

Town Manager's Report

Select Board Meeting 03/28/2022

1. Grant Project Updates:

a. Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) Grant (Pedestrian Accessibility Scoping Study): *The Selectboard alternative selections were sent to Nicole Fox following the 3/14/2022 SB meeting. I await more word from Nicole.*

Action needed: *None.....at this time. Informational Only.*

b. TAP Bike & Pedestrian Grant: Update – 3/25/2022. *I had a Zoom meeting with Pete Pochop and we discussed the “next steps” in moving this project along. I reached out to Dan Monette inquiring whether or not Fuss & O’Neill is still interested in providing a set of drawings for the project. I heard back from Dan’s supervisor advising they are interested so we set up a Zoom meeting this upcoming week. I also spoke with Ted Parisi and advised I needed his professional services to do the easement and ROW research for the project. Once I have that I can file the VTRANS 1111 permit request.* Last Update: 2/10/2022 – The Town received the approved Grant Award. Next step is to work with engineer to begin the research on easements, utilities, and the VTRANS 1111 Permit for highway access (driveways). Last Update 8/5/2021: The project was approved for sidewalks from Castleton Four Corners to Parson Hills. The project was selected among five applications statewide with funding requests totaling \$329,000 in state funds. The project was approved for \$92,400, thus meaning the Town has an obligation to match that amount. Last update: 6/14/2021 – The grant application for the Bike & Ped Grant for a small-scale project was submitted and acknowledged. The estimated project cost is approximately \$185,000 (includes a 15% contingency). It is a 50% cost share.

Action needed: *None.....at this time. Informational Only.*

c. Staso Road Stormwater Scoping Study – *Update: 3/25/2022 – Another virtual in-progress review was done this past Monday. Everything is on track to brief the final draft to the Selectboard in April. Once this is done, the report will be submitted to VTRANS for their review. The next grant cycle to apply for stormwater mitigation and the Salt and Sand shed is this fall.* Update: 3/7/2022 – There was a meeting on 3/7/2022 between the engineer, Rutland Regional Planning Commission, and Town of Castleton (me). We discussed the proposed location of the building and a stormwater treatment area to the north of current small salt shed on Staso Road. Following the meeting, I contacted Brent Clark and Chris Fouracre asking them to clear the sumac trees and remove the trash (including tires) that is currently in that proposed for stormwater treatment area. Last update: 01/06/2022 - I participated in a project update meeting on 01/03/2022 where it was announced that VT DEC agreed that the area adjacent to the current salt and sand store on Staso Road are not Class II wetlands. This is good news because that area can now be engineered as a treatment area. The final project presentation is expected in February for Selectboard review and approval. In speaking with Peter Pochop from VTRANS, the next round of grants for the salt and sand shed funding is November 2022 with award notifications going out in January/February 2023. If awarded the grant, the best guess on when it would go out to bid to build it would be late 2023 or the summer of 2024. The Selectboard will have to decide whether to pursue the grant knowing there would not be a new salt and sand shed through grant funding until 2023 at the earliest. The current lease agreement with Pete Ruby for use of his shed on Route 4A West runs out 5/31/2022. If the Selectboard

decides to enter into another 2-year lease with Pete, that new lease would expire on 5/31/2024, which would align with building a new one using the grant funds. Because the grant is not a 100% guarantee, I urge the Selectboard to consider asking the voters to assign a portion of last fiscal year's \$153,000 surplus to be used to help fund a new salt and sand shed. This was already done with the proceeds from the sale of the old fire station in the amount of approximately \$97K, so we already have some seed money in the bank, so to speak. As an FYI, I have asked Chris and Brent to start looking at grant alternatives and gather cost estimates for those alternatives. If it is determined that there is lost revenue due to COVID, the Selectboard could also consider using a portion of that amount to apply to building a salt and sand shed in 2023 or 2024. ARPA funds must be committed by mid to late 2024, so there is time to wait and see what happens with the grant application award in early 2023 and what Chris and Brent come up with for alternatives and costs if the Town were to fund it themselves. Last update: 12/27/2021– On 12/13/2021, MSK Engineering, Fitzgerald Engineering, and Rutland Regional Planning Commission representatives provided a briefing to the Selectboard outlining their proposed areas for a new salt and sand shed based. The location proposed was on the existing site of the sand pile and small salt shed adjacent to the Transfer Station on Staso Road. This would be the most cost effective, the best location for stormwater mitigation, would have no additional noise or visual impact to the neighbors, and would provide the best salt and sand delivery access each year. Last Update 11/8/2021 –There is a special meeting scheduled for 12/13/2021 for public comments.

