

Memo

To: Town Council
From: Matt Hart, Town Manager *MWH*
CC: Town Employees
Date: July 27, 2015
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

- *Legal Opinion on Purchasing Ordinance* – Please see item #5 in your packet for a legal opinion from our Town Attorney concerning the procurement of professional services under the Town's Purchasing ordinance. The thrust of the opinion reads that "...in cases in which there is a sufficiently precise scope of services, the Town should engage in its own RFP/RFQ. In cases in which the scope of services is 'less precise,' the Town Manager may utilize the State's Bid List, while ensuring a sufficient and representative number of vendors are given an opportunity to bid." The opinion will necessitate a change in practice, which staff will implement immediately. I will also discuss the issue with the Finance Committee, as the Town Attorney has indicated that the language in the ordinance could be clearer.
- *Sale of Nathan Hale Inn* – I have discussed the issue of taxes due and payable for the Nathan Hale Inn with the Town Attorney, following UCONN's purchase of the property on July 1, 2015. The assessment year is different from the fiscal year, and runs from October 1 through September 30 of each year. Consequently, there may be taxes owed and I am looking into the issue in consultation with the Town Attorney. I will keep the Council informed on this matter.
- *Town Attorney Memo re Council-Staff Relations* – Attached please find a memorandum from the Town Attorney regarding his meeting with department heads to discuss their March 8, 2015 letter concerning council-staff relations. The upshot of the communication is that the Town Attorney in his discussions with staff did not hear concerns that would "rise to a criminal charge of harassment or threatening, but heard instead a "more general concern that this situation not be allowed to escalate to a point where...intervention would be necessary." Given the recent progress we have made in this area, I recommend that we defer the issue of council-staff relations to the next Town Council, which can address the matter in the form of rules of procedure or operating guidelines.

Major Projects and Initiatives

- *Community Playground* – I am happy to announce that site work for the new Community Playground will begin tomorrow, July 28, 2015. Last Monday, the Planning and Zoning Commission approved a site plan modification for the Community Center site, where the new playground will be located. Last year at this time, State Representative Gregory Haddad announced that the State Bonding Commission approved \$100,000 in state financing to help support the building of a new community playground in Mansfield. In addition to the State support, the Jeffrey P. Ossen Family Foundation awarded \$200,000 to support this accessible, community-built playground in Mansfield. The playground is part of an ongoing effort by the Mansfield Advocates for Children to strengthen community connections and enhance the overall quality of life in Mansfield. As the site work begins, fundraising will continue for other project amenities such as specialized playground equipment, playground components, picket fencing to surround the playground and other project needs. Volunteers will be needed to help with the community build later this fall. Anyone wishing to support the project financially or to volunteer can obtain information at the Playground Committee's website, www.mansfieldcommunityplayground.org.

- *Eversource Interstate Reliability Project* – During the week of July 27, 2015, no work is scheduled in Mansfield. 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.

Department Reports

- **Public Works**
 - *Pavement Restoration Projects, Hunting Lodge Road and Mansfield City Road* – The Town will be installing new catch basins and drainage piping on sections of Hunting Lodge Road and Mansfield City Road, and will later be paving those same sections of roadway. The work on these roads will occur through the end of July and into mid-August, and the roads will at times be limited to local-only access. Local residents can obtain more information about these projects by visiting the Town's webpage at www.mansfieldct.gov.
- **Town Manager's Office**
 - *CIRMA Equity Distribution* – I am happy to report that on July 22nd the Town, the Mansfield Board of Education and Region 19 received their member equity distribution program checks from CIRMA, in the following amounts:
 - Town, for workers compensation (WC): \$9,675
 - MBOE, for workers compensation (WC): \$5,040
 - Town/MBOE combined, for liability, automobile and property (LAP): \$6,051
 - Region 19, LAP/work comp combined: \$5,633

The partners will use the proceeds from the equity distribution program to offset the cost of insurance and to provide safety and risk management training programs for staff.

Upcoming Events

- *Storrs Farmers Market* – Storrs Farmers Market is in its 21st season. The Market is open from 3:00 to 6:00PM every Saturday through November 22nd on the front lawn of the Beck Municipal Building (Town Hall). Everything sold at Storrs Farmers Market is grown or produced in Connecticut. Visit www.storrsfarmersmarket.org for more information and to sign up for weekly emails from the Market.

Upcoming Meetings*

- Traffic Authority, July 28, 2015, 10:30 AM, Conference Room B, Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building
- Finance Committee, July 29, 2015, 6:00 PM, Council Chamber, Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building
- Agriculture Committee, August 1, 2015, 7:30 PM, Conference Room B, Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building
- Inland-Wetland Agency & Planning and Zoning Commission, August 3, 2015, 7:00 PM, Council Chamber, Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building
- Four Corners Sewer and Water Advisory Committee, August 4, 2015, 6:30 PM, Council Chamber, Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building
- Agriculture Committee, August 4, 2015, 7:30 PM, Conference Room B, Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building
- Ad Hoc Committee on Naming of Streets and Buildings, August 5, 2015, 5:00 PM, Conference Room C, Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building
- Mansfield Advocates for Children, August 5, 2015, 5:30 PM, Council Chamber, Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building
- Town Council, August 10, 2015, 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.*

Memorandum

To: Mayor Paterson, Members of the Town Council
Matthew Hart, Town Manager

From: Kevin M. Deneen, Esq.

