

MEMO

To: Town Council
CC: Town Employees
From: Ryan J. Aylesworth, Town Manager
Date: July 22, 2024
Subject: **Town Manager's Report**

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

- I will be out-of-state beginning tomorrow (Tuesday, July 23) and have asked Ms. Maria Capriola, Chief of Shared Services and Administration, to serve as Acting Town Manager from Tuesday morning until Sunday evening (7/23-7/28). That said, I anticipate being reachable by cell phone in the event of any emergency situations.
- As the Council was informed last week, during an active police investigation carried out by the Middletown Police Department on July 18, one of their police cruisers collided with an uninvolved motorist on Wormwood Hill Road in Mansfield. Fortunately, it is our understanding that no parties experienced serious injury as a result of the collision. Furthermore, it is our understanding that the suspect in question was later apprehended in another jurisdiction in Massachusetts. The safety and wellbeing of our residents is of the utmost importance to Town officials and the Mansfield Resident Troopers Office. Incidents like this highlight the need for careful consideration and coordination in law enforcement activities that cross municipal boundaries. We look forward to the relevant authorities completing a thorough investigation of this incident to understand the actions and circumstances that resulted in today's accident.
- This past week, Sergeant Stephen King's appointment as the next "permanent" Supervisor of the Mansfield Resident Trooper Office became official. This is a positive outcome for Mansfield given Sergeant King's past success overseeing the operations of the Resident Trooper program in Mansfield as well as his extensive time working as a Resident Trooper in this office. His established network of relationships with members of the UConn Police Department, as well as Off-Campus Student Services, reinforces that Sgt. King is a great fit for our Town.
- I am happy to report that, after a competitive and in-depth selection process that involved collaboration across Town of Mansfield and Mansfield Board of Education personnel, a conditional employment offer was extended to the preferred finalist for the vacant Director of Facilities Management position. This is obviously a very important position to our municipal and public schools operation. As soon as customary background and reference checks are completed, additional information on the selected individual will be shared with the Town Council.
- Sergeant Stephen King (Supervisor, Mansfield Resident Trooper Office), Mr. John Armstrong (UConn's Associate Dean of Off-Campus Student Services), and Mr. Nathan Fuerst (UConn's Vice President of Student Life and Enrollment) will be in attendance at the Council's regular business meeting tonight. They will re-introduce themselves, as well as share information relative to 2024 UConn fall semester activity planning.
- Mr. Michael Nintean, Director of the Department of Building and Housing, will provide the Council with an overview of the Department's statutory responsibilities and operations, as well as an update on ongoing trends, activities, and priorities of the Department.