Action needed: *None.....at this time. Informational Only.*

d. Grants-in-Aid Project (2022) – NO CHANGE. I received the fully executed grant application back last week. Chris Fouracre and I will meet ~~in January~~ on 2/22/2022 to begin looking at the road segments to include in this grant. The culvert replacement on Barker Hill will be included and we already have the sections of culvert and coupling on hand. 80% qualifies for reimbursement under the grant. It is a win-win for the Town because we compliance with the permit, our roads get fixed properly, and we only pay 20% of the costs, all of which can be paid through in-kind work.

Action needed: *None.....at this time. Informational Only.*

e. Better Roads Grant – NO CHANGE. Last update: 12/27/2021 – DPW Director Chris Fouracre crafted and submitted grant applications for a Category B (culvert replacement, stone-lined ditches, grading, ROW clearing) for Eaton Hill West and a Category D (concrete box culvert replacement) for the South Street Trestle).

Action needed: *None.....at this time. Informational Only.*

f. Better Connections Grant – NO CHANGE. Last update 6/14/2021 – Based on my conversations with members of the selection committee, the Town overall lacks community engagement in determining the future path of community and economic development. We will not likely be awarded Better Connections, or a host of other grants until we have a lead agency, steering committee, and community engagement. The CDERAC has started the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) assessments, but less than 300 people have participated in taking the survey. It is a start, more needs to be done. The Town Plan and priorities set by the Select Board are key ingredients in getting our resources pulling in the same direction.

Action needed:

None.....at this time. Informational Only.

2. Transfer Station –

a. Operations – NO CHANGE. Last update 3/11/2022 – I met with Joe Rice and Chris Fouracre at which time Joe briefed me on two possible courses of action to cover the cardboard and plastic bins so the contents are not getting covered with snow and ice. Despite Joe using vegetable oil to spray the inside of the bins before they are placed to collect the recyclables, there are instances where he is unable to unload 100% of the contents at the Material Recycling Facility and ends up transporting a partially full bin back to the Transfer Station. I am not making any recommendation to the board at this time. Some thought has to be given to the final layout of the Transfer Station before I can make a recommendation. The block walls set two years ago are already starting to bow outward and despite our best efforts, this will continue to be a problem. This may require the wall to be removed once again and reset. I believe we are throwing good money on top of bad in this instance. They are holding back a lot of dirt and that area is subject to vibration and addition weight from the backhoe, vehicles, and the roll off truck. Additionally, water seeps behind the blocks and erodes away at the gravel, which in turn goes through freezing and thawing cycles that negatively impact the position of the blocks. Once the final layout is decided, it may be in the best financial interest to pour the walls like was done on the west side of the operations building. This is expensive so unless we can find an alternative funding source, putting it into the operating budget will prove challenging and likely would cause the board to increase rates to offset the costs. Last update: 2/14/2022 - Joe Rice submitted a proposal to cover the cardboard and plastic bins with a couple of courses of action. I will meet with Joe and Chris Fouracre next week to review the proposal. If we can come to a consensus, I will bring the proposal to the SB at a future meeting.

Action needed:

I request the SB consider adding \$9,000 to the ARPA potential project funding list to purchase the materials to build the pole barn over two side-by-side bins and the public works crews will build it this fall.

b. Equipment. NO CHANGE. The new loader is still on track for delivery in June 2022.

Action needed:

None.....at this time. Informational Only.

c. Vehicles. NO CHANGE. Last Update: The new F-250 is still on track to be delivered by May 2022. Last update. 11/08/2021 - Chris ordered the 2022 Ford F-250 that the SB approved (with purchase order) and we now await a projected delivery date.

Action needed:

None.....at this time. Informational Only

d. Public Outreach/Community Engagement – Household Hazardous Waste days are now posted for 2022.

Action needed:

None.....at this time. Informational Only.

