

Town Administrator Report
April 4, 2016

1. Projects Update:

Quinebaug Regional Technology Park Bridge, Road and Utilities Construction

- Bridge, road and utilities construction and installation complete. Tully Construction and Gerber Construction will be out in April to finish up minor items of seeding and loam and site clean up.
- 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 4th 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.*
- A corporate discount of 10% was obtained for town employees who want to sign up for a Y membership.
- 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. *No change.*

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. First project this spring will be South Main Street. Attended meeting of Putnam Business Association with BETA engineers to communicate the plans for South Main and its possible impact on businesses. 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 has started and will be completed by end of spring.
- Town is finalizing the paperwork to close on the USDA loan of \$2.97 million. Plan to close loan on April 15th with a loan rate of 1.75%.

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. No change.

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 and next round will be received in April. 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. After meeting with DEEP staff, Town will still have to have appraisals done for all of the respective properties and we'll have to find three (3) new acres to replace the three acres taken out of active recreation use for the Municipal Complex at Tarr Park.
4. Armory. WPCA is still interested in possibly using 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. A bill was raised for consideration before the Energy and Technology Committee this week and we submitted testimony. Committee voted bill out for consideration. Project is on hold until cap is raised.
9. FY 14-15 Audit. Audit is completed. Fund balance (surplus) has increased to \$4,389,723 representing 18.5% of total General Fund expenditures or sufficient to cover approximately 2.2 months of General Fund expenditures. Our auditors will be presenting audit results in detail at the Board of Finance April meeting.
10. Bond Anticipation Notes and General Obligation Bond Issuance. Brenda Fox-Howard and I are working with our financial advisor and bond counsel on a new BAN issuance through November 30, 2016 for temporary financing of our WPCA projects and the High School. Included in another issuance is \$4.8 million for General Obligation Bonds for permanent financing of the High School project. Since this our first GO bond issuance in a long time,

the Town will be seeking a credit rating from one of the rating agencies, Moody's or Standard & Poor's on this borrowing. Brenda and I will be working with our advisors on a presentation scheduled sometime in May.