

# Town Manager's Report Select Board Meeting 11/19/2021

## 1. Grant Project Updates:

a. **Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) Grant (Pedestrian Accessibility Scoping Study): NO CHANGE** . Last Update: 11/08/21 – I participated in a project update meeting on 11/2/2021. We reviewed the public comments from the meeting on 10/11/2021 and discussed three courses of action that address the public concerns. These courses of action will be briefed at a public meeting at a future date. I did express my concern about the current planning timeline. The next round of bike and pedestrian grants open for applications in April 2022 and close in June 2022. I need the information from the scoping study to include in the grant, therefore I need the information no later than May 1, 2022, so I have ample time to put together the application. This will require assistance from the Rutland Regional Planning Commission for data collection, letters of support, and to proof the final product before submission. Additionally, this will require matching funds. Until the project goes to final design, I am not sure what the final costs will be, but the current sidewalk project required approximately \$148K from the Town. The proposed project for the village is substantially larger than the current project and costs of labor and materials have increased, so the Town's match will likely be greater than \$148K. The sidewalk project from Castleton Corners to Parson's Hill schedule for next year will deplete the sidewalk funds we have on hand, so the project for the village will require additional funding, perhaps some through assignment of surplus of the current and next year's operating budget. It is not clear if something like this would be eligible use of ARPA funds.

Action needed:

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

b. **TAP Bike & Pedestrian Grant:** No change from last report. 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 –NO CHANGE**. Last Update 11/8/2021 – I participated in a project status meeting on 11/1/2021. We discussed the 9050 general permit for stormwater mitigation for areas greater than 3-acres of impervious surface. We reviewed a map of the Town's land on Staso Road and discussed two potential locations for a salt and sand shed. One location would be in the upper parking lot behind the fuel tank because it is in the existing impervious surface area, and the second would be between the pole barn at the highway garage and the Transfer Station. This area does contain spots where the ground water does not drain and would require more treatment because it is not included in the current impervious surface area. The engineering team continues to work on the environmental assessment and potential stormwater treatment methods. The next meeting status update meeting will be in December 2021. Last update: 9/24/2021- An in-progress review (IPR) was held on 9/20/2021. We discussed the area the solar array will occupy, and I was informed that since there will be

vegetation growing under and around the solar panels that it is not considered an impervious surface area.

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 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 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. 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 – Update: 11/08/2021** – I received the latest safety assessment of the Transfer Station from Wade Masure. I then spoke with Joe Rice, and he advised that he is working with Chris Fouracre on the fix plan. When asked what he needed, he advised that he is all set and will work out the details with Chris for a fix plan that will satisfy the deficiencies noted by PACIF Loss Consultant, Wade Masure. My assessment has not changed and that correcting noted deficiencies are underway, which once completed will increase both employee and patron safety.

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

b. **Equipment. NO CHANGE.** Last Update: 11-8-2021  
(1) The new open-top bin is still not ready for pickup.

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

c. **Vehicles. Update: NO CHANGE.** 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** – Nothing significant to report.

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

3. **Solar Projects** –

a. **MHG Solar Gravel Pit – 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** –

a. **Phase I. 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.*

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

b. **Sewer Plant –Update: 11:19/2021** - *The draining of the tank is progressing without incident. The contractor did not reach sludge until the tank fell below six-feet of material. The less sludge equates to less money the Town will pay in the end. The engineer that VLCT-PACIF assigned did visit the facility and talked with Jeff and took photos. Nothing else to report at this time. Last 11/08/2021 – DPW Director Chris Fouracre has begun coordination with Senesac, Englobe, and Goulet Trucking to get the draining, cleaning, inspections, and repair made to the 400,000-sludge tank (Course of Action#1) using sewer reserve funds as approved by the Board of Sewer Commissioners on 11/1/2021.*

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

5. **Highway Department** –

a. **Paving in FY21-22 -Update: 11/08/2021** – *Paving is complete for this year.*

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

b. **FEMA (Town wide designation)** – No change.

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

c. **FEMA (Little Rutland Road)** –**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. **FEMA (South Street Trestle)** – No change. Update: 9/10/2021 – Due to the complexity of this project, I asked Vermont Emergency Management for an extension to this project, which was granted until October 2022. Bid packets and grant applications will be completed in 2022.

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

## 6. **Town Office & other buildings** –

a. **Fire Station.** Update: 11/19/2021 –Chief Goyette and called Paul and Mickey McClure about the water damage to the fire station due to a separated vent pipe and he sent me photos of the damaged ceiling tiles. Paul McClure's called me back and advised it is still on their list to complete. VLCT-PACIF wants better photos of the damage, which can be completed once Paul cuts through the wall upstairs in the fire station so we can see the extent of the damage. It has not leaked since the vent pipe was replaced.

