator Murphy's office.