- The flooring maintenance work at the Downtown Storrs Parking Garage that was scheduled for July 12 and July 13 was postponed due to inclement weather. Our team is working to reschedule this work for later this summer. Once dates are secured, notifications will be made to the public and our stakeholders.
- As the Council was previously briefed, in support of positioning the Town of Mansfield, a campaign is underway to promote Mansfield as a great destination for all ages to visit and enjoy, offering unique experiences in the summertime. This is a collaboration between the Town and the Mansfield Downtown Partnership. During tonight's regular business meeting, the Council will receive a preview of the 30-second spot that is going to be aired a total of 46 times on NBC Connecticut during the upcoming Summer Olympic games in Paris (July 26 – August 6). The piece features the Adventure Park at Storrs, the UConn Dairy Bar, the Ballard Puppetry Museum and Betsy Paterson Square, and the Mansfield Drive-In. The Town worked with local businesses to supplement the work provided by NBC-CT, including Levin Aerial Works (aerial footage of The Adventure Park) and Waldron's Studio 88 (original music composed for the ad). The Hartford-based NBC station also visited Mansfield to record a lifestyle feature on other local attractions such as trails and parks, outdoor dining spots, Storrs Farmers Market and Summertime Saturday Puppet Shows.. The campaign will be supported with social media, and other select print ads.
- The Town's updated website went live Wednesday afternoon. This update is intended to provide a fresh look, offer an enhanced structure for users to find most-frequented pages more readily, focus on marketing events and services more effectively from the Home page, and to be more interactive. The update was relatively seamless, and now IT, Communications, and department staff will be working in the coming weeks to improve content presentation and simplify linking. The website changes pertain to all the Home pages—the Town home page, the Mansfield Public Library, Mansfield Parks & Recreation, including Mansfield Community Center (MCC), and the Mansfield Public Schools—each with unique user needs.
- The newly established Deputy Chief of Operations position with Mansfield Fire and Emergency Services (programmed for funding in the FY2024/25 budget) will remain open into early-August to ensure ample opportunity for a deep pool of qualified applicants. First round candidate interviews are being tentatively scheduled for the week of August 12 with the goal of having the position filled in September. The complete job description can be accessed here: <https://www.applitrack.com/mansfieldct/onlineapp/1BrowseFile.aspx?id=39362>
- Hiring and appointment notes:
 - Yamilmarie Figueroa has been promoted from Outreach & Transportation Coordinator with our Senior Center to Case Worker with our Human Services Department effective July 1, 2024. Yamil has been with the Town for approximately three and a half years. She is currently pursuing her master's degree in social work from Sacred Heart University. She holds a Bachelor's degree in sociology from Eastern Connecticut State University and an Associate's degree from Three Rivers Community College. Congratulations Yamil!
 - Dan Murphy began work as a part-time Firefighter/EMT on July 1, 2024. Prior to that, Dan was a volunteer member of Mansfield Fire and Emergency Services. Dan is certified as an EMT, and recently completed Firefighter II. He holds a Master's degree in business from Bryant University and a Bachelor's degree in information systems management and business administration from Salve Regina University. Congratulations Dan!
 - Nicholas Webster began work as a full-time Firefighter/EMT on July 15, 2024. Nick has over 20 years of experience in the Fire Service, both volunteer and career. He holds numerous certifications related to Fire and Emergency Services. Welcome Nick!
 - Clinton Thomas will begin work as a part-time Firefighter/EMT on August 12, 2024. Clinton has over five years of experience in the Fire Service, both volunteer and career. He holds numerous certifications related to Fire and Emergency Services. He holds a Bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Southern Vermont College. Welcome Clinton!

- *New Regulations related to Multi-Family Development Proposed.* On July 18th the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) held a workshop to review comments received to date related to the Planned Housing Design District Regulations. The workshop was recorded and is available for viewing at www.MansfieldCT.gov/Video. The public hearing has been continued to August 5, 2024. All public comments must be received by the close of the public hearing.
- *Extension of the temporary and limited moratorium on new high-density housing developments proposed:* A public hearing to receive comments on extending the moratorium on new multi-family developments to December 31, 2024, is scheduled for August 19, 2024. If the moratorium is extended, new developments over five (5) total units or with an average density greater than three (3) units per acre will be prohibited, and no applications can be received by the Planning and Zoning Commission or Zoning Agent.
- *Northwest Mansfield Vision and Strategy Plan:* [A Neighborhood Inventory and Existing Conditions Report](#) is now available for review online! A public presentation of the draft plan is planned for late-September. Follow the progress at www.mansfieldtomorrow.org/nw-neighborhood-plan
- Summer Reading is officially underway at the Mansfield Public Library and – in addition to great programs all summer long – kids, teens, and adults can win prizes just for reading! Kids & teens fill in circles on our Summer Reading Challenge Game Board for every day that they read to earn prizes from the Library’s prize box for every 5 days they read. Participants also earn raffle tickets toward weekly Free Ice Cream Coupon drawings! Adults can register online on the Mansfield Public Library website or fill out a print registration form at the library. Read a book that fulfills a challenge from our list and submit your completed review using our form online or a print form at the library. There are 10 different reading challenges and there will be a prize drawing every two weeks. Find more information at <https://mansfieldpubliclibraryct.org/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=1990>
- For those curious about the world of social media but unsure where to start, Mansfield Public Library – through its Mansfield’s Digital Access Navigators – are going to be offering a fun and informative one-hour presentation (Friday, August 2 at 10:00 AM) that’s perfect for anyone looking to get the hang of social media! More specifically, this information session is intended to:
 - Explore the features of different social media platforms.
 - Learn what sets Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, and others apart.
 - Learn about some of the terms, lingo, and acronyms you see online.

Whether someone is stepping into social media for the first time, or just looking to stay current, this course will have them covered. No registration required. For more information, call 959-444-1305 or email Paul Velazquez (VelazquezP@mansfieldct.org).

