

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Antonia Moran called the meeting of the Mansfield Town Council to order at 7:00 p.m. over Zoom. Mayor Moran announced that the Eagleville Green housing project won an award for the best green building project and congratulated the team responsible for the project.

2. ROLL CALL

Virtual: Cotton, Dufresne, Kueffner, Moran, Mullen, Shaiken, Tomecko
Excused: Bruder, Zaicek

3. OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE COUNCIL

None.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

A. ~~Lease Agreement (Vinton School Building) – Regional School District 19 STAAR Program~~

B. Scheduling a Public Hearing – Proposed Amendment to the Ordinance for the Town of Mansfield Application for Farm Tax Abatements

C. Scheduling a Public Hearing – Proposed Amendment to the Ordinance for Ambulance-Type Motor Vehicle Exemption

D. Appointments to Town Committees

E. 02.09.2026 Minutes

Kueffner requested item 4A Lease Agreement (Vinton School Building) – Regional School District 19 STAAR Program be pulled from the consent agenda and placed under new business as item 6D.

Dufresne **moved** and Kueffner seconded to approve the consent agenda as amended. Motion **passed** unanimously.

Motions approved by consent:

- Move, effective February 23, 2026, to schedule a public hearing for 7:00 p.m. at the Town Council's regular meeting on March 9, 2026, to solicit public comment regarding proposed amendments to the Farm Property Tax Abatement Ordinance.
- Move, effective February 23, 2026, to schedule a public hearing for 7:00 p.m. at the Town Council's regular meeting on March 9, 2026, to solicit public comment regarding proposed amendments to the Ambulance-type Motor Vehicle Exemption Ordinance.
- Move, effective February 23, 2026, to reappoint David Stevens to the Commission on Aging for a term ending 9/30/2028; appoint Kathy Ward to the Mansfield Housing Authority Board of Directors for a term ending 10/31/2028; appoint Annetta Miller to the Affordable Housing Committee for a term ending 1/1/2029; and appoint Dunja Pelto and Lori Smolin to the Arts Advisory Committee for terms ending 3/1/2027.
- Move to approve the February 9, 2026 regular Town Council meeting minutes as presented.

Shaiken **moved** and Cotton seconded to add BUILD Planning Grant to the agenda as new business item 6E. Motion **passed** unanimously.

5. OLD BUSINESS

None.

6. NEW BUSINESS

A. Proposed Sustainability Committee Charge Revision

Cotton and Kueffner spoke in support of the proposed charge revision, noting that the revisions modernize the charge and bring it in line with present-day priorities.

On behalf of the Committee on Committees, Cotton **moved**, effective February 23, 2026, to adopt the proposed revised Sustainability Charge as presented. Motion **passed** unanimously.

B. CT DOT Grant Application – Handicap-Accessible Van

Aylesworth discussed the popularity of the Town's transportation program and the strain on the program since one of the handicapped-accessible vans had to be removed from service. Jessica St. Louis, Director of Human Services, explained the need for the transportation program and the obstacles residents face when trying to secure handicapped-accessible transportation. In response to Councilor questions, St. Louis discussed grant requirements for providing transportation services, services provided by other towns, and regional service offerings such as Dial-A-Ride. Kueffner noted that he wished the Town's services could be expanded with a regional municipal program. Shaiken asked staff to assess the feasibility of obtaining reimbursement from insurance companies. Councilors expressed the desire for Dial-A-Ride services to improve.

Cotton **moved** and Kueffner seconded, effective February 23, 2026, to authorize the Town Manager to apply for a grant through the CT DOT Section 5310 Program in the amount of \$101,790.41 to support the transportation needs for seniors in our community.

In support of the motion, Cotton stated that the need for the transportation service is immediate and seeking grant funds to attain a new vehicle is fiscally responsible.

Motion **passed** unanimously.

C. Parks and Recreation Department Update

Jay O'Keefe, Director of Parks and Recreation, provided the Council with a department update related to the operations, services, programs, and ongoing/upcoming projects and priorities of the department. Michael Stankov, Environmental Planner, spoke regarding parks, preserves, and natural areas and open space acquisition and management.

In response to Councilor questions, O'Keefe and Stankov spoke regarding pond maintenance and O'Keefe spoke regarding the new program registration app, local competition, membership fees, the pool filtration system, and sidewalk replacements. Cotton asked staff to contact the Department of Veterans Affairs to inquire about supplementing member fees for Veterans.

D. Lease Agreement (Vinton School Building) – Regional School District 19 STAAR Program

Aylesworth described the STAAR program and their requirements for program space. In response to Councilor questions, Amanda Backhaus, Director of Finance, discussed the cost analysis

performed to determine the lease cost in consideration of the additional expenses related to keeping the Vinton School building open.

Dufresne **moved** and Cotton seconded, effective February 23, 2026, to authorize the Town Manager to enter into an agreement with Regional School District #19 to lease a portion of the Vinton School building for the purpose of housing the District's STAAR Program as presented. Motion **passed** unanimously.

E. BUILD Planning Grant

Aylesworth described the infrastructure improvement planning assistance the Town hopes to attain with a successful grant application and the requirements of the grant. In response to Councilor questions, Aylesworth and John Carrington, Director of Public Works, discussed planning and construction costs and funding.

Kueffner **moved** and Dufresne seconded, effective February 23, 2026, to authorize the Town Manager to submit a grant application to USDOT Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant for the planning and design of intersection and pedestrian safety improvements in Four Corners. Motion **passed** with all in favor except Cotton who was not present for the vote.

7. REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER

Town Manager Ryan Aylesworth presented and discussed his written report. The report is available online at www.MansfieldCT.gov and is on file with the Town Clerk.

In response to Councilor questions, Aylesworth discussed the condition of the Town's snow plowing equipment and the upcoming proposed meeting with HUD.

8. REPORTS AND COMMENTS OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

Dufresne thanked the Public Works employees for a great job clearing snow for those that had to use the roads during the storm.

9. REPORTS OF COUNCIL COMMITTEES

None.

10. PETITIONS, REQUESTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

A. J. Barba – Housing Opportunities with HUD

11. FUTURE AGENDAS

None.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Dufresne **moved** and Cotton seconded to adjourn the meeting at 9:39 p.m. The motion **passed** unanimously.

Antonia Moran, Mayor

Sara-Ann Chaine, Town Clerk