MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER
   Mayor Moran called the regular meeting of the Mansfield Town Council to order at 7:01 p.m. on Zoom.

2. ROLL CALL
   Present: Ausburger, Berthelot, Bruder, Coleman, Fratoni (late arrival noted below), Kochenburger, Moran, Schurin, Shaiken

3. OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE COUNCIL
   [Fratoni arrived]
   Zach Anglin, Storrs Road, spoke in favor of lifting the mask mandate. (Statement attached)
   Mr. Aylesworth read into the record a statement from Betty Wassmundt, Old Turnpike Road, including input about in-person meetings and concerns about the contract with the Mansfield Discovery Depot. (Statement attached)

4. 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 and comments, Mayor Moran and Mr. Aylesworth discussed the funding for crosswalk projects and Mr. Carrington discussed the need for contracted tree services.

5. REPORTS AND COMMENTS OF COUNCIL MEMBERS
   Mayor Moran reported meeting with DOT and UConn regarding pedestrian safety projects. She noted that today was Matt Hart’s first day as the Executive Director of CRCOG. Mr. Ausburger, in response to an email received from Mr. Aylesworth, provided several pieces of critical feedback regarding marketing efforts for the Helping Hands program and inquired as to why The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) hasn’t been offered in several months.
   Director of Planning, Linda Painter, answered and clarified several points regarding Helping Hands marketing efforts.
   Mr. Coleman encouraged people to participate in restaurant week and asked why two motions he proposed on February 14th regarding the mask mandate and in-person meetings were not on the agenda.
   Mayor Moran noted that both items were on tonight’s agenda.
   Mr. Coleman began speaking regarding the minutes of the Town Council and the Council Rules of Procedure Rule 2(h).
Mr. Shaiken raised a point of order stating that the portion of the agenda for Council reports is for Councilors to report the official business that they have conducted as Councilors since the last Council meeting and that Mr. Coleman’s present topic has been referred to the Personnel Committee and is not on the Council’s agenda for discussion. Mayor Moran ruled that Mr. Coleman could make a brief statement.

Mr. Coleman stated his request that the minutes follow Rule 2(h) and he will not approve the minutes tonight because they do not follow Rule 2(h).

Ms. Berthelot thanked Ms. Painter and her staff for their work on the Helping Hands program and suggested that more outreach needs to be done by the Town.

Mr. Shaiken requested the Helping Hands program to be on the next agenda so the public and the Council are prepared for a discussion on the topic.

Mr. Shaiken reported the first meeting of the Reapportionment Committee occurred two weeks ago. Officers were chosen and the State Department of Education’s attorney gave a presentation. He added that the Committee is formed to decide how to handle Mansfield’s slight underrepresentation on the Region 19 Board of Education as determined by the recent census and that a referendum on the Committee’s recommendation will eventually be held.

Mr. Bruder thanked the Library staff for all the work they do to provide a place for families to visit together.

Mr. Aylesworth stated that any characterization of the Planning and Development staff as not making every effort on the Helping Hands project is incorrect. The staff in the Planning Department care deeply, have shown tremendous commitment, are short staffed and are working well outside of work hours. In no way should anyone think that staff is just going through the motions and doing the bare minimum.

Mr. Coleman requested the minutes be pulled from the consent agenda.

6. CONSENT AGENDA
A. Appointments to Town Committees
B. FY 2022-2023 Budget Review Calendar (Item #6B, 02.14.22 Agenda)
Mr. Shaiken moved and Mr. Schurin seconded to approve the consent agenda. Motion passed with all in favor.

