

## **Manager's project update: July 18, 2022 meeting**

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

### **Highlights:**

We are closely monitoring the Lake due to growth of blue-green algae. If it continues to grow and expand we will need to close the Lake to certain activities. I have authorized additional testing and monitoring. This is not a geese or Hydrilla treatment issue. It is most likely attributed to a mild winter and the lake did not stay cold enough to slow this growth. Chemical treatments are not recommended at this time. The geese are likely responsible for frequent closures or Patriots park. We are sweeping twice weekly but there are a lot of young geese on the beach.

Our tax billing firm got out bills out on time and we are explaining that the car value assessment is a statewide issue due to market conditions. The State law change will help prevent this in the future by using a standard depreciation from initial value. While this will assist on the car tax issue it will bring in less revenue over the life of cars and therefore raise mil rates on houses.

Had a nice ground breaking for the Library renovation project. Had to BEE there. Actual construction is almost ready to start.

The South Street at Homestead road construction project is moving swiftly and the Swamp Road project is going into shutdown until late September, with limited signal work underway. The contract is signed for the Transfer station with work starting July 18th. The landfill methane project construction is complete and we are waiting for the grass to grow.

Eric Peterson was sworn in as our Police Chief with a July 18<sup>th</sup> start date.

The school roofs are out to bid with a July 20<sup>th</sup> opening (extended a week). Results of the bid will determine whether work can occur this summer or not. Building Committee will meet on the 21<sup>st</sup> to review bids.

### Public Works/Engineering

LOTICIP grants: The Swamp Rd/Rt. 44 project is paved and temporary detour in place. Some delays of signal posts is expected which will have to be addressed, but work is expected to be completed this fall.

Woodbridge Road drainage and pavement is complete. Our prep of Loomis and Carver is almost complete so we can line up the outside contractors to finish. We will move back into the Lake area. The first round of roadside mowing is complete. The mower is waiting for parts.....supply chain issues.

Todd Penney continues to work toward getting the plans and specs for the Community Connectivity grant for sidewalks on Main Street from Hemlock Point Lane to approximately Cheney Lane. Starting to seek the required easements from the State and neighbors. It is still hoped to be a fall 2022 construction project.

We have finally been authorized to select an engineer for the LOTICIP grant for the intersection of Swamp and South, including the South Street curves, and a dip in Swamp Road. We are still getting proposals from the two firms on the CRCOG pre-selected list. Construction is hoped for the summer of 2023.

The South Street road reconstruction and sidewalk project near the Homestead is underway. Significant tree work has been completed to make room for the drainage and sidewalk. Stone wall work and landscaping is included in the bid. The dry weather has helped this project move along quickly.

The methane venting project contract for the Miller Richardson football field has been hydro-seeded. This includes a smaller recreational softball field in the rear left corner, and an extension of the practice field to a full second football field.

The State-designed Hop River Road Bridge replacement is nearing a fall bid. The project will start with utility work in fall and materials ordered for a spring construction. GM2 will be our construction inspectors. We just received word that the State will be using Federal funds to pay 100% of the project costs including inspection. Since the construction budget estimate now far exceeds the funds we allocated from the last road bond this is fantastic news. This will free up the balance of the past bonding for eligible projects covered by the scope of the bond. This is likely in the \$300,000 range. We will evaluate alternative eligible projects. After our first pre-bid meeting we discussed concerns of needing assurance this will be a one season bridge closure. We have agreed to allow longer work days to assist in reaching that goal.

We need to replace two culverts located on Bunker Hill Road and Parker Bridge Road. We have submitted two grant applications for this year's Local Bridge grant round and are still waiting for response. The grants, if we are awarded one or both, require a 50% match. Our share will need to be bonded and could be over a million dollars. These two projects are complicated by a pending Andover bridge replacement on Bunker Hill Road scheduled for this summer. We need to coordinate the three projects to assure access to houses and proper traffic detours. We also have to fully replace the Broadway culvert, which will not be eligible for State funds. We will need money for design, and this will also need to be added to a future bonding package. There is a possibility CRCOG will have a LOTCIP culvert round which covers 100% of construction costs, or the use of ARPA funding.

The DEEP Microgrid project (\$4,000,000 grant) is still at a critical juncture. Tritec withdrew their buyout offer but we are working with another firm with greater experience. Time for the grant is running out.

