

MEMO

To: Town Council
CC: Town Employees
From: John C. Carrington, Interim Town Manager
Date: May 11, 2020
Subject: **Town Manager's Report**

Below, please find my report concerning various items of interest to the Town Council, staff, and the community:

Council Business

- *Proposed FY 2020/21 Operating Budget and CIP* –Residents can find a schedule of budget meetings on the Town's website and can access information regarding the current year budget and next year's proposed budget on our *Open Mansfield* financial transparency platform: <http://open.mansfieldct.org>.

Departmental Reports

• ***Animal Control***

- Shelter closed to the public to minimize risk to staff. Telephone triage for calls to determine urgency and to give advice. Essential services in the field only
- Community outreach program: Take pets into protective custody when their owner is hospitalized suddenly. Pet food pantry
- Following the NACA protocol and the guidelines form State Animal Control. <https://www.nacanet.org/naca-statements-on-covid-19/>

• ***Board of Education:***

With Connecticut schools officially closed now through the end of the school year, we are focused on continuing learning and closing out the year. Highlights include:

- Moving to use of school buses for meal distribution allowing for increase in number of meals served and better control of food temperatures as the weather warms,
- Preparing for end of year events which will need to be held virtually and transitions to new grade or school.
- Process for providing feedback to families on student learning.

In addition, planning is beginning for next school year including how to address student needs within a variety of scenarios such as regular school attendance, reduced in-person schooling, continued distance learning, or a combination of in-person and virtual learning.

• ***Building & Housing:***

- Continue to provide housing inspection services but have had a slightly increased volume of customers asking to postpone. I have advised staff to approve these requests and clearly document the reason and update our schedule so we return at a later date. This will have a negative effect on revenue in the short term. We may also need to consider overtime in the future to maintain our implementation schedule as required by ordinance.

- Building department will work with code enforcement colleagues regarding outdoor dining code ramifications. Restaurants to begin this activity on or about May 20.
 - Inspectors continue to use any down time to scan our historic files and input the data into MAGNET software for future use
- ***Downtown Partnership:***
 - Working to assess needs of businesses to meet state guidelines for possible reopening on/after May 20
 - Continuing to administer "Spend & Win!" contest to support Mansfield restaurants
 - Reviewing and sharing information for businesses about safe reopening procedures from the state, CDC, and industry associations
- ***Eastern Highland Health District:***
 - The EHHD continues to conduct COVID-19 case contact tracing. As of 5-11-2020 we have completed 111 case investigations, with 31 still active. The EHHD is a beta test site for the new state-wide contact tracing platform "ContaCT", which will be launched sometime this month.
 - Weekly distribution of PPE to area healthcare providers continues. To date we have distributed the 2,870 masks/N95 respirators, 400 gowns, 738 face shields, and 90 boxes of gloves to 19 healthcare providers in the health district.
 - The EHHD Medical Reserve Corps unit continues to grow with 57 new volunteers fully vetted and sworn in the past month for a total of 87 members in the unit. We have approximately 45 more still in various stages of the vetting process.
- ***Facilities:***
 - Custodial staff working on cleaning up after staff and will be working on school shutdown efforts as well as all Town building shutdowns.
 - Maintenance staff completed installation of A/C units in the elementary school libraries.
 - Maintenance staff continuing multiple projects as well as the repairs to MCC family changing rooms.
- ***Finance:***
 - Received the Town Aid Road grant in the amount of \$414,125
 - Continue to monitor all revenues and expenditures and will be working on projections through June 30th.
 - Operations continue as normal
- ***Fire:***
 - Continue to respond to 911 calls for service.
 - Continue to try to keep personnel safe and healthy.
 - Trying to maintain PPE supplies
- ***Emergency Services:***
 - Coordinate Town PPE order requests to DEMHS
 - Disseminate information from DEMHS to Town Departments related to Presidential Disaster Declaration; working with Finance Department to submit required paperwork
 - Attend State and Local conference calls for updated information

- **Human Resources:**

- COVID-19

- Unemployment compensation verification – received 24 inquiries for the week of 5/4 – 8 to verify employee information as the State continues catches up with their backlog of claims.
 - Reviewing information from various sources to prepare for employees Returning To Work and the impact that will have on staff.
 - Continue to process “Report Only” worker’s compensation claims for First Responders due to potential COVID-19 exposure.