Motions adopted by consent:
- Move, effective February 28, 2022, to appoint Nicole Pedersen to the Solid Waste Advisory Committee for a term ending 9/1/2023; to appoint Berdakh Utemuratov to the Solid Waste Advisory Committee for a term ending 9/1/2024; to appoint Alexander Eitland to the Agriculture Committee as an alternate for a term ending 10/13/2023; to appoint Denise Kegler to the Mansfield Advocates for Children as a parent representative for a term ending 6/30/2023; to appoint Jaclyn LaPointe to the Mansfield Advocates for Children as a parent representative for a term ending 6/30/2024; to appoint Michael Accorsi, Gina DeVivo Brassaw, and Kathy Fratoni to the Affordable Housing Committee for terms ending 1/1/2026; to appoint Aida Gradascevic to the Affordable Housing Committee for a term ending 1/1/2024; and to appoint Joe
Emenheiser from an alternate member to a full member of the Agriculture Committee for a term ending 10/13/2023.

- Move, to adopt the *2nd Revised* Proposed Budget Review Calendar for FY 2022/2023 as presented by staff.

C. Approval of Minutes
Mr. Shaiken moved and Ms. Berthelot seconded to approve the February 14, 2022 regular meeting minutes and the February 15, 2022 special meeting minutes.

Mr. Shaiken stated that the issue of Rule 2(h) as described in the Rules of Procedure was referred to the Personnel Committee for consideration and that Ms. Chaine is currently following the direction of the Mayor, previous Mayor and Councils in regards to details of debate in the minutes. Mr. Shaiken urged the Council to adopt the minutes as they are an accurate reflection of the meetings based on the procedure the Council has been following.

Motion passed with Berthelot, Bruder, Kochenburger, Moran and Shaiken in favor, Coleman against, and Ausburger, Fratoni, and Schurin abstaining.

7. OLD BUSINESS
A. COVID 19 Update (Item #7A, 01.24.22 Agenda)
Robert L. Miller, Director of Health, Eastern Highland Health District (EHHD), provided the Council with an update on COVID-19 in Mansfield including information about local case trends and vaccination rates. A significant decline and downward trend has been observed over the last six weeks. In response to Councilor questions, Mr. Miller stated that the data indicates it is reasonable to lift the mask mandate at this time.

B. Status of Local Authorities Relative to Mandating Masks and Face Coverings (Item #8A, 02.14.22 Agenda)
Mr. Aylesworth stated that now is the right time to rescind the mask mandate based on the new metrics.

Mr. Shaiken moved and Mr. Ausburger seconded to express formal support for the Town Manager to rescind the existing indoor face covering mandate for public spaces in Mansfield effective tomorrow.

Mr. Shaiken stated that the only way to battle the pandemic regardless of politics is to follow the advice of our Director of Health and the CDC. Schools, teachers and parents will need a week or two to work out new procedures and adjust. In response to Councilor questions, Mr. Miller indicated that it is essential that individuals who choose to or are recommended by health care providers to continue to wear a mask be supported.

Motion passed unanimously.
C. Resuming Council and Council Committees In-Person Meetings (Item #7A, 01.10.22 Agenda)
Mr. Shaiken moved and Mr. Ausburger seconded to have the Town Council and Council Committees resume hybrid or in-person meetings beginning on March 14, 2022. For Council Committees, the decision to hold the meeting in person or virtually will be up to the committee Chair.

Mr. Shaiken asked the Town Manager to explore whether any mitigation strategies are recommended such as unvaccinated persons testing negative before attending a public meeting and expressed his strong opinion that remote participation for Councilors, staff and the public continue to be made available.

Motion passed unanimously.

D. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding/Investment Deliberation (Item #1, 02.15.22 Agenda)
Mr. Aylesworth presented a brief summary of the progress made to date and a list of possible projects to complete with ARPA funding.
Councilors discussed whether to identify preferred projects before or after a public hearing.

Mr. Bruder moved and Ms. Berthelot seconded, effective February 28, 2022, to schedule a public hearing on the Town of Mansfield’s proposed uses of its American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding allocation for Monday, March 14, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. If a change in public date is needed, the Town Manager is authorized to revise the date provided Council members are polled and available on the new date, and the Town Clerk is advised of the new date prior to the deadline for advertising the public hearing.