We had B & L design our new transfer station next to the DPW facility using ARP funds. Bids came over budget and we worked the number down as best we could. The Council authorized additional ARPA funds and a notice to proceed was issued. Sunset Valley is anticipated to start on July 18<sup>th</sup>. We are looking at a temporary limited transfer station to allow softball field construction to start.

Woodbridge Road was cold recycled in place after the Town replaced several culverts. The top course is scheduled to be paved this month. Prep work on Carver Lane and Loomis is underway prior to paving/reclaiming in July or August. We are using the new goose poop sweeper twice a week at Patriots Park.

Public Safety - Police: We have hired Eric Peterson as our next Chief. He will start on July 18<sup>th</sup>. A nice swearing in ceremony was held on the 12<sup>th</sup> and we got to meet his family and a lot of his peers. We had decided to wait for the new Chief to be appointed to make the Sergeant appointments, and now need to work swiftly on the Captain promotion. Our new Boating Officer has been active and working on improving safety on the lake. We are also looking for part time dispatchers and an Executive Assistant for the Police Chief due to Kevin Roberto's relocation to another state. We have a good applicant pool for this position.

Fire EMS: The replacement fire truck ordered last year is expected in September. Our alternative ambulance replacement has been ordered, with no date for delivery provided. A state law was passed to

direct an increase to state Medicaid ambulance rates - we also have a rate increase request pending. The department has been extremely busy this summer with accidents and medical calls. They continue to work with the Farmers' Market on parking.

Finance: We started the new fiscal year and complicated budget work while short-staffed due to the lack of a Town Accountant. Good news is we have a new Accountant starting in Early August. Our bill vendor got the tax bills out on time. We were approved to bid the two school roofs and they are out to bid with a mid-July response. The bids will let us know whether this summer is an option. The possible middle school renovate-as-new concept discussion is postponed until fall. We need to evaluate the new school HVAC state grants as an option. School Walls work was postponed until Christmas break. We continue to work with the Finance Committee and Town Council on the complicated American Rescue Plan funding planning.

Development Group: We held our first two meetings on the local agreements required to allow an extension to the Bolton Lakes sewer system. A community funding request was selected by Congressman Courtney and forwarded to the House Appropriations Committee for consideration. 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. It is very likely the State will fund 50% 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. Hytone Farm has started construction for the approved anaerobic digester. We held a meeting to discuss a second stage to assist in food waste management and talks will continue. PZC's moratorium on cannabis retail sales will be extended to allow the Commission to review our attorney's draft regulations. A late July public hearing is envisioned. A public hearing on the affordable housing plan is also planned for July 25. The four-town Economic Vitality group is meeting to work out a regional events calendar and submitted an ARP grant for economic development consulting. We held a meeting to fine tune a proposed logo. Cassidy Hill Vineyards has hired both an attorney and an engineer to prepare plans and assist them with our concerns of zoning compliance. An August public hearing on their application is envisioned. A proposal for a new dentist office next to Dollar General was approved with construction anticipated this summer. The Economic Development Commission created a subcommittee to focus on the future development at the Bolton town line.

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 started negotiations the Public Works unions. We hired a new Youth Services Coordinator, and Town Accountant, and deadlines are up for a Planning Assistant/Zoning Enforcement Agent and Police Executive Assistant. I think we have viable candidates for both. In the interim we have hired Kevin Roberto to assist remotely for up to 20 hours a week for Police and hired an engineering firm to provide 6 hours a week of zoning help.

Other projects:

DiBlasi Engineering completed final design work on wall repairs, but the contractor is not able to fit it into their summer work schedule. It will be a Christmas vacation project. CHS and GHR roof plans are now out to bid and we will see what the market brings to us for timing of work.

Work is underway for the housing unit renovations at Orchard Hills under the CDBG grant.

We submitted a Creaser Park plan to DEEP for review and a meeting is scheduled on site to review our proposal. Our plan is to demo the front two cabins in phase one since they are not really savable. The back cabin is on a slab, and it will be gutted and converted to a storage building likely with a garage door.

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 have 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.

We are trying to work on getting the Trails grant permits ready for some DPW work on the Bear Swamp section of road (not the stream crossing) for late summer.