- Mansfield Public School leaders and Board of Education Members invite parents, staff, and community members to join in reading *The Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness*. This timely book, written by psychologist Jonathan Haidt explores youth mental health in the era of smartphones, social media, and big tech—and outlines a plan for a healthier, freer childhood. A copy can be borrowed through the Mansfield Public Library Circulation Desk, and the book is available as an E-Book through Overdrive. In collaboration with Mansfield Public Library, a community book discussion is being held on August 22 (Thursday) beginning at 6:00 pm at the library. A light dinner will be provided, and ample activities to engage young children during the program will also be available courtesy of our Youth Librarians.

- We are thrilled to announce that – following installation of four of the six nets (shipment of the remaining two nets was delayed) – a portion of the new pickleball facility adjacent to the Mansfield Community Center had a soft opening late this past week and is already seeing considerable use. The remaining two nets, which will be installed on the “competition” dimension courts, will soon be delivered and installed. Coordination with Eversource and timing for the electrical equipment for illumination is still pending, however, the courts are being put in use before the lighting is in place, which will extend play into the evening hours. We look forward to coordinating with the private benefactor of this exciting project to arrange for a more formal ribbon cutting for these new courts in the near future.



- *Public Works/Infrastructure Improvement Updates*
 - At the July 8th Town Council meeting, Councilor Coleman raised a concern about a possible inland wetlands violation by the Department of Public Works on Browns Road where the department is conducting drainage improvement and replacement. The Inlands Wetlands Agent, Michael Stankov, investigated the area with the DPW Operations Manager, Brian LaVoie on July 9th. They inspected the two locations of concern: the north side of the road near 416 Browns Road, and the north side of the road just east of the intersection of Coventry Road and Browns Road. Both field observations and the Town’s wetland map revealed no evidence of wetlands within 150 feet in either of the disturbed areas. On the north side of the road, proximate to 416 Browns Road, it appears that there has been some erosion in a controlled pocket at the road edge near the catch basin. The Inland Wetlands Agent found no evidence of sediment passing through the basin or across the road. There was, however, some erosion near the newly installed catch basin on the south side of the road where substantial regrading has occurred to make necessary road improvements. To address this, DPW installed straw mats to stabilize the disturbed slope. The eroded area on the north side of the road will be rebuilt at the same time as the rest of the road is intended to be rebuilt, and the topography will be adjusted to direct soil outside of the area. On the north side of Browns Road, immediately east of its intersection with Coventry, the disturbance at the edge of the road is the result of the installation of an underdrain to catch and infiltrate excess runoff. In this area, the Inland Wetlands Agent did not observe evidence of erosion immediately adjacent to the road. Eroded sediment is being captured by deep sump catch basins or remaining in upland areas on both sides of the road. The Inland Wetlands Agent works closely with DPW; the department is fully aware that any regulated activity requires an Inland Wetlands License per the Town of Mansfield’s Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Regulations.

Additionally, an on-site meeting with DPW leadership (Director, Assistant Director, Operations Manager, and Road Foreman), the Inland Wetlands Agent, and Councilor Coleman was arranged for the week of July 15th. At the meeting, the DPW Director explained that the department always makes a good faith effort to protect the environment, and it welcomes the opportunity to review any activity that may be perceived as a violation to learn from the experience and prevent any future occurrences. As noted above, these two areas from the July 8th concern were not deemed violations. At this meeting, Councilor Coleman raised concerns about another area on Browns Road that was not part of his original complaint. Personnel subsequently traveled to this area between 242 and 262 Browns Road to observe the concern. At this location, the Department had the proper sedimentation controls in place

but there was erosion of the newly emplaced bank due to the significant rainfall on June 30th. The Inland Wetlands Agent explained that it is not general practice for DPW to receive wetlands permits when they are maintaining existing drainage structures. In general, the maintenance of drainage culverts and minor earthwork around them is considered to be a critical component of erosion control and proper soil and water conservation, and it is thus permitted as a non-regulated use. If work was slated to put in new culverts that would direct water into or away from wetlands, thereby changing the character of wetland systems, a permit is required. Town projects that have this level of disturbance, including the culvert under Hunting Lodge Road and the infrastructure improvements along South Eagleville Road, have obtained their required wetlands permits.

