

MEMO

To: Town Council
CC: Town Employees
From: Ryan J. Aylesworth, Town Manager
Date: August 12, 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 for two additional windows of time between now and the end of the summer. The first will begin this Friday (August 16) in the morning and will return the following Monday (August 19) in the afternoon. Mr. Jay O'Keefe, Director of Parks and Recreation will serve as Acting Town Manager from noon on August 16 (Friday) until 8:00 PM on August 18 (Sunday), and Ms. Maria Capriola, Chief of Shared Services and Administration, will serve as Acting Town Manager from 8:00 PM on August 18 (Sunday) until 5:00 PM on August 19 (Monday). That said, I anticipate being reachable by cell phone in the event of any emergency situations. The second window of time I will be out-of-state is September 3 (Tuesday) through September 7 (Saturday). Ms. Capriola will serve as the Acting Town Manager from 9:00 AM on September 3 through 9:00 PM on September 7. I will be traveling in an area with limited cellular service during this time, but, will be receiving daily updates.
- A 6:00 PM special meeting of the Town Council has been scheduled to precede the regular meeting of August 12 to provide the Council additional information on community engagement efforts related to the ongoing municipal facilities master planning process. A firm called CivicBrand was hired by the Town to facilitate a wide range of community engagement activities. The firm will be presenting its findings from the community engagement work, and a tool that can be utilized by staff when developing and evaluating facilities capital projects. Presenting from the firm will be Ryan Short and Brisa Byford. Town staff and the firm will also present recommended next steps for our ongoing Facilities Master Planning process.
- In recent weeks, the administration of Regional School District 19 began engaging the Town's administration in very preliminary discussions about the possibility of acquiring a portion of the Annie Vinton School property for the purpose of the Region constructing a new educational facility that would house both its Depot Campus (alternative education) and STAAR programs. As a reminder, The Region presently leases space from the Town at two separate locations (Depot Road for the alternative education program; Vinton School for the STAAR program). The Vinton School property is a roughly 23-acre parcel with frontage on both State Route 32/Stafford Road and Stearns Road. As the existing school building is approximately 70 years old and would necessitate considerable investment in order to make it suitable for long-term use/occupancy, initial brainstorming between Town and Region officials has included the possibility of subdividing a portion of the "back land" that has frontage on Stearns Road while preserving the Town's ability to retain the front portion of the property (with frontage on Stafford Road) for a variety of beneficial redevelopment purposes.
- UConn President Radenka Maric has inquired about being provided a tour of the new Mansfield Elementary School as it is the State's first newly constructed "net zero" public school. She is interested in how the design of this facility can help UConn continue to plan for the design of its own future environmentally sustainable buildings. Town and Mansfield Board of Education officials look

forward to touring President Maric about the building and site with an eye toward how a local project can help UConn achieve its own goals going forward.

