

## MEMO

**To:** Town Council  
**CC:** Town Employees  
**From:** Ryan J. Aylesworth, Town Manager  
**Date:** December 14, 2020  
**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:***

- Although my tenure as Town Manager officially began two weeks ago, today marks only my third day physically in the office as a result of the need to adhere to COVID-related interstate travel restrictions (due to relocating from NH) as well as finishing packing out our home in New Hampshire. That said, the beginning of my tenure has been quite busy (as expected!), including a large volume of meetings (combination of virtual and in-person) with municipal employees, Council members, other local officials, and various community stakeholders. Topics have run the gamut from budget development, capital projects, policies and procedures, personnel, the Town's IT networking/infrastructure environment, public safety, UConn-Town relations, community and economic development, facilities management, recreational programming, local and regional COVID-19 response efforts, and everything in-between. I have been incredibly humbled by how welcoming and gracious everyone has been (internal and external to the municipal organization), and I very much look forward to continuing to settle into my new role, visiting with stakeholders, and getting a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing the Town of Mansfield.
- The Town Manager, former Interim Town Manager, Finance Director, and former Finance Director held a work session on the 2021 budget this past week. A great deal of ground was covered and this was a very useful meeting to review the process by which the Town's budget has been developed in past years and – to a lesser extent – determine if there was any need to deviate from the general framework historically used. At this time, it is our intent to proceed with the budget “calendar” and overall process used in the past. The Town Manager, Finance Director, and other appropriate personnel will be coordinating closely over the next few days to finalize the 2021 budget guidance that is disseminated to department heads for their reference in developing their respective 2021 operating and capital budget requests. Along these lines, a “kickoff” meeting with department heads regarding the 2021 budget is being planned for December 21.

#### • ***Board of Education:***

- Mansfield Public Schools continue to operate in-person schooling with grades PreK-6 attending five days a week and grades 7 and 8 operating in a hybrid model.
- A small number of cases of COVID-19 have been identified among staff and students totaling five cases thus far.

- Effective mitigation strategies including mask wearing, physical distancing, hand hygiene, frequent cleaning, and more are in place. Cooperation from our families, including careful monitoring of their children's health, are contributing to a safe environment within our schools.

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

- Starting Dec. 2, Hartford Health Care (HHC) began offering priority testing for symptomatic first responders at its drive-through facilities across the state, with the exception of its Bradley Airport and Westport locations. This service is being offered during the first two hours that the location is open, and will continue as long as the facilities can handle the volume. HHC is actively working on moving its Drive-Through testing to appointment only in the next few weeks – as soon as HHC has a firm date on this change, they will communicate it.
- For purposes of this program, first responders are defined as active state or local police, career and volunteer fire and emergency medical service personnel, and; state or local public safety tele-communicators (i.e., dispatchers) (911/CMED call-takers.)
- The first responder must present active credentials/ agency ID and an insurance card.
- At this time, this priority testing is available for symptomatic first responders only, and is not offered to those who have experienced an exposure but are asymptomatic, nor is this available for family members.

- **Planning & Development:**

- Small Cities Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Grant Awards
  - Governor Lamont has announced that Mansfield has received the following grants from the Small Cities CDBG Program:
  - COVID-19 Resident Assistance Programs (\$500,000). These funds will be used to provide childcare assistance, rental assistance and food security to low and moderate income residents that have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Additional information on how to apply for and participate in these assistance programs will be available after the Town receives and executes the assistance agreement.
  - Fire Protection Equipment (\$735,927.84). The Town applied for a grant of \$900,000 to assist in purchasing a hybrid aerial/pumper fire truck for Station 207 in the Four Corners area. As the funds awarded are less than requested, the Town will need to determine whether to provide additional funds in excess of the \$250,000 already budgeted or change the apparatus type. The total estimated cost of the project is \$1,150,000, which leaves a projected funding gap of \$164,072.16.
- Affordable Housing Plan
  - On December 8, 2020, the Ad Hoc Committee on Affordable and Workforce Housing unanimously selected Milone & MacBroom Inc. to assist the Town in preparing an Affordable Housing Plan as required by state statute. The project is anticipated to kick-off in January and be completed by June. Stay tuned for information on how to participate in the planning process.

- **Downtown Partnership:**

- The Mansfield Downtown Partnership hosted its 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Winter Welcome on Saturday, Dec. 12. In the interest of health and safety, the Partnership transformed the event into a drive-through experience. Approximately 175-200 vehicles drove through Downtown Storrs to enjoy festive displays by Mansfield businesses and community organizations; ice sculptures by UConn Dining Services; a mural by the E. O. Smith Art Club; video performances by Consonare Choir Matrix, E. O. Smith Choirs, Band, and Orchestra, and a preview of *The Nutcracker Movie* by Miss Kelly Productions and Mansfield Parks & Recreation Department;

and a special (social distanced) visit from Santa Claus. Find photos of the event and the performance video at [downtownstorrs.org/winterwelcome](http://downtownstorrs.org/winterwelcome) or on our Facebook page ([@DowntownStorrs](https://www.facebook.com/DowntownStorrs)).