Mr. Bruder commented that the input from a public hearing will help the Council move forward through the process.

Motion passed unanimously.

8. NEW BUSINESS
A. Human Rights Commission Annual Report
Glenn Mitoma, Chair of the Mansfield Human Rights Commission (HRC), and Jane Fried, HRC member, provided the Council with an update on the activities of the HRC. In addition to reviewing the report, maternity care at Windham Hospital and Title VII were discussed.

B. Service Agreement between Mansfield Discovery Depot and the Town of Mansfield
Mr. Aylesworth provided a brief background of the longstanding service agreement between the Town and the Mansfield Discovery Depot (MDD) and stated that staff completed a full cost accounting of services to ensure the current contract recovers the Town’s actual cost for services.
Mr. Kochenburger raised concerns over cyber security as it relates to providing IT services to the MDD.

Ms. Berthelot stated the importance of the Town’s support of the MDD dating back to the 1970s when the Town began its relationship with the MDD in recognition of the important role childcare plays in the lives of working women and in the lives of the children who receive care.

Mr. Coleman raised concerns over the Town’s liability as a landlord and responsibility for major repairs.

Mr. Ausburger questioned whether Mansfield taxpayers have been footing the bill for non-residents attending the daycare.

Ms. Berthelot indicated that most people who utilize the daycare live or work in Mansfield and that MDD is unique in that it’s open year round and all kids get a solid meal while they’re there.

Ms. Berthelot moved and Mr. Shaiken seconded to authorize the Town Manager to execute the attached service agreement between the Town of Mansfield and the Mansfield Discovery Depot for the period July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2025.

Ms. Berthelot stressed the importance of the relationship between the Town and the MDD, that the MDD provides children a quality education regardless of status, and urged the Council to support the contract.

Mr. Shaiken commented that the current agreement effectively ends whatever subsidy the Town was giving now that a cost analysis has been completed, the Town should continue to send a strong message that we support the MDD, and capital improvements are outside of the agreement and will be discussed at a later time.

Mr. Coleman stated he would support a three year contract if it were retroactive so prices could be adjusted sooner.

Mr. Kochenburger asked to make a friendly amendment to remove item number 3 from the agreement. Councilors debated the need for the amendment.

Mr. Shaiken moved and Mr. Ausburger seconded to enter executive session to discuss the Town’s cyber security and to invite Ryan, Jaime (if available), and Charmaine. Motion passed unanimously.

The executive session ended and Council resumed meeting in public session.

Mr. Kochenburger moved and Mr. Ausburger seconded to amend to take out the IT support for at least 30 days or to limit subject to review.

Councilors debated the proposed amendment.

Mr. Kochenburger proposed to amend his motion to say that the town has noted that shared services with IT may create potential problems and that this is an issue that will
continue to provide if that’s the desire but that will be an issue that will be flagged and reviewed quickly.

Mayor Moran asked Mr. Kochenburger to restate his proposed amendment to his motion.

Mr. Kochenburger stated his amendment was on three to add either to the main clause the Council provide the following information technology services that MDD subject to the Town’s need to terminate this option after further review.

Mayor Moran asked Mr. Kochenburger to state his proposed amendment as a motion.

Mr. Kochenburger stated the Town should provide the following information technology services to the MDD with the provision that the Town reserves the right to terminate portions of this service as required or is necessary for IT security and insurance or subject to the provision that the Town reserves the right to terminate this particular section or ask to terminate in full or in part that’s necessitated by the Town’s cyber security needs.

Ms. Chaine requested the motion be written into the chat for clarity.
Ms. Moran confirmed that Mr. Kochenburger is withdrawing his original motion to amend with agreement from Mr. Ausburger.

Mr. Kochenburger moved and Mr. Ausburger seconded to amend the motion by adding the Town shall provide the following information technology services to the MDD with the provision that the Town reserves the right to terminate in part or in whole these technology services depending on the Town’s cyber security needs.

Councilors debated the need for the amendment.