3. Solar Projects –

a. MHG Solar Gravel Pit – NO CHANGE. Update: 3/11/2022 - I received an email from Ted Parisi with a copy of a Memorandum of lease that he filed in the Castleton

Land Records, Volume 226 at page 94. I also received a message from Pete Giese from MHG Solar confirming our address to mail a lease payment. Last update: 01/7/2022 – The final solar lease deal still not made it through probate court. This is ongoing and a favorable outcome is expected. I did check on the progress of the solar project on Monday during one of my many trips around town and the contractor is working on the electrical portion of the array. The power lines are installed and are of insignificant impact on the Town. I walked the array and checked the eastern edge to be sure there was no migration by the solar array contractors, and everything is okay. MHG Solar already received one extension to the deadline for the array to be producing power and that expired on 12/31/2021. With the number of electrical connections remaining to be made, I would guess they are a couple of weeks away from going live with the array. Update: 12/23/2021 – I signed documents with Ted Parisi on Thursday that will allow MHG to get title insurance and show total ownership of the property to the Town of Castleton. Last update: 11-19-2021. I signed the three Green Mountain Power utility pole and power line easements. Chris Fouracre and I met with both a GMP and MHG Solar representative in the gravel pit to finalize the location of the poles. Last update: 11/08/2021 -The Town received the signed warranty deed for the purchase of the Hadeka property in our gravel pit. It has been filed with the Town clerk. This gives clear title so I can now sign the power pole easement agreements with Green Mountain Power and MHG Solar can proceed with the project.

Action needed: *None.....at this time. Informational Only*

4. Sidewalk Projects – Phase I. UPDATE. 3/25/2022 – *The last invoices from contractors were received and being processed. Minus punch list items that Belden Construction will complete this spring, the project and the Town will submit for our final project reimbursement.* Last Update: 11/19/2021 –The sidewalk project reached substantial completion. There are several punch list items that Belden's is working on, but they have begun demobilization. Part of the punch list includes work to be done in the spring. This primarily will be landscaping issues because no grass seed was planted, just topsoil and hay. People are already using them, and I did receive a couple of compliments and a couple of complaints. The complaints were all about the disruption at the Castleton Four Corners. I shared that with all parties at the last meeting. They acknowledged it was disruptive, but it is a busy intersection and hard to make it easy for traffic to flow smoothly, especially when large vehicles approaching the intersection from the north and had to make the right hand turn off Route 30 onto Route 4A. I personally want to thank the Selectboard for staying the course and seeing this project through. It is a benefit to residents of the community should they choose to use them.

Action needed: *None.....at this time. Informational Only*

5. Sewer Plant –UPDATE: 3/25/2022 – *I submitted the five-year projected sewer budget to the Vermont Bond Bank with corrections. It was received. I have a virtual meeting with Wayne Elliott and Jason Booth from Aldrich and Elliott on Monday, March 28th at 10:00 AM to review the bids and discuss the project costs.* Last Update: 3/11/2022 - While working with the Vermont Bond Bank, it was discovered that the \$90,000 that Beldon's projected as the annual loan payment amount was incorrect. According to the bond bank, the actual amount will be \$150,000 per year, resulting in an underestimate of \$60,000. This creates a revenue vs expenses shortfall, so I have to go back into the 2023-2027 draft budget figures and adjust them to account for that \$60,000 shortfall. Last update: 01/22/2021 – I am working with Aldrich and Elliott to get the bid packet ready for the 20-year upgrades and the bond bank on final paperwork requirements. The bid packet is expected to be on the street by the middle of the month.

Action needed:

None.....at this time. Informational Only.

5. Highway Department –

a. Paving in FY21-22 -Nothing Significant to Report.

Action needed:

None.....at this time. Informational Only.

b. FEMA (South Street Trestle) – UPDATE: *Chris Fouracre received a new quote for a metal squash culvert with the required aquatic passage riffles and it is significantly less expensive than the concrete box culvert. This culvert can be handled with our excavator and we won't need to rent a crane. Still no word back about the grant we applied for to make the project whole. As an FYI, the pavement under the trestle is coming up in chunks. The highway crew is using cold patch right now. The road has to be torn up to replace the culvert so no need of paving it now. I will have a final cost estimate for the project by the next meeting. I am hopeful we will have a response to our grant request as well. This will allow Chris to present to the board the project and any financial shortfalls needed to complete the project.* Last Update: 2/11/2022 – Chris Fouracre has reached out to Rivers and Streams Management Engineer Josh Carvajal asking if a metal squash culvert could be used in-lieu-of a concrete box culvert. Josh's response was believed that he could approve a change to the metal culvert, but he had to do some calculations on how large the culvert would have to be in order to be in compliance. Josh is going to send Chris a drawing with some additional information on how to make it all work keeping in mind the aquatic organism passage is still required. This approach if approved should reduce the cost of the project significantly. Last Update: 01/7/2022 - The entire project is projected to exceed \$100,000, which far exceeds what FEMA paid the Town after the 4/19/2019 storm. We won't know for a couple of months whether the Town was awarded the \$60K Better Roads Category D Structures grant(s), however, the lowest of the two quotes Chris has received back for a pre-cast box culvert is \$86K and that does not include the entrance and exit wing walls, therefore the \$60K from the grant won't even cover the cost of the culvert itself. This has gone well beyond the financial limits the Town has the resources to complete. Chris and I will be reaching out to Steffanie Bourque at the Rutland Regional Planning Commission and Robert Faley at VTRANS District #3 to try and find an additional funding source to complete his job. In addition to the \$30K FEMA gave to the Town and \$60K from the Better Roads grant, our best guess as to the amount of money needed to complete this project is in the neighborhood of \$75K. This project has been simmering on the back burner since April 2019 and needs to be put to bed. If we have another storm and it washes out the road, it is unlikely that FEMA would give us a dime because we haven't fixed the original problem. FEMA funds projects to bring them back to "pre-storm condition" and right now, these conditions are less than favorable.

