

## **Manager's project update: June 6, 2022 meeting**

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

### Highlights:

The Town Council revised the proposed budget and no suggestions for changes were made at the budget meeting. The vote is set for Tuesday June 7<sup>th</sup> at the two Main Street firehouses.

The Town has been awarded SustainableCT Silver (still the highest level) status.

Both the Library renovation project and South Street@Homestead road projects are signed and project starts are being scheduled.

We are in the final stage of the background process for hiring of our next Police Chief and are targeting a June 20<sup>th</sup> council ratification consideration.

Congressman Courtney's office has selected our Bolton sewer connection as a Community Funding project so we will start the required connection agreements.

CRCOG Policy Board approved our Daly Road LOTCIP grant for 3.1 Million.

The landfill methane project is under construction but some difficulties have come up. The transfer station is out to bid with a Friday opening and the softball field project is almost out to bid.

### Public Works/Engineering

LOTCIP grants: The Swamp Rd/Rt. 44 project is getting ready for paving. Some delays of signal posts is expected which will have to be addressed.

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 summer 2022 construction project.

Both the softball project and transfer station preliminary designs are complete. The transfer station bid bids are due June 3, and we hired a local firm to clear trees to speed the project up. June 30 is the plan for Softball bids going out with construction this summer. We have finally been authorized 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. We are still getting proposals from the two firms on the CRCOG pre-selected list. A reminder that we will need additional funds from CNREF this fiscal year. Construction is hoped for the summer of 2023.

The South Street road reconstruction and sidewalks near the Homestead has been bid with Spazzarini winning the bid. The contract will be signed soon. We expect a June start.

We signed the methane venting project contract for the Miller Richardson football field, funded in part by a STEAP grant. This includes a bid alternate for a recreational softball facility in the rear left corner. Construction started with a mid-June completion. Some complications occurred due to underground conditions which have been worked out but costs are up.

The State preliminary design of the Hop River Road Bridge has reached final design stage. The project will be bid in fall of this year with utility work starting in fall and materials ordered for a spring construction. We hired GM2 to be our construction inspectors. The construction budget now far exceeds the funds we allocated from the last road bond. This will need to be addressed. 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 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. The grants, if we are awarded one or both, would pay 50% of construction. 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 CROG will have a LOTCIP culvert round which covers 100% of construction costs, or 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 have hired B & L to design a new transfer station next to the DPW facility using ARP funds. Bids are out with a June 3 bid opening. We are concerned the price may far exceed estimates. We are looking at a temporary limited transfer station to allow softball field construction to start.

Bill Watkins submitted a DERA grant application for a replacement diesel truck which we did not get.

Juniper Drive and Hickory Drive pavement is complete. Woodbridge Road is having 3 culverts repaired to get ready for major pavement later this year. Then we move to Carver Lane/Loomis to do some drainage prior to paving/reclaiming. Tree work is also being planned with a focus on Nathan Hale Rd, Flanders Rd, Plains Rd, and Nathan Hale Drive with the transfer of funds that the Council approved. Crack sealing is completed.

Public Safety - Police: We had successful Police Chief Interviews using an outside panel on April 4<sup>th</sup>. We shared the results of the public survey on leadership qualities with the panel. I have conducted second rounds with two candidates for final interviews. It is a slow process. We are finalizing the required background checks and believe I will have a candidate for ratification consideration at the June 20 Council meeting. We hired one officer who will start in several weeks and are now recruiting for one more get to full staffing. We have decided to wait for the new Chief to be appointed to make the Sergeant appointments. We have also hired a Boating Officer who the Council needs to appoint as a Special Constable. Discussions of a multi town regional animal control facility fell apart. The police dock has been installed at Patriots Park along with the Police Boat. We are also looking for part time dispatchers and an Admin for the Police Chief.

Fire EMS: The replacement fire truck ordered last year is expected in September. Improvements at the Merrow Road substation are complete except some bathroom work. 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. The department will coordinate with Coventry Cares on CoventryFest and the Farmers Market on parking.

Finance: We held a successful bond sale on June 1. We were approved to bid the two school roofs and need to determine when the work can be done. We have tabled the possible middle school renovate-as-new concept discussion until fall. We need to evaluate the new school HVAC state grants as an option. Yearend close out is the priority. We continue to work with the Finance Committee and Town Council on the complicated American Rescue Plan funding planning.

Development Group: We have been approved for the SustainableCT Silver award for another three years. 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 received proposals for engineering consultants to review the Windham connection and are selecting firms to interview. We believe some state funds will assist in this study. We continue to meet with developers and finance groups interested in the Bolton town line area. Hytone Farm is starting 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 is nearing an end and the subcommittee is forwarding recommendations to the whole commission. The four-town Economic Vitality group is meeting to work out a regional events calendar and submitted an ARP grant for economic development consulting. They are looking at creating a logo. SLR, our consultant on Housing Affordability, has submitted a draft plan and the PZC will be having a public hearing and has requested an extension through July. Cassidy Hill Vineyards has hired both an attorney and an engineer to prepare plans and assist them with our concerns of zoning compliance. They also are working to resolve issues with the State Liquor Control Commission. A proposal for a new dentist office is going to a public hearing this month. 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 with the Police and Public Works unions. We have an agreement with the Police Union for a one year extension. We have exchanged proposals for Public Works. We are finalizing the Police Chief hiring with an anticipated Council ratification vote on June 20<sup>th</sup>. We have hired a Police officer, Senior Center

Assistant, Assessor, Cemetery Sexton, DPW Maintainer I and Boating Officer. Interviews are scheduled for Youth Services and we are advertising for a Town Accountant.

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 has been turned over to Superintendent Petrone to decide if work can be done while school is in session. CHS and GHR roof plans are now authorized to go out to bid and timing of that is also a school decision.

Bids were opened for the housing unit renovations at Orchard Hills under the CDBG grant. Human Services has reconvened their Advisory Committee and is trying to reinvigorate the Human Rights Commission and also staff the Community Conversations initiative. They are receiving generous food donations.

We submitted a Creaser Park plan to DEEP for review and are waiting for approval. It looks like for phase one we will demo the front two cabins 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.