- *Mansfield Elementary School Project- Water Treatment:* As the Council was previously informed, 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 has been formally approved by CT Department of Public Health (DPH). Now that it has been approved, the proposed treatment system is being prepared for installation as soon as possible to minimize disruption to students and staff once school resumes in late-August. The Town Manager's Office has been made aware of confusion that arose among members of the public when it was reported that treatment will include chlorination of the water. Chlorination of the water is being administered purely as a preventative measure in this case. The source water being drawn from the wells does not require treatment. There is recognition that the relatively high frequency in which water will be sampled for independent testing to ensure copper concentrations are being reduced will create opportunities for bacteria to be inadvertently introduced into the system as a result of the sampling process. As such, chlorination was deemed a prudent addition to the treatment plan to prevent any possible future issues associated with the frequency of water sampling.
- The Chief of Shared Services and Administration, Director of Human Services, and Director of Parks and Recreation took part in the Federal Funding Resource Fair organized by Congressman Courtney from 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM at Eastern Connecticut State University on August 8th. The fair provided participants an opportunity to gain access to pertinent informational resources and make direct connections with funding agencies.
- As has been previously reported to the Council, Michael Posocco has been hired to serve as the next Facilities Management Director for the Town of Mansfield and the Mansfield Public Schools. He began work on July 29. He will be formally introduced to the Council during tonight's regular meeting. Mr. Posocco has more than 15 years of experience in the facilities and property management fields. Additional biographical information is included in the informational packet. A press release can be found here: <https://www.mansfieldct.gov/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=2009>
- The Town Manager's office is increasing promotion to register residents for the 2024 Mansfield Local Government Academy, scheduled to begin Thursday, September 12. This 12-session program is designed to educate and familiarize citizens with all aspects of their Town government. Informed citizens lead to more engaged citizens. More than 50 residents have completed this program. Classes are convened in a variety of Town facilities and run from 6:00 to 8:00 PM on Thursdays. Discussions are led by staff members who are responsible for leading and managing the various departments and functions of local government. There is no cost to enroll and a light dinner is provided. The target class size will be between 15 and 20 enrollees. Further details are available on the Town Manager's [webpage](#).
- 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. Although the television campaign airing on the Olympics has now ended, the campaign continues with social media featuring local attractions, town amenities, and businesses, and prominence on the [Town website's](#) Summer Fun page
- Mansfield's recently "refreshed" website went live in late-July. Information Technology, Communications, and department staff continue to test links and are working to refine improvements, improve content presentation and simplify linking to optimize the end user experience.
- Management continues to negotiate successor collective bargaining agreements with the Public Works and Professional and Technical Employee unions, which are both represented by CSEA.
- Hiring and appointment notes:
 - First round interviews with qualified candidates for the Executive Assistant position in the Town Manager's Office have been scheduled for this week, with second round interviews scheduled for finalists the following week.

- Lynda Lambert has been promoted to the position of Administrative Analyst with Mansfield Fire and Emergency Services. The promotion is effective today, August 12, 2024. Lynda has been with the Town of Mansfield for nearly 20 years, admirably serving our Parks and Recreation Department, most recently as their Administrative Services Specialist. Congratulations Lynda!
- Jefferson Smith began work as a full-time Firefighter/EMT on August 12, 2024. Jefferson has over 10 years of experience in the Fire Service, both volunteer and career. He holds numerous certifications related to Fire and Emergency Services. He holds an Associate's degree from Manchester Community College and is a graduate of E.O. Smith High School. Welcome Jefferson!
- Collin Delmastro began work as a full-time Firefighter/EMT on August 12, 2024. Collin has more than six years of experience in the Fire Service, both volunteer and career. He holds numerous certifications related to Fire and Emergency Services. Welcome Collin!
- First round interviews are being held for our newly created Deputy Fire Chief and Executive Assistant to the Town Manager positions this week, with the second round interviews scheduled for finalists the following week.
- All 22 full-time Firefighter/EMT positions are now filled. This includes the two newly authorized positions for the Department on July 1 of this year.
- Both newly created DPW laborer positions – one with a focus on drainage, the other with a focus on maintaining the Downtown area – are now filled. These positions were newly authorized as of July 1 as part of the approved FY 2024/25 budget.
- *New Regulations related to Multi-Family Development:* The Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) will hold another workshop on August 15, 2024 to review the Planned Housing Design District Regulations. The workshop will be recorded and available for viewing at www.MansfieldCT.gov/Video. The public hearing has been continued to September 3, 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:* A public hearing to receive comments on a PZC-initiated proposal to extend the moratorium on new multi-family developments to December 31, 2024, is scheduled for August 19, 2024. Also, on August 19th there will be a public hearing, to hear comments on an extension of the moratorium to August 31, 2025 submitted by a private citizen. Both extensions of the moratorium prohibit new developments over five (5) total units or with an average density greater than three (3) units per acre.
- *Northwest Mansfield Vision and Strategy Plan: [A Neighborhood Inventory and Existing Conditions Report](#)* is now available! A public presentation of the draft plan is planned for late-September. Follow the progress at www.mansfieldtomorrow.org/nw-neighborhood-plan
- Mansfield Public Library (MPL) is supporting Mansfield's ongoing sustainability efforts by hosting a Craft Swap on the evening of Tuesday, August 20. Unwanted craft supplies can be donated during normal library hours from August 12-19, 2024, and then community members will have the opportunity to do a little free shopping at our swap event on Tuesday, August 20, 2024 from 5:00-8:00 p.m. MPL is accepting craft supply donations at the library circulation desk for all types of crafts: yarn, fabric, paper-crafting, tools, etc. Donations must be in good, usable condition. Previously opened containers of liquid (paint, glue, etc.) will not be accepted. Any items left at the end of the swap will be used by the library, donated, or discarded.
- Celebrate the Finale of the Summer Reading Program at MPL's Annual Ice Cream Social! Kids, teens, and adults are all invited to join us for a family-friendly Ice Cream Social on the Library Lawn for games, music, and family fun- free for all community members Saturday, August 17th from 11AM-1PM on the Library Lawn (Rain Location: MPL's Buchanan Auditorium)
- As a reminder, 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 (MPL) Circulation Desk, and the book is available as an E-Book through Overdrive. A community book discussion is being held on August 22 (Thursday) beginning at 6:00 pm at the Library (Buchanan Auditorium). A light dinner will be provided. Children are welcome to stay with their parents during the discussion, or MPL will also offer engaging activities in the playground area (or activity room in case of rain).