Action needed:

None.....at this time. Informational Only.

c. FEMA (Little Rutland Road) –NO CHANGE. Last Update: 11/08/2021 – The work was completed at Kilchevsky's. I believe the Town fulfilled the agreement for this year.

Action needed:

None.....at this time. Informational Only.

d. Overtime and Salt & Sand Usage –Next report will be on April 11th.

Action needed:

None.....at this time. Informational Only.

6. Town Office & other buildings –

a. Fire Station. NO CHANGE. Last Update: 3/11/2022 - I spoke to Mickey McClure on 3/11/2022 and he provided me the name of the contractor who insulated the police station and town office building. I will contact the contractor and see if he is willing to give me a quote to insulate the eaves of the fire department. Mickey is going to also remind Paul about providing a quote for a “watchman” temperature monitoring system at the fire station. This system can be programmed to send out an alert to designated personnel should there be a problem with the heating system and the temperature drops below a pre-set number. The damage could be extremely costly if the water in a truck freezes and causes pipes to rupture or cause damage to a pump.

Action needed: None.....at this time. Informational Only.

b. Highway Garage: NO CHANGE. Last Update: 03/11/2022 – I called Overhead Door to try and get new garage door openers for the garage. I spoke with Janine Fuller and she advised that in 2014 that the Town was given an assessment of the garage doors advising they are in need or replacement. One was replaced in 2014 and some parts were taken from the old door and used to place a band-aid on other old overhead doors. The bad news I received on 3/10/2022 from Janine was the motors are too old to work on and we cannot get replacement openers because they don’t meet the UL 325 codes. I attached quotes for new motor and new doors that I received on 3/11/2022.

Action needed: None.....at this time. Informational Only

c. Police Station. Nothing significant to report

Action needed: None.....at this time. Informational Only

7. Police Department –

a. Dispatching Costs – NO CHANGE. Last Update: 2-11-2022 – Recent discussion about the future of dispatching services is evolving. The recent discussion includes the State funding 4-5 dispatch centers (PSAPs), including one in Rutland County. The State is looking at \$11M to get the dispatch centers operational and approximately \$3M of that money to fund the first year’s operating costs. Discussions about how to fund them in the future are ongoing. A county tax is on the table for discussion, The next meeting is on 2-15-2022. Chief Mantello is one of the local law enforcement officers taking a leadership role in the process. Last update: (11-19-2021) There was a meeting with the Vermont Department of Public Safety Director and State Police about the future of dispatching. Nothing was resolved, but it was made clear that the State is looking at ways to subsidize the costs to municipalities. There is also talk about counties forming their own dispatch centers. It is unresolved at this point, but I feel confident it will not negatively impact the FY22- 23 budget.

Action needed: None.....at this time. Informational Only.

b. Public Outreach – NO CHANGE. Update: 3/11/2022 -Chief Mantello is hosting/facilitating a second community meeting between residents who are in the blasting zone of Camara’s Quarry and the owner(s) of the quarry. Chief Mantello scheduled the meeting on 3/17/2022 at 6:00 PM at the Fire Station community room. The reason for the second meeting is that Dave Camara allegedly thought the meeting was the following week.

Action needed: None.....at this time. Informational Only.

8. **Emergency Management** – Nothing to report

Action needed: None.....at this time. Informational Only.

9. **Fire Department** –

a. **Dispatching Costs** – See notes under police department.

Action needed: None.....at this time. Informational Only.

b. **Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG)** – Nothing to report

Action needed: None.....at this time. Informational Only.

c. **Operations** – *The Chief is asking when the meeting with the Public Safety Committee is going to happen.*

Action needed: *SB appointed public safety committee and set a date to meet with Chief Goyette to discuss vehicle replacement plan/Truck Committee.*

d. **Public Outreach & Support** – Nothing to Report

Action needed: None.....at this time. Informational Only.

e. **Apparatus – NO CHANGE. Last Update: 1/21/2022** - Engine 2 remains out of service. Chief Goyette has been in conversations with a shop in Granville, NY who agreed to come up Castleton and look at the vehicle, but has not showed as of 2-10-2022. Chief Goyette stated he would reach out to them again if they had not contacted him by the end of the week..

Action needed: None.....at this time. Informational Only

10. **Town Lands** –

a. **Crystal Haven Common Area** – Nothing to report.

Action needed: None.....at this time. Informational Only.

b. **Park & Ride. NO CHANGE.** Last Update 3/14/2022 - Awaiting a response about the new controller for Sol Energy. Update: 01/7/2022 – I spoke with Paul McClure from McClure Construction on 01/6/2022 about the solar lights at the park and ride near Exit 5. Paul advised that there was proper voltage to the device and sensors, but the controller lights were not lit as per the technical manual. He recommended that I contact the company who manufactures the device and see if they would ship one to the Town Office so he use his lift to get up in each light tower and troubleshoot the system. I will purchase two replacement batteries (\$200 each) so Paul will have a new controller and new batteries to help isolate whether it is the controller, batteries, or something else that is the reason they are not working. Last Update 12/23/2021 – I met Paul McClure at the Park & Ride on 12/22/2021 to investigate why the solar lights are not working. Last Update: 12/27/2021 -After a few attempts to open a light housing, it was determined a special wrench is needed, one Paul did not have with him. Paul advised he would come back on 12/23/2021 with the proper tool and let me know what he

finds. Last Update: 11/19/2021 – I received a message from Paul McClure at 10AM on Friday (19th) advised he was still interested and to call him back to try and coordinate a time to inspect the control modules on the solar lights at the park and ride.

Action needed: None.....at this time. Informational Only.

c. Historic Cemetery in Village. NO CHANGE. Update: 11-19-2021 – Nothing further to report until spring when Castleton University student Joey Kinney will plan another day of cleaning headstones.

Action needed: None.....at this time. Informational Only.

d. Recreation Department – Looking to hire a full-time recreation director. I reached out to Martha Clifford

Action needed: None.....at this time. Informational Only.

11. Selectboard – *The auditorium in the Jeffords Building on CU campus is reserved for 6:00 PM on 4/27/2022.*

Action needed: None.....at this time. Informational Only.

a. Union Negotiations (NEPBA): *Update: 3/25/2022 – I received an email from Chris Hoar with some dates to choose from for the first meeting to renegotiate the New England PBA contract for police officers. The dates have been sent to the Town's negotiating team for consideration.* Still no word from Chris Hoar or Justin Szarejko on a date for a first meeting. I sent an email to Chris Hoar asking his work schedule and what times work best for him to begin negotiations. As of 1/22/2022 I had not received a response. I will try to reach him through Justin Szarejko on Monday if I have not heard back by then.. Last update: 12/23/2021: I reached out to Chris Hoar soliciting the best day of week and best time of the day to kick off negotiations. I reached out via email to Joe Mark and Mike Holden inquiring what day of the week and what time of the day works best for them. As of 12/23/2021 this has not been resolved.

Action needed: *SB negotiating team to choose rank order the dates provided by Chris Hoar and I will set up the first meeting.*

12. Public Concerns –

- a. Muddy gravel roads. The highway crew is out fixing them. No buses on four gravel roads.*
- b. Dirt and sod on sidewalks. Highway crew had to fix impassable roads first. They had it on their schedule to sweep the sidewalks today (3/25). A little rain helps keep the dust to a minimum.*
- c. Lots of gravel pushed onto lawns. Some in the right of way and some outside of it. The highway crew will do their spring clean up once the roads are stabilized.*
- d. Scheduled removal of the Pelletier Dam on East Hubbardton Road this summer.*

Action needed: None.....at this time. Informational Only.

13. Follow up from last meeting – Nothing to report

Executive Session – Contracts/Labor Relations and personnel.