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

b. **Police Station.** N/A

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

c. **Highway Garage.** Chris Fouracre had to have a contractor come to the garage and troubleshoot the wood boiler. It was repaired and a circulator motor replaced. It is now working. There is one of the three blowers that is not working. Chris will work on getting a contractor in to look at it. The heating oil and vehicle fuel was delivered.

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

d. **Police Station.** Mickey McClure still has to cut the bottom of the door that leads from the parking lot into the Troop Room, so it closes properly. It is on their list of tasks to complete.

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

7. **Police Department** –

a. **Dispatching Costs** – 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** – The police department is planning on participating in the lighted holiday parade scheduled for 12/11/2021 and providing traffic control. We had our first planning meeting with Jen Jones, fire chief, police chief, DPW Director, Nancy Trudo, Castleton Women’s Club, and Lisa Thayer of the Castleton Fire Department Association. To date, the number of vendors that can be placed in the old Texaco Station parking lot is maxed out. A brochure was created and will be distributed locally and over social media. We expect to have 35-40 parade entrants.

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

8. **Emergency Management** –

*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)** – *I received a message back from Lance Harbour (our regional FEMA rep) and he advised he could not recommend a grant writer, but suggested I call the Pownal Fire Department as they have been successful using a grant writer under the AFG Grant program. I also reached out to Chief Bill Lovett at the City of Rutland Fire Department because they may have used a grant writer to get their platform.*

c. **Operations** – Chief Goyette approached me to advise that two vendors have submitted bids to replace the mini-pumper (Engine 6) and that the officer group was going to review the bids this past Wednesday night and bring their recommendation/request to the Selectboard on thesecond meeting in November. I am not sure if they plan on submitting another grant application to try and defer out-of-pocket costs or plan on asking the SB to use money from the vehicle reserve account. The Assistance to Firefighter Grant period opens on 11/8/2021 and closes on December 17, 2021. As discussed last year, it would be worth the investment to hire a grant writer to increase the odds of being approved. The devil is in the details.

*Action needed: *This is on the agenda for this meeting. The bid quotes are in the meeting packets. The actual bid specs are 1.5 – 2-inch documents so not feasible to put in a packet.**

- d. **Public Outreach & Support** –The fire department is planning on participating in the lighted holiday parade scheduled for 12/11/2021. They were also asked to help string lights at the Texaco Station. They also plan on having a meet and greet with Santa at the Fire Station following the parade. The American Legion Auxiliary is helping by cooking cookies for the kids.

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. Update: 11/19/2021** – *I received a message from Paul McClure at 10AM on Friday (19<sup>th</sup>) 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. 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.*

11. **Recreation Department** – I added the salary and benefits to the budget worksheet that supports what the Recreation Commission directors and commissioner briefed to the Selectboard back in October about a full-time recreation director.

Action needed: *Selectboard to make comments and provide direction or guidance. I wanted to take this opportunity to advise that the increase to the recreation budget is substantial as compared to last year's recreation budget. If the board provides guidance or direction that tells me to level fund the budget or keep department increases below a certain dollar amount, or below a certain percentage, would kill the idea of a full-time director for recreation. To clarify, there seriously isn't much to cut or reduce in the rest of the recreation budget without cutting the funds needed for the programs themselves. Those bones have little meat on them now. Having a full-time recreation director with no funding to administer recreation programs would be nonsensical from a programming perspective.*

12. **Selectboard** –

- a. Is there a need to schedule time at the town office or fire department for a meeting between Castleton and Hubbardton Selectboard members (two each) to discuss the upcoming Castleton Village School vote?

Action needed: *Provide direction or guidance as necessary.*

**b. Union Negotiations (NEPBA): 11/19/2021.**

*Action needed:* Does the Selectboard want me to reach out to the New England Police Benevolent Association (NEPBA) to start a dialogue about ground rules for union negotiations. The current contract between the Town and NEPBA expires in 2022. I made a best guess about wages in FY2022-2023 because the budget goes before the voters before the new collective bargaining agreement will be successfully negotiated.

**13. Public Concerns – Nothing to report**

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

**14. Follow up from last meeting** – I spoke with Chief Mantello and Justin Szarejko regarding the broken guardrails on Drake Road. Both advised that must have happened some time ago. Neither of them recalls an accident happening recently on Drake Road. I have been here for almost four years, and I cannot recall an accident on Drake Road at the bridge location where the wooden posts were broken. I cannot file a claim with an insurance company without a police report and after speaking with Peter and Justin, it is my takeaway that there are no police reports that I can act on.

**11/19/2021**

Executive Session –N