

## MEMO

**To:** Town Council  
**CC:** Town Employees  
**From:** Ryan J. Aylesworth, Town Manager  
**Date:** January 25, 2021  
**Subject:** **Town Manager's Report**

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

### **Departmental Reports**

#### • ***Town Manager:***

- Residents who are 75+ are the first wave of residents eligible for the COVID-19 Phase 1b rollout of vaccines. In an effort to ensure that these residents are informed of the vaccination scheduling options and supported through the registration process, Human Services, the Senior Center, the Mansfield Library and the Town Manager's departments are collaborating on messaging and outreach. Technology support with the registration, on computers or by phone, is being offered by both the Senior Outreach Coordinator and the Mansfield Public Library. Additionally, transportation to vaccination appointments can be requested. The Human Services department is making an effort to reach all identified seniors personally by phone, and a mailing will be coordinated to distribute a Town of Mansfield flyer outlining these service offerings. This information outlining how the Town of Mansfield is prepared to help residents will also be pushed out by social media and on the Town's website so that families and friends of these seniors are also aware of the process.
- As all Council members were informed over the weekend, the Resident Trooper's Office received intelligence from the FBI that a political group known as the "Boogaloo Bois" planned to organize a demonstration on Town Hall grounds this past Sunday (January 24) as part of a series of similar events planned throughout the state on the same date/time. The Resident Trooper's Office coordinated very closely with other divisions of the State Police and other law enforcement entities as appropriate. In the interest of public safety, it was also decided that the Mansfield Community Center would remain closed in the morning for the duration of the planned protest. Ultimately, a demonstration did not take place. The Town very much appreciates the efforts and actions of the Resident Trooper's Office and other law enforcement agencies over the past few days to compile related information and plan accordingly.
- The Town Manager attend the CT Council of Small Towns (COST) annual meeting on January 13. Speakers at the conference included Governor Lamont, Senator Blumenthal and a variety of leaders within the state legislature.
- The Town Manager participated in the annual meeting of the Connecticut Town & City Managers Association (CTCMA) held on January 21 (virtual due to COVID). Topics discussed at this meeting included law enforcement usage of body cameras and other devices intended to promote/ensure accountability.
- On January 28 (Thursday) the Town Manager and Mayor/Deputy Mayor have been invited to meet (virtually) with State Representatives Haddad & Smith and State Senator Flexer to

discuss state biennial budget as well as to go over issues facing the town and how our state legislators might be able to collaborate with local officials to address these issues.

- As decided by consensus as the Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) at the October 26, 2020 Council meeting, the sewer assessments for Four Corners will be split 50:50 between property owners and the entire tax base. We will assess approximately \$2,700,000 to the property owners in the Four Corners Sewer District who will benefit from the sewer. The assessments are forthcoming. The Town Attorney is reviewing requirements and will be making a recommendation soon on how to proceed. A meeting as the WPCA is likely in February or March.
- This past week the Town Manager accompanied the Director of Building & Housing Inspection on a drive-by auto tour of numerous parts of Town with large volumes of rental properties that are in violation of the Town's ordinance relative to overcrowding. This has been an ongoing challenge for many years and a new/different approach may be warranted.
- As was previously reported, the permanent Fire Chief position was re-advertised with an application deadline of February 5, 2021. At this time the Town has received more than a dozen applications from qualified candidates and we anticipate this number to grow significantly before the application window closes.
- Steady progress continues to be made with the FY2022 budget development process. Department heads returned their completed budget worksheets and narratives (both for operating and capital requests) on or before January 13 and several meetings have subsequently been held between department heads, the Town Manager, and Finance Director to review these requests.
- The inaugural issue of a new bimonthly electronic newsletter is currently in development with a targeted publication date of February 1 (Monday). The e-newsletter will be posted in a variety of locations as well as distributed by email to subscribers who are interested in staying abreast of Town affairs. This resource will include a wide range of information, including department/committee news, project updates, helpful hints (i.e., fire safety strategies), schedules of upcoming meetings and community events, and other items we hope will be of use/interest to residents.
- One of my priorities is ongoing enhancement of the Town's official website and social media presence. Although a structural and stylistic overhaul of the website is ultimately going to be necessary, we are trying to identify some low-hanging fruit that can be addressed in the short-term. One example of this are headshots and short biographical sketches for each department head that will be added to the respective department web page. Information to be included in a given department head biographical sketch include a brief overview of the associated job responsibilities, an outline of the individual's previous related professional experience, and a personal anecdote (i.e., what they enjoy most about serving the Town of Mansfield).
- It has been some years since the Town Council held a goal-setting/prioritization retreat with the Town Manager and senior staff as appropriate. I would like to have a group discussion with the Council (likely targeting a meeting in February) to get feedback on the possibility of convening such a session shortly after the start of the next fiscal year (meaning it would likely take place during the month of July or August). These sorts of sessions are typically a half-day or full day in length, and are often facilitated by an outside party (of which there would be a number of potential options to consider). I believe this exercise would be beneficial to complete either immediately prior to or concurrent with each of the municipal departments engaging in strategic planning efforts (five-year time horizon) that are being tentatively planned to commence in FY 2021/2022.