- Mansfield Public Library is excited to announce the launch of its Library Connection Mobile App: The Library at Your Fingertips! This app can be used for a wide range of valuable purposes, including:
 - Creating a digital library card
 - Searching the catalog
 - Requesting and cancelling holds
 - Accessing digital resources
 - Reserving museum passes

More information, including how to download and link your library card found here:

<https://mansfieldpubliclibraryct.org/2605/MPLs-Mobile-App>

- We want to inform the Town Council as well as the public of changes within the Youth Service Bureau. Mansfield Youth Services and the Mansfield Public Schools have been in a period of transition over the past few months. Mansfield Public Schools have decided to expand their services to include two School Social Workers, each assigned to their own school. This will mean that the two school-based social workers within YSB will be transitioning to either the middle or elementary school, with a corresponding reduction in staffing assigned to YSB. Additionally, Katie Bell, the Youth Services Supervisor will be leaving us to accept a new professional opportunity. Her last day with the Town of Mansfield is September 5. The Human Services Director will be providing administrative support while we recruit and hire a new Youth Services Supervisor. The position has been posted and we hope to start interviews in early September. While the staffing has changed, the goals and mission of Mansfield Youth Services remain the same. Youth Services is committed to fostering positive youth development, social-emotional learning, establishing community connections and empowering youth and families to strive towards independence, resilience and growth.
- We are pleased to announce a collaboration between Youth Services and the Community Center that includes the Youth Services team providing services, developing programming and providing supervision of the Teen Center. We will be soliciting feedback from both Middle and High school youth to help in the program development, while supporting the mission of both Youth Services and the Teen center. This collaboration will begin the week of September 2nd.
- The Summer Service and Leadership programming administered by Youth Services was a huge success. Ten Mansfield youth, grades 9-12, volunteered this summer for five weeks to assist with projects and food distribution at the Covenant Soup Kitchen in Willimantic. They all came in with extraordinary work ethic and commitment to getting the tasks done! Covenant even gave our group of youth a special shout out on Facebook for all their hard work. Additionally, the Mansfield Mustangs, which is a youth driven service learning group for youth entering grades 5 – 9, participated in two sessions making up a total of 20 youth that volunteered in Mansfield and surrounding areas to work with programs that they helped choose. To date this program has volunteered at Creative Living Community of CT, Tara Farm Rescue, Our Companions Animal Rescue, Spring Valley Student Farm and Horizon Wings. The upcoming projects are focused on cleaning up trails in surrounding park areas such as Mansfield Hollow. Finally, GOAL is an adventure-based learning and positive youth development program for Mansfield youth entering into High School. Throughout the session, the facilitators incorporate community and character building activities to help develop self-confidence, resiliencies, and improve feelings of social connectedness. Over the course of 6 weeks, youth in this program participