

Manager's project update: July 19, 2021 meeting

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

- Storm Elsa dumped a lot of water on us with some significant impact. We had road damage on Trowbridge, Wrights Mill, Monument Hill, and many dirt roads. A culvert on Broadway is being repaired. The Lake is very high and gate wide open. Several old building in the village had some water intrusion from the mill stream.
- Coventry Microgrid has found a financial partner to move the project forward. The Town and Housing Authority are being asked to show commitment to the project to Tri Tech by signing a non-binding terms sheet which will give them the comfort to engage with (and pay) Eversource to design and cost out the transfer switch. This is critical to determine project costs.
- Happy new fiscal year: Various bills were mailed on time and we are closing out the fiscal year in good shape and starting the New Year. We continue to monitor Rescue Plan updated guidelines. The Treasury department's Q&A suggests we can use funds to relocate our transfer station, which opens up new possibilities to revert to an old plan for Miller Richardson Park to address softball issues. Pursuing this option with Anchor Engineering for feasibility and costs. Plans and costs are expected by July 16th.
- Progress is being made on the CHS walls projects. We got fair pricing and repairs are underway in the Media center and Science wing with an August 16th deadline. I have lined up MTI to conduct the special inspections. DiBlasi Engineering will have the remaining walls study completed by the end of July to determine what additional work may still be needed in other areas, and whether it can be accommodated on nights and weekends to get this major project completed. I hope that the funds appropriated by the Council will be sufficient to finish this multiyear project.
- We returned grant documents to State for the 1.5 million dollar Orchard Hills renovation project and **are still waiting** for authorization to get the project out to bid this summer. We are checking to see if this project has any impact in resolving the lead solder issue, which is common in most buildings constructed in this time frame and easily resolved by letting the water run a bit after sitting overnight. There may be minor improvements with sink replacements.
- DPW has put off working on roadside mowing and catch basin cleaning to do Elsa storm damage repair. Still also finishing up prep work for summer road work. We are ready for the train recycling/paving for Carpenter, Trowbridge and South River and still on track for early August work.

- We finally received the State Historic Preservation Office approval for the Library project and have completed the contract documents and submitted back to the State Library. The project is likely to be bid out late fall/ early winter. Wetlands approval was received for additional parking. A courtesy update review for PZC is planned. Once we have a signed State contract we can sign the architect's contract to prepare construction plans and documents.
- Swamp/Rt. 44 intersection final plans are edging closer to bidding. We have all approvals and are waiting for the final letter to proceed any day. Bid documents can then be finalized with an August bid opening and September contract start. This project will not be finished until spring of 2022.
- The State replacement of the culvert crossing RT 44 in front of Highland Park Market is underway. There have been water and road issues.
- I reformatted the Microgrid wiring extension to Police and Fire submission for Sen. Murphy's consideration which was submitted. We expect to hear whether we were successful in the initial screening in a few weeks.
- We have hired Lesley Munshower as our new Recreation Director and she will start on July 19th.
- After soliciting price proposals for a pavement management study we have selected a firm from MA. They will survey every road for condition and map it out for our GIS system to allow a comprehensive planning and mapping tool. This is coming from Town Aid for Roads funds and will help in prioritizing our next road bond.

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 August with construction starting in September and a spring 2022 completion.
- 2) We continue to work on the load rating of Pucker Street Bridge. The revised recalculations were again submitted this week, 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 2022 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, but a budget bill is now under discussion in Congress.

- 4) The girls' softball field committee met 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 for the landfill venting project. We are costing and doing conceptual designs for a tweak which would give more space to the gravel pit concepts and enhance parking and safety by moving the Transfer Station and sliding over one of the two lay down yard fields there. Pricing and plans due for this tweak due July 16th.
- 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, but still not done. Fortunately we have had enough rain to keep the grass healthy.
- 6) We have decided that the cabin we were going to fix at Creaser Park 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. Will need DEEP approval.
- 7) We are still waiting for authorization to select an engineer for 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. We expect the 90% plan review to be completed by CRCOG by the end of this month.
- 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 renter pricing. 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. We are at the negotiation stage for pricing and contract terms and will work on this through several task groups and all Boards over the summer.
- 13) We are looking at an old option which may now be financially viable due to a new source of money to move the transfer station. We will have tweaked plans and pricing by July 16th. The Council may wish to send this alternative back to the Softball Committee.
- 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. They have been impacted by the large amount of rain.

Public Safety: Police: Officer Provost has submitted his resignation to take a job in MA. Officer Santiago will be completing the Academy on July 23rd. We again recruited certified officers and interviewed six candidates. We have made conditional offers to two finalists. 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. Pricing for the Sergeant's exam has been encumbered and eligible candidates have been invited to begin preparation for the test.

Fire EMS: North Coventry Fire Association is considering dissolving the Association, and have submitted a settlement agreement to the Council to address some important legacy issues related to this. A swearing in of the new slate of officers for Dept. 18 was held on June 30th. The cost of the proposed firetruck has significantly increased and will be discussed at the Council to consider stretching the lease payment terms and funding a bit more to purchase the truck needed.

Finance: The Budget passed and tax bills went out on time. 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 school 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. We continue with the complicated American Rescue Plan funding planning. Our insurance renewals are in place. Finance received the GFOA certificate of excellence again.

Development group: We have submitted all required paperwork into DEEP for a permit to allow connection to the Bolton Lakes sewer system. We expect that DEEP will receive comments in August and then make a determination. This is an alternative to using the State law since it will make us eligible for State Grants. PZC adopted regulation which will allow Hytone farm to submit an application for staff approval of an anaerobic digester. We need to wait for 3 weeks to see if an appeal is made but can start reviewing plans once submitted to keep the project moving. 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 for a medical related business envisioning new construction.

In exciting news, Sanborn Garage has been purchased by a family-owned Japanese mini car repair and sales company. They are coming into meet with the Economic Development Commission in July. 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.

We are gearing up for the summer Hydrilla treatment with treatment now planned for July 23rd. 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 in July. 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:

Exit interview surveys were sent out to former employees back to 2019. One was received. We have conducted several negotiations sessions for all Town and School AFSCME groups for pension and now have cost estimates. I have hired Lesley Munshower as our next Recreation Director. She starts on July 19th. We recruited for the part time positions 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. We are in the screening and testing

stage. 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 continues work on corrective plans for the High School walls with hopes of finishing the full study this month. Work is underway for phase 2 of the wall reinforcement in the media center and science wing. The School Building Committee has approved bids for the fire door projects with installation underway. They are now looking at roofing and air handling price estimates and may need to discuss with Finance for consideration of a November referendum since both seem to be above prior bond approvals.

ICDS, the HVAC engineering firm selected for the high school/middle school project, met with the school building committee on July 1. 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 are checking on State aid now.

Quisenberry, the architect for school roofs, recommended we delay the roofs until next year. 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. They also are met with the School building committee on July 1. It appears that additional bonding will be required for both projects and we will need to consider rapid action in July/August to allow a November vote. This is not likely due to need for a great deal of information.

The Library project received the State Historic Preservation Office approval and we have submitted the contract paperwork to the State Library. Once received we can hire Ken Best to complete construction plans and bid specs. Inland Wetlands approved required parking changes to add spaces. 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 and finished a successful fund drive.

We are still waiting for 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.