- **Board of Education:**

- Mansfield Public Schools has been experiencing an increased number of COVID-19 cases among school community members. On Wednesday it was determined that it was time to

take a pause from in-person instruction at Goodwin School. Beginning Thursday, January 21 and continuing until Friday, January 29, Goodwin School is operating under the remote learning model.

- The number of cases experienced among our schools is not surprising given the number of cases within the community but the concentration of cases at Goodwin School suggested that moving to remote learning would allow us to avoid the possibility of transmission within classrooms.
- New elementary school building project update:
  - The project has officially achieved 100% design status
  - Presentation was made to the School Building Committee on January 7 and a committee members were given a window of time to submit comments by January 12.
  - A joint meeting of the Building Committee and Board of Education (BOE) was held on January 14 to approve the project for submission to the State for final review and bidding approval. The School Building Committee voted unanimously (with one abstention) and the BOE voted nearly unanimously (one dissenting vote) in favor of approving the latest plans and project budgets for transmission to the State.
  - State review meeting scheduled for January 21, 2021 – approval to bid assumed within two weeks
  - Anticipated project out to bid - March 2, 2021
  - Bids due April 13, 2021
  - Recommendation of lowest qualified bidder to the building committee – Anticipated for April 22, 2021
  - Anticipated construction start May 1, 2021

- **Finance:**

- The initial review of the subscriber listings for the Town of Mansfield and the respective contributing agencies shows that the projected annual cost for health insurance is \$8.35 million. This represents an approximately 18% increase across the entire book.
- The June 30, 2020 ending Fund Balance in the Medical Insurance Fund is \$5.36 million.
- The Town Manager, Region 19 Superintendent, MBOE Superintendent and Finance personnel met to discuss the initial findings. At this meeting, the decision to utilize \$950,000 from the Medical Insurance Fund to stabilize the rates for both the Employer and the Employee shares of the medical insurance expense. This reduction to the fund balance results in an overall increase of approximately 10% for both the employee and employer shares of the health insurance premiums.