- The Partnership would like to thank the following Mansfield businesses, community organizations, UConn departments and programs, and municipal departments for helping to make the reimaged Winter Welcome a success:
  - The Adventure Park at Storrs
  - Ballard Institute & Museum of Puppetry
  - Chabad at UConn
  - Consonare Choir Matrix
  - E. O. Smith Art Club
  - E. O. Smith Band
  - E. O. Smith Choirs
  - E. O. Smith Orchestra
  - E. O. Smith Panhertones
  - E. O. Smith Trebles
  - Fitch House Bed & Breakfast
  - Friends of Ecole Agape
  - Mansfield Academy of Dance
  - Mansfield Fire Department
  - Mansfield Public Schools
  - Mansfield Public Works
  - Mansfield Resident State Troopers
  - Miss Kelly Productions
  - The Oaks on the Square
  - Storrs Student Living
  - Tulman and Beck-Ferruci Families
  - UConn Dining Services
  
- The 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:**
  - The Town's Senior Holiday Drive Thru Lunch and Celebration was an overwhelming success this past week. COVID-19 necessitated the use of an alternative/outdoor format, but 100 seniors were served!
  
- **Parks & Recreation:**
  - 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 make adjustments if necessary

- **Library:**
  - Due to the continued high incidence of COVID-19 in town and across the region, the Mansfield Public Library remains closed to the public and will not reopen until it is deemed safe from a public health and safety standpoint. Curbside services remain available at the main branch located on 54 Warrenville Road. Computer use at the main

branch is available by appointment only. 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)

- **Fire Department:**

- As was reported by a variety of news media in recent months, Mansfield Fire Department Captain Ted Morrissette had been experiencing significant health issues as a result of a failing liver for many years. Captain Morrissette received a liver donation in mid-October, and we are very happy to report that he was discharged from the hospital in late-November to continue his recovery from home. Liver transplant recipients often realize a full recovery within six months of returning home from the hospital. The Mansfield Fire Department celebrates not only Captain Morrissette's improving health, but the generous acts of anyone who donates an organ for the benefit someone else.

- **Public Works:**

- The wind and rain storm on November 30 resulted in:
  - Centre Street – tree on wires
  - Pleasant Valley Road – tree on wires
  - Hillcrest Drive – Limb blocked one lane
  - Bousa Road – Limb blocked one lane
  - Wormwood Hill – tree down
  - Mansfield City Road – tree across road
  - Atwoodville Road – wires burning on pole
- Since the last Council meeting, the Department removed 22 trees and pruned 65 trees.
- Snow Report
  - 12/5 – 2-3 inches in southern end and 6-8 inches in northern end; used 95 tons of salt and expended \$5,331 in overtime
  - 12/6 – treated some icy spots throughout Town, used 6 tons of salt and expended \$572 in overtime.
  - 12/7 – spot treated icy spots on regular time, used 6 tons of salt.
  - 12/8 – misting rain with 26-degree temperature on regular time, used 24 tons of salt.

- **Facilities**

- This past week, representatives from the Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) completed a short-notice inspection of Town facilities.
- Buildings visited by OSHA included:
  - 3 Fire Houses
  - Public Works Complex
  - Facilities Shop at Mansfield Training Center
  - Transfer Station
  - Mansfield Community Center
- Things OSHA was focusing on:
  - Safety policy review such as: Lock out tag out, Confined space, SDS hazard communications, PPE assessments, Blood borne Pathogens, Asbestos and building hazard assessments for buildings constructed pre 1980
  - Physical inspection of spaces: Eye wash stations if any reason to believe dispensing of corrosive chemicals is done in a building.
  - Things plugged into extension cords

- Broken electrical covers or electrical boxes missing covers or panels not having breakers labeled
- General cleanliness such as items placed in front of storage shelves which present a tripping hazard
- No dust accumulations
- Unmarked bottles with fluid inside
- Things to expect coming out of these inspections:
  - Close out meeting where they will discuss their findings
  - Fines imposed or violations where actions are required: will expect a representative or two from the Town to attend a meeting to challenge any findings at the OSHA office
  - Will need to have assessments of hazards done on any building older than 1980 will be a capital expense on these reports. Cost can range by size of building up to about \$10,000 per building
  - Will need each department to update all SDS's
  - To limit or get rid of any stored chemicals
  - Assessments of job duties for the proper PPE (Personnel Protective Equipment)