- At approximately 3:30 pm on July 17th, the Town was alerted to a turbidity issue in Eagleville Brook near Separatist Road. The Inland Wetlands Agent, DPW Director, Assistant DPW Director and Project Engineer went to the upstream site of the Hunting Lodge Road culvert replacement project as it was the likely source since it is in the midst of the more sensitive earth movement portions of that project. The brook water was turbid, evidence of disturbed earth upstream leading to suspended particles. At the time, all water currently flowing through the bypass pipe and leaving the sediment bag was clear. The de-watering procedures that the contractor, Genovesi Construction, has in place are working and are consistent with the approved plan, which meets all CT DEEP standards for erosion controls. The turbidity is an unfortunate situation but common during sensitive work along stream banks and is both very fixable and unlikely to cause any lasting degradation of wetlands conditions in the stream. To capture further sediment from continuing downstream, the contractor installed a check dam on a shallow area of the streambed to capture particulate and let it drop out of the water column. These are a simple and effective technique for controlling turbidity and should restore water quality.
- Genovesi Construction has completed Phase 1 of the temporary water connection and temporary water management portion of the Hunting Lodge Road culvert project. Genovesi has poured concrete for the first footing and headwall. Testing is completed on the concrete to ensure adequate strength. Once the footing and headwall have achieved the necessary strength a new 48" concrete pipe is installed allowing for the contractor to begin the final phase of the water management plan and the box culvert installation. The project is moving on schedule for an August 31 completion date.
- The sanitary sewer extension on South Eagleville Road is complete with restoration of the off-road portions complete and grass beginning to grow. Final paving is not scheduled at this time as VMS Construction is now scheduled to begin installation of a replacement water main on South Eagleville Road for the Connecticut Water Company. The project is scheduled to begin working in South Eagleville Road the first week in August.
- The drainage improvements on Browns Road (from Chatham Drive to Crane Hill Road) and September Road is complete. A contractor began reclaiming (grinding /tilling) the existing surface last week which will last through the middle of this week. The Town's paving contractor is scheduled for install a binder (first) course of asphalt shortly thereafter.
- *Mansfield Elementary School Project- Water Treatment:* The final design plans and associated documentation related to the planned water treatment system for Mansfield Elementary School to address the persistent elevated copper levels that was transmitted to the CT Department of Public Health (DPH) on June 25 was formally approved on July 11. Now that it has been approved, the proposed treatment system is being prepared for installation as soon as possible this to minimize disruption to students and staff once school resumes in late-August.
- We were recently informed that due to industry-wide delays in construction, delivery of the Ambulance 707 replacement, which is being funded by a portion of the Town's ARPA allocation, is likely going to be delayed until June 2025.

- Chief Roache reports that refurbishment of Squad/Truck 207 by Greenwood Emergency Vehicles has commenced and we have pictures to offer while production is underway: <https://galleries.e-one.com/2022/2022In-Process-Trucks/Greenwood-Emergency-Vehicles342098/146620Mansfield2024E-ONEGreenwoodAerial>
For an idea of what the finished product is going to look like, Block Island (RI) just took delivery of a nearly identical truck:<https://www.greenwoodev.com/block-island-ri-e-one-hr100-quint-ladder/>
- *Justices of the Peace*: Anyone who is not a member of a major party and wishes to serve as a Justice of the Peace should contact the Town Clerk before August 1st for more information.
- *Summer Concerts on the Square*: There has been live music on Betsy Paterson Square every Thursday in June and July from 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM. The remaining concert (July 25) will feature [Funky Dawgz Brass Band](#) (jazz/soul/funk originally from Storrs). Summer Concerts on the Square are free and open to everyone.
- *Summertime Saturday Puppet Shows*: Together with the Ballard Institute & Museum of Puppetry, the Partnership invites residents and friends of all ages to enjoy free puppet shows this summer! Join us for *Judy Saves the Day* by Sarah Nolan (Saturday, July 27), and *I Love Tacos* by Paper Heart Puppets (Saturday, August 3). Performances will take place at 11:00 AM on Betsy Paterson Square. In the case of inclement weather, the shows will be held indoors at the Ballard Institute. For more information, please visit downtownstorrs.org/puppetshows.
- The August/September edition of the Town's bimonthly electronic newsletter will be published on August 1.
- The Town Manager's most recent monthly appearance on WILI-AM on the Wayne Norman Show took place on July 3 and can be accessed [here](#).