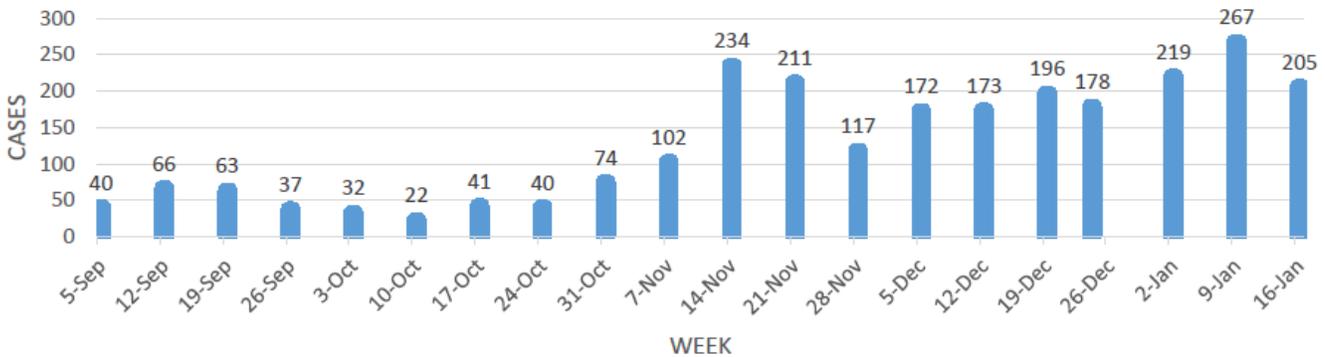
- **Eastern Highlands Health District (EHHD):**

- The EHHD conducted four vaccination clinics for phase 1a eligible personnel and people age 75+ in the past week. 400 doses were administered. Five additional clinics are scheduled for the coming week for second dose recipients and those 75+.
- Follow this link for more information on the Phases of the vaccine rollout:  
<https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus/COVID-19-Vaccination---Phases>
- Based on health district contact tracing evidence, disease transmission within our population is largely driven by small gatherings of family members not from the same household, small social gatherings, and workplace settings.
- The weekly case count (see bar chart below) indicates a **23% drop** in the prevalence of cases from the previous week. Follow this link for more town level data:  
<https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus/COVID-19-Data-Tracker>

### TOWN LEVEL DATA

TOWN	Number of Cumulative cases	Change from last week	Two week change	Cumulative Hospitalizations	2 week hospitalization change	Deaths
Andover	119	3	19	2	0	2
Ashford	166	20	59	5	0	3
Bolton	177	14	47	8	0	5
Chaplin	80	5	15	1	0	0
Columbia	225	23	40	7	1	3
Coventry	458	37	71	11	0	5
Mansfield	935	49	100	12	0	6
(non-student)		(48)	(98)	(12)	(0)	(6)
Scotland++	33	0	8	1	0	1
Tolland	642	36	79	18	1	15
Willington	174	18	34	4	1	3
<b>EHHD Total</b>	<b>3,009</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>472</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>CT Totals</b>	<b>235,796</b>	<b>14,252</b>	<b>33,038</b>	<b>1,069*</b>	<b>-18</b>	<b>6,774</b>

EHHD Confirmed Weekly Case Totals September - January 16, 2021



**Downtown Partnership, Economic Development & Marketing:**

- The gateway signage team has asked for ArtFx to provide a sample of the stone for that team’s review. An easement for the use of the property for the sign on the southern end of Mansfield is in the hands of the Town attorney.
- Copies of the new “Explore Our Town” publication have been delivered to the Downtown Partnership office and will be promoted by mid-February and distributed widely after that. The plan is to include a letter from the Town Manager to many of the constituencies (i.e., realtors) as a way to both introduce him to key stakeholders and also give the piece context.