Motion to amend passed with Ausburger, Coleman, Fratoni, Kochenburger and Schurin in favor and Berthelot, Bruder, Moran and Shaiken against.

Mr. Coleman moved and Mr. Ausburger seconded to amend the permanent contract to the original contract term of three years retroactive from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2024.

Mr. Coleman stated his concern about the rate of inflation and the financial impact to the Town over time.

Motion to amend failed with all against except Ausburger, Coleman and Fratoni who voted in favor.

Original motion as amended passed with all in favor except Coleman and Fratoni who voted against and Ausburger who abstained.
9. REPORTS OF COUNCIL COMMITTEES
Mr. Schurin reported that the Personnel Committee met earlier today and discussed the Rules of Procedure, Personnel Committee charge and the Personnel Appeals Board. Ms. Berthelot reported that the Committee on Committees held a special meeting and those recommended for appointment were appointed during the Council’s consent agenda. The Town still needs more Affordable Housing Committee members.

10. DEPARTMENTAL AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORTS
None.

11. PETITIONS, REQUESTS AND COMMUNICATIONS
B. L. Medeiros (02.14.22)
C. Resident Emails re: Brookside Lane (02.17.22 - 02-22-22) – Mr. Coleman reported he conducted a site visit and wants to show photographs. Mayor Moran asked this to wait for a future meeting.
D. J. Lowe (02.15.22)
E. D. Keane (02.21.22)
F. J. DeWolf (02.24.22)
G. T. Kollars (02.25.22)
H. A. Guyette (02.26.22)

12. FUTURE AGENDAS
- Helping Hands Program
- Brookside Lane
- Pedestrian Safety at Mansfield Middle School
- Town Road Paving Plan

13. ADJOURNMENT
Mr. Bruder moved and Mr. Ausburger seconded to adjourn the meeting at 10:50 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

Antonia Moran, Mayor
Sara-Ann Chaine, Town Clerk
Hello Council members,

Today, the CDC released guidance removing recommendations for universal masking in community settings in counties outside of high risk zones. As I’m sure you have seen, Tolland county is currently in the “low risk” zone, where the CDC recommends masking should be a personal decision based on individual risk levels.


In addition, Mansfield yesterday exited the “red zone” on the Connecticut state Covid tracker. This means that the case rate has dropped below 15 cases per 100,000 residents. At 10 cases per 100,000 residents, the town will drop into the “yellow zone”. Mansfield averaged 10.9 cases per 100,000 residents over the last week.


I expect you know all of this information by now. I am writing to urge that you make public a decision-making framework listing the conditions that will cause each of you to move to eliminate the school mask mandate. I don’t know if the CDC’s removal of mask recommendations or the state’s change in town emergency status will shift your stances because you have not broadcast whether they will or not. As elected officials exercising power, I think it is incumbent on you to clearly explain why conditions require that you use force and when you will stop using that force. Please consider doing so.

Respectfully,
Zach Anglin
Good Afternoon,

It is past time to open up the council meetings; hold meetings in person in council chambers.

Regarding the M. Discovery Depot, do not do a contract out so far as proposed; at the most, do a contract for 3 years commencing at the retroactive date proposed. It is past time for this council to recognize that former councils have made serious mistakes which continue to be financial burdens on the citizens. Getting involved with this daycare project is but one serious mistake. It is time to extricate the town. Look carefully at the grant this town manages for MDD. I urge you to give MDD notice that this town will not apply for the grant again. MDD serves many towns; perhaps one of them will take over the grant and some of the other work Mansfield provides to MDD. Under no circumstance should a new contract allow for this town to apply for any other grants. You are responsible for judicious spending of my tax money; there is no justification for using my money to subsidize a private corporation. Start now to disentangle this town from MDD.

Give good thought to spending the federal money. Provide information to the public as to possible projects and then listen to the citizens.

It is past time for this council to do something about Parks & Rec and the money that project costs the citizens.

Betty Wassmundt