Date: 7/27/2015

Re: Council/Staff Relations: Meeting with Department Heads

As you are aware, on March 8th of this year, a letter was presented to the Town Council signed by the heads of various departments. In this letter, the Department Heads described an overall concern regarding Council/Staff relations, specifically including interactions between Council members and staff, and the public and staff. This was in part focused on interactions and discussions which occurred during Town Council meetings.

Following that presentation, at the request of the Council and the Town Manager, I met with the Department Heads on April 7, 2015 as a group to listen to their comments and concerns. The letter from the Department Heads outlined concerns regarding interactions with both the public and Council Members, it also expressed that "The behavior has recently reached a level that has caused some employees to be concerned for their safety." The letter then cites Council Rule of Procedure 5 which provides that "all meeting participants including Councilors, citizens and staff should confine their remarks to the substance of the issue at hand. Participants should avoid discussing personalities and not impugn the motive, character or integrity of any individual. The Town Council supports the right of a resident to criticize its local government, but this should be done appropriately and responsibly, with civility and discretion. All participants should address their remarks to the Mayor and maintain a civil tone "and requests that "a trooper be present at all Town Council meetings." The concern expressed in my meeting with the Department Heads revealed that they were concerned with the escalating tone and lack of civility.

In my discussions with the Department Heads, this concern was more of a general concern regarding what they regard as a contentious atmosphere and discussion with members of the public which they feel is escalating and the discussions have become increasingly personal. Given the highly publicized violence that has occurred in other communities and meetings, their concern is that this escalation not lead to any such occurrence in Mansfield. I did not hear concerns that would rise to a criminal charge of harassment or threatening, but rather this more general concern that this situation not be allowed to escalate to a point where such intervention would be necessary.

Also, some members of the public have raised concerns that department heads were coerced into signing this letter. In my discussions with the Department Heads, they were forthright in conveying their thoughts and comments regarding the issues presented in their letter to the Town Manager. Not one expressed any feeling of coercion or pressure to sign the letter.

A concern was raised in my discussions with the Council as to whether it was appropriate for the Town Manager to bring this letter directly to the Town Council. The Town Manager and Assistant Town Manager (who was out on maternity leave at this time) provide the Human Resources services for the Town. As such, it was appropriate for the Department heads to provide this letter to the Town Manager. As this letter directly concerned interactions between staff and the Council and members of the public at Town Council meetings, it was entirely appropriate for this to be then presented directly with the Town Council.

TOWN OF MANSFIELD
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS



Engineering Division

AUDREY P. BECK BUILDING
FOUR SOUTH EAGLEVILLE ROAD
MANSFIELD, CT 06268-2599

From: John Carrington, P.E., Public Works Director
To: Residents of Hunting Lodge Road
Date: July 17, 2015
Re: **Pavement Restoration Project**
Hunting Lodge Road

The Town of Mansfield (Town) maintains nearly 110 miles of roadways within its network making it one of the most expensive pieces of infrastructure the Town owns. This work is being undertaken by the Town to continue restoration of the roadway network.

Between July 21, 2015 and August 7, 2015 the Town will be installing new catch basins and drainage piping in the roadway. Minimal disturbance to residents of Hunting Lodge Road is anticipated.

On or about July 28, 2015, the Town's sub-contractor Garrity Asphalt Reclaiming will be removing the top one (1) inch of asphalt on Hunting Lodge Road between North Eagleville Road and Separatist Road. The roadway will be closed to through traffic but will **remain open to residents needing access to their homes.**

The estimated time for completing paving of the roadway is **mid-August.**

We ask for your patience during the project and please provide feedback to the Town of Mansfield Public Works Department at (860) 429-3676 or e-mail us at PublicWorks@mansfieldct.org.

Thank you for your patience and support,

John C. Carrington, PE
Public Works Director

TOWN OF MANSFIELD
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS



Engineering Division

AUDREY P. BECK BUILDING
FOUR SOUTH EAGLEVILLE ROAD
MANSFIELD, CT 06268-2599

From: John Carrington, P.E., Public Works Director
To: Residents of Mansfield City Road
Date: July 17, 2015
Re: **Pavement Restoration Project**
Mansfield City Road

The Town of Mansfield (Town) maintains nearly 110 miles of roadways within its network making it one of the most expensive pieces of infrastructure the Town owns. This work is being undertaken by the Town to continue restoration of the roadway network.

Between July 21, 2015 and August 14, 2015 the Town will be installing new catch basins and drainage piping in the roadway. Minimal disturbance to residents of Mansfield City Road is anticipated.

On or about August 12, 2015, the Town's sub-contractor Garrity Asphalt Reclaiming will be removing the top one (1) inch of asphalt on Mansfield City Road between Browns Road and the south entrance to Jonathon Lane. The roadway will be closed to through traffic but will **remain open to residents needing access to their homes.**

The estimated time for completing paving of the roadway is **end of August.**

We ask for your patience during the project and please provide feedback to the Town of Mansfield Public Works Department at (860) 429-3676 or e-mail us at PublicWorks@mansfieldct.org.

Thank you for your patience and support,

John C. Carrington, PE
Public Works Director