- OTHER:

- Recruiting efforts for Finance Department Head position. Go To Meeting panel interview (5/5) for 4 candidates. Final interview for 3 candidates scheduled for Tuesday morning 5/12.

- **Human Services:**

- Nutrition support for food insecure and homebound senior households through food pantry, Meals-on-Wheels delivery and Mobile Foodshare and coordination with other food pantries and faith-based organizations
 - Transportation for seniors and disabled adults to medical appointments that are necessary and in which there is no other alternative
 - Mental health support through counseling, parent and caregiver support, telephone reassurance and wellness checks, crisis intervention and referral.
 - Case management, information, advocacy and referral for those in need of assistance accessing critical services and programs – ie: financial assistance, food insecurity, healthcare access

- **Information Technology:**

- During the month of April and early May (April 1st to May 11th), over 30 public meetings were live streamed and recorded for public access.
 - Information Technology staff are using PPE (masks), frequent hand washing, equipment disinfectant, and 6+ foot distancing to safely conduct any required onsite work to keep all network systems operational.
 - School-at-home and work-at-home in support of social distancing continues successfully using systems such as SSL remote access, GoToMeeting, Zoom, Google Classroom, and PLearning.

- **Library:**

- Mailing seeds to people who request them from the seed library.
 - Working on a phased opening plan with no set dates.
 - Developing and expanding online programming.

- **Parks & Recreation:**

- Staff continue to offer a variety of online exercise and activity options. Check website for details and updates.
 - Staff are continuing to contact all Community Center members to see how they are doing and provide information. A recent survey to Silver Sneakers members was completed and a summary of the survey results will soon be shared with Council members.
 - Summer program brochure has been distributed and staff are preparing modified operational plans for summer programs and summer camps following guidelines by the CDC and State and local health officials.

- **Planning and Development:**
 - An interdepartmental team comprised of Planning, Building, Fire, Engineering, EHHD and Economic Development staff is developing permit procedures for outdoor activities pursuant to the reopening guidelines for business sectors that have been authorized to re-open on May 20th. These procedures will be finalized as soon as possible once the Governor issues the anticipated Executive Order related to permit and fee waivers. If needed, special meetings of the Town Council, Planning and Zoning Commission and Traffic Authority will be scheduled to address any remaining issues that require local action. Final procedures will be posted on the Town's website and communicated to businesses.

- **Public Works:**
 - Have altered and staggered schedules to reduce the number of individuals at one at time at the Garage Property.
 - Continue with small teams utilizing social distancing, one person per vehicle, and assigned vehicles.
 - Changed accepted payments at the Transfer Station to credit/debit cards only along with new payment terminal that minimizes common touch surfaces.

- **Resident Troopers:**
 - Troopers have been instructed to maintain a high level of visibility within the Mansfield community while continuing to respond to calls of service.
 - The CSP continues to operate with "calls for service limitations" in an attempt to reduce the possibility of an exposure of COVID-19 to a State Trooper. These limitations are being managed by the Troop C desk personnel and dispatcher. (Example: a complaint of annoying and/or obscene phone calls will be reported via telephone or email, a Trooper will not be responding to the residence unless absolutely necessary. At which time the complainant would be asked to step outside to speak with the Trooper with "social distancing" standards being observed.)
 - Mansfield Resident Troopers are working in conjunction with Mansfield Fire/EMS units when responding to needed calls for service.

- **Town Clerk:**
 - Operations during this time require a higher level of customer support to assist with searches, uploading requested documents, and technology support; call volume of customers with non-Town Clerk needs has increased to an almost debilitating level and we are working with Town staff to rectify this.
 - Essential and routine functions continue; essential public-facing services are conducted by appointment through the drop box slot; detailed operations plan is posted on the Town Clerk's webpage.
 - Office hours are reduced and coverage is staggered; routine customer service, archival and special projects are worked on from home

Upcoming Events

- *Storrs Farmers Market* – Storrs Farmers Market is open every Saturday from 3:00 to 6:00 PM on the front lawn of the Mansfield Town Hall from May through November. Learn more at storrsfarmersmarket.org.