

Memo

To: Town Council
From: Matt Hart, Town Manager
CC: Town Employees
Date: October 27, 2014
Re: Town Manager's Report

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

Council Business

- *11/04/14 Election and Referendum* – The offices on the ballot include Governor and Lieutenant Governor, Representative in Congress, State Senator, State Representative, Secretary of the State, Treasurer, Comptroller, Attorney General, Judge of Probate, Registrar of Voters and Judge of Probate to fill a vacancy. There are also two questions on the ballot. The first is a statewide constitutional amendment regarding removing restrictions concerning absentee ballots and permitting a person to vote without appearing at a polling place on Election Day. The second is a local referendum question which reads "Shall the Town of Mansfield appropriate \$9,000,000 for the Four Corners Sanitary Sewer Project, and authorize the issue of bonds, notes and other obligations to finance the portion of the appropriation not defrayed from grants (estimated net project cost of \$6,000,000)?" Voting will be in all four polling locations and the polls will be open from 6 AM to 8 PM. A list of voting districts by street is available on the Registrars of Voters page of the Town's website (mansfieldct.gov). Absentee ballots are available in the Town Clerk's office beginning Oct. 3. Property owners who are qualified to vote on the referendum question may do so by appearing on Election Day at the Registrars of Voters office in the Audrey P. Beck Building at 4 S. Eagleville Rd. Voters who are not registered to vote but who wish to register on Election Day should report to the Council Chamber of the Audrey P. Beck Building at 4 South Eagleville Road.
- *CCM Convention* – The Mayor, Deputy Mayor and several staff were able to attend the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) Annual Convention on October 21, 2014. Councilor Raymond was also there representing the Materials Innovation and Recycling Authority (MIRA). We were able to hear from gubernatorial candidates Tom Foley and Governor Malloy, and to attend various workshops of interest for municipal government officials.
- *Financial Operations Controls Assessment* – I have executed the contract with Blum Shapiro and they have commenced work on Task 1 of the engagement (Review current processes, operations and controls).
- *Tax Collection Procedures, Interest Rate on Delinquent Taxes* – At the October 14, 2014 meeting the Town Council asked for clarification on the interest rate paid on delinquent taxes. The statutory rate is 18% per year or 1.5% per month, and compounds over time. A resident cited an example of a 65% interest rate. To reach this level, the taxes would have to be delinquent for a period of 43 months (43 months X 1.5% = 64.5%). Furthermore, state statute does not provide the Town with the ability to waive or charge a different interest rate. The only discretion the Town has under statute is whether to impose a minimum interest of \$2.00 for minimal delinquencies (between \$60-70); Mansfield does assess this minimum interest rate.
- *UCONN Master Plan* – Attached please find a press release from the University regarding its Campus Master Plan, highlighting its public information session scheduled for 6:30-8:00 PM this Thursday, October 30, 2014, in the Council Chamber at the Beck Municipal Building (Town Hall).

- *Update Regarding 458 South Eagleville Road* – At the October 14, 2014 Council meeting, Mr. Jason McGarry requested the installation of a guardrail along his property which abuts routes 32 and 275. Staff communicated Mr. McGarry's request to the Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT). ConnDOT has responded that guardrails are installed to protect motorists from roadside hazards such as drop-offs, bodies of water and other more significant fixed objects. Since there are no such hazards at this location, the installation of a guardrail is considered unwarranted and unsafe as it would introduce an obstruction. Further, the State right-of-way is not wide enough to accommodate a guardrail. I have asked the Mansfield Traffic Authority, at its regular meeting scheduled for 11:00AM tomorrow, October 28, 2014, to discuss to discuss the signage, pavement markings and lighting at the intersection to see if these items could be improved to enhance driver visibility. This would most likely involve asking ConnDOT to review the intersection from a traffic safety perspective. I will also ask the Traffic Authority to review options for fencing or markers that Mr. McGarry could install on his property to enhance driver awareness.

Departmental Reports

- *Town Manager's Office/Finance Department*
 - *Electricity and Natural Gas Contracts* – I have good news to report from our Director of Finance and energy consultant Titan Energy on the Town's electricity and natural gas contracts. The NextEra electricity supply contract will take effect in December 2014 and run through December 2017. The Town currently consumes 4,018,000 kWh/year of electricity. Dropping the price from about 10 cents to 7.496 cents under the new contract will reduce the Town's cost by approximately \$100,000 in 2015, alone. If you compare that to where the consultant expects the utility is going (12 cents/kWh), our hypothetical savings are about \$180,000/year. Furthermore, the Direct Energy gas contract began in August and lasts through August 2017. The price came down from \$8.8/DTH to \$7.64/DTH, which, based on a 30,000 DTH annual load, will reduce the Town's expenditures by \$34,800/year. The bottom line is Mansfield is in a strong position through 2017, and I would like to thank Ms. Trahan and our colleagues at Titan for their excellent work in this regard.

Major Projects and Initiatives

- *CL&P Interstate Reliability Project* - Work in Mansfield this week will include use of a helicopter to help install and string overhead lines in the vicinity of Stafford Road and Highland Road and site restoration work in the vicinity of Bassetts Bridge Road and South Bedlam Road. Weekly construction updates can be found at www.NEEWSprojects.com. Residents can also call 1-866-99NEEWS (1-866-996-3397) or email NEEWS@NU.com for more information.

Upcoming Events

- *Storrs Farmers Market* – The Market is open every Saturday from May through Thanksgiving, from 3:00 to 6:00 PM on the front lawn of the Beck Municipal Building. Everything sold at Storrs Farmers Market is grown or produced in Connecticut. In fact, the average distance from farm to market is just 12 miles! Visit www.storrsfarmersmarket.org for more information.

Upcoming Meetings*

- Traffic Authority, October 28, 2014, 11:00 AM, Conference Room B, Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building
- Human Services Advisory Committee, October 29, 2014, 3:30 PM, Conference Room B, Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building
- UCONN Master Plan Presentation, October 30, 2014, 6:30 PM, Council Chamber, Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building
- Inland/Wetland Agency & Planning and Zoning Commission, November 3, 2014, 7:00 PM, Council Chamber, Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building
- Town-University Relations Committee, November 4, 2014, 4:00 PM, Community Room, Mansfield Community Center

- Agricultural Committee Meeting, November 4, 2014, 7:30 PM, Conference Room B, Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building
- Mansfield Advocates for Children, November 5, 2014, 5:30 PM, Council Chamber, Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building
- Mansfield Downtown Partnership Board of Directors, November 6, 2014, 4:00 PM, Council Chamber, Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building
- Four Corners Water and Sewer Advisory Committee, November 6, 2014, 7:00 PM, Council Chamber, Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building
- Housing Code Board of Appeals, November 10, 2014, 5:00 PM, Conference Room C, Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building
- Town Council, November 10, 2014, 7:30 PM, Council Chamber, Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building

**Meeting dates/times are subject to change. Please view the [Town Calendar](#) or contact the Town Clerk's Office at 860-429-3302 for a complete and up-to-date listing of committee meetings.*