

**Town Administrator Report**  
**March 7, 2016**

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1. Projects Update:

Quinebaug Regional Technology Park Bridge, Road and Utilities Construction

- All aspects of Tech Park subdivision have been completed. Sewer lift station work is done. Official ceremonial bridge opening took place on February 27. Former Mayor Pete Place was honored.
- Trail System- Bids are out for construction of extension of River Trail to the Tech Park over the one-lane bridge. Bids will be opened at Selectmen's April 4<sup>th</sup> meeting.
- Broadband Connection – Various contractors have approached Town to extend broadband connection off the state network to the Tech Park. Will go out to bid/RFP on this service. *No change.*
- YMCA had a ribbon-cutting ceremony on February 27 and opened for business on February 29. Working on obtaining a corporate discount for town employees who desire Y memberships.
- Town Consortium (Putnam, Brooklyn, Pomfret, and Sterling) – Meeting was held with Scotland and Brooklyn. Mayor and I had a later meeting with Pomfret First Selectman Craig Baldwin. Interlocal agreement reviewed and will be finalized for towns' signature. Towns' funding is being arranged and invoices will be sent to partner towns.

Water Line Replacement/Relining Project

- Contract 1 work is completed in Thompson Avenue/Bates Avenue/Groveland area and in the Wilkinson/Bellevue/Prospect/Oak Streets areas. Final paving will occur in spring 2016. *No change.*
- Contract 2 bid has been awarded to B&W Paving and Landscaping for \$8,101,905. Quinebaug Avenue to Tech Park main installed and activated. Project is shut down for winter. The remainder of proposed Contract 2 project areas:
  - Arch Street, Arthur Street, Brown Street, Canal Street, Centennial Street, Church Street (Pomfret to Woodstock), Eden Street, Edmond Street, Fenner Street, Florence Street, Frank Street, Furnace Street, George Street, Grove Street, Interval Street, Letters Street, May Street, Mechanics Street, Memorial Terrace, Milton Street, Olney Street, Pomfret Street, Sewer Plant Road, South Main Street, Tatem Street, Vandale Street, Vine Street, Walnut Street, Wood Avenue (Church to Marshall)
- Work will begin at those locations in spring 2016. Coordination of work needed between State DOT on their paving projects, Eversource gas improvements, and town's sidewalk and highway projects.

Sewer Lift Stations

- 99 percent completion of work on pump stations 1-8. Pump station 10 is 90% complete and work on Pump Station 9 will be completed this spring.

- Town is finalizing the paperwork to close on the USDA loan of \$2.97 million. Depending on date of closing, Town could have a lower interest rate of 1.875% compared to the original budgeted rate of 2.125%.

#### Manganese/Iron Treatment Building

- WPCA voted at last meeting to reject the proposals from the two design/construction teams. WPCA will work with Suez, our water and sewer operation partner, on possible next steps to correct the manganese and iron problems in our wells.

#### Putnam High School Project

- Work is progressing in accordance with construction schedule. Contract for gas lines has been approved and gas will be installed in two phases for the 2015 (installed) and 2016 construction seasons. Next round of state reimbursement was received this month. This reimbursement significantly assists Town with its cash flow situation on all project funding.

2. WPCA. Suez (United Water), the selected water and sewer management partner started up their management activities February 1. Suez staff has been in town to meet with WPCA employees and accomplish other tasks leading up to their taking over operations and management. Despite some small bumps, transition to Suez is going well.
3. Conversion of Owen Tarr Park and Sabin Street/Woodstock Avenue properties. Working with Public Facilities Study Committee to meet the requirements of the state to find a substitute property of equal or better value to replace the passive, open space land off Sabin Street. Correspondence with attached maps was sent to state DEEP showing that Sabin Street property will still have extensive open space and a walking trail circling the entire property. A map showing the town-owned property (12.8 acs.) combined with land donated by the Newths (13.5 acs.) for a total of 26.3 acres to be committed to open space was also included with a description showing that the Town intends to extend the River Trail from the Farmers' Market over the Wheelabrator landfill bridge and tied into a trail system in the Tech Park. This proposal would still be subject to approval by the DEEP Commissioner. Based on town meeting approval of an appropriation for engineering and design work on the Sabin Street property, low bidder, Messier Associates, began work to determine the field needs on Sabin Street and construction of a bridge to site. CPH and LLB firms were shortlisted to be architects for Town Hall/Library complex, site visits followed, and after consideration of presentations, LLB was selected as the architect through the referendum stage.
4. Armory. NOW proposal for Armory has hit a bump in the road, specifically should NOW for any reason cease to be a non-profit organization, who would be responsible for assuming any debt incurred for the building improvements. If the NOW proposal falls through, there may be renewed interest from the WPCA to use the Armory as a base for their maintenance crew and equipment.
5. Sidewalk Reconstruction. Sidewalk reconstruction project has begun with the following streets or portions of streets started and/or finished: Battey Street, Church Street, and Kennedy Drive. Work has progressed to Main Street with brick pavers being removed and decorative stamped concrete being installed instead. Work progresses. Jerry Beausoleil is working with Eversource on gas line improvements/installation, BETA Group on water line

project, and the town's public works priorities to coordinate all of these activities so when, for instance, we repave a road, we don't want to have to dig it up again because of gas line installation.

6. High Speed Broadband Fiber Installation. *No change*. Firms' under state contract are investigating cost of bringing fiber to Tech Park from the backbone line. Began discussion with Town's IT consultant on bringing high speed fiber installation to certain locations in town for economic development reasons, particularly to our Tech Park. Discussion will be framed as a town policy decision and not just for the sake of installing technology. Possible ways to manage installation could be as a public utility much like our water and sewer utilities. Some key questions to move this question forward are:
  - a. What's Putnam's policy?
  - b. Who are the champions to move this forward?
  - c. Who are community partners?
  - d. Who are the telecommunication carriers serving Putnam?
  - e. Identify key players and their roles?
7. Pomfret Sewer Line Connection. Putnam is reviewing a draft agreement with Pomfret allowing them to tie in to our system. Pomfret is looking to a possible spring 2016 construction start. No change.
8. Municipal Solar Array Installation. SolarCity has finally come back with a proposal that they will go forward with a 700 kW solar installation on municipal solid waste landfill. However, a number of towns, including Putnam, have run up against a problem moving forward on these projects. These towns developed projects that planned to utilize virtual net metering (a credit for electricity for clean energy projects). We signed contracts, completed the permitting process and received ZREC credits. However, even though the projects were shovel-ready, we were informed that we could not participate in the virtual net metering program because the program had reached a cap. So essentially, towns are being unfairly penalized for attempting to utilize a program meant to reduce our energy costs, support local jobs, and achieve the benefits of virtual net metering. The affected towns, "stranded towns" have come together to seek relief through legislative action. We are seeking legislation that would raise the cap for these specific towns. Hopefully, a bill will be raised for consideration before the Energy and Technology Committee this week and we will submit testimony. Project is on hold until cap is raised.
9. FY 14-15 Audit. Town had to seek a third extension until the end of the month on completing our audit for last fiscal year. Hopefully, audit can be completed before the end of the month and we won't have to use full 30 days. Important to have audit completed so we know where we stand financially from last year to know where we stand for this year's budget consideration and if we move forward with any further public financing, for instance on phasing in the High School project permanent financing.