- Mansfield representatives joined officials from Tolland, Coventry and Bolton on the most recent 4-town Economic Vitality Committee meeting. The conversation focused on existing and possible future tourism destinations, as well as the potential for a shared/common events calendar that residents and visitors could use.
  - Downtown Partnership staff, Planning & Development Director, and Communications Specialist recently met with the Town Manager to review the current marketing budgets and plan for the FY21-22 marketing budget. The main projects with the current and proposed funding are the development and implementation of a media placement plan to promote Mansfield including promotion of Explore Our Town branding piece; a town-wide signage plan; other promotional opportunities including possible rack cards for visitor locations, print ads, digital ads, postcards, paid media, and materials for events such as the Festival, UConn Week of Welcome, Big E, etc., and tables and booths at regional events.
  - The Downtown Partnership continues to support all Mansfield businesses by communicating guidance from the state for phased reopening, funding and business development opportunities, and federal news and updates through email blasts and our website (please see [mansfieldmdp.org/reopen](http://mansfieldmdp.org/reopen))
- **Human Services:**
    - As part of the ongoing Phase 1b rollout of the COVID-19 vaccination program, Human Services personnel have been coordinating closely with other municipal staff and the Eastern Highland Health District to help seniors 75 years of age and older receive the vaccine. More specifically, the senior center has been providing information through its newsletter, email blasts and during virtual programming regarding the vaccine and testing. The Human Services outreach coordinator, Yamil Figueroa, is offering assistance to seniors who are having challenges with the registration process. Yamil is also coordinating transportation assistance for those who need it to both testing and vaccine sites.
  - **Parks & Recreation:**
    - The Mansfield Community Center is currently serving as a host location for CT COVID-19 Vaccines (Phase 1a eligible citizens). Clinics are provided by the Eastern Highlands Health District several times per week.
    - As a reminder, the new temporary Community Center hours began on December 10<sup>th</sup> as follows:
      - Monday-Friday: 5:30am-1:30pm and 3:30pm-8:00pm
      - Saturday and Sundays: 7:00am-4:00pm

Staff will continue to closely monitor user patterns and revenue collections, and confer with the Town Manager to identify possible needs for adjustment as appropriate

- **Library:**
  - The newly created 30-minute browsing appointments have been very popular, and are fully booked each day.
  - Federal tax forms should be available later this week, as we have been informed that they have been shipped, and their arrival will publicized. For easy access, we will put the standard forms and instructions outside the library during business hours. People can call to get other forms printed as needed. We expect to be able to have prints available the same day as requested, depending on volume. No word yet regarding state forms.
  - Library hours are Monday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday 10 - 3; Tuesday, Thursday 2 – 7. For more details on services the Library continues to offer, please contact us at 860-423-2501 or [MansfieldLibrary@MansfieldCT.org](mailto:MansfieldLibrary@MansfieldCT.org)

- **Town Clerk:**
  - The Town Clerk’s Office will be **closed** on Tuesday and Wednesday this week (January 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup>) from 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM for required staff certification training. The Town Clerk and staff will be on site at the conclusion of their training to perform necessary work.
- **Fire Department:**
  - Below is a brief synopsis of Fire Department responses for the period January 11 through January 24, 2021.

Type		# Mutual Aid Out of Town
ALS	31	1
BLS	31	1
Total Medical	62	2
Structure Fire	1	1
Fire Alarm	2	
CO Alarm	1	
Service Call	4	
Vehicle Accident	5	1
Tree on Wires	1	
Total Other	14	2
Grand Total	76	4

- **Public Works:**
  - Since the last report, the Department removed 21 trees and pruned 29 others.
  - Since the last report, the Department responded to one minor snow-treating event, on January 20<sup>th</sup>, with 8 trucks and a utility tractor using 51 tons of salt and 9 employees for 3 hours straight time.
  - Downtown Loop Closure Walkway Project: This project is made up of two interconnected locations that lack an off-road multi-use trail. Location #1 is a proposed multiuse trail from the existing 5’ sidewalk at the Maple Road intersection, along Route 275 – South Eagleville Road, connecting to the existing 8’ multi-use trail at the intersection of Separatist Road. Location #2 is a proposed multi-use trail starting at the terminus of an existing 8’ multi-use trail at the intersection of Separatist Road and Hunting Lodge Road, traveling along the edge of Hunting Lodge Road, and terminating at the four-way intersection with North Eagleville Road. Though DOT has not yet approved project funding, the Department is moving forward with design and plans. DPW expects funding within the next month, which will allow us to contract with a survey firm. The Town has had preliminary design review by a DOT contractor who is already conducting environmental and historical reviews.
- **Facilities:**
  - As was previously reported, representatives from the Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) completed a short-notice inspection of Town facilities in early-December. After completing a close out meeting on December 18 and waiting many weeks without an update, the Town finally received word from OSHA representatives that final report is forthcoming. Once the report is received, it will be carefully reviewed and issues will be challenged or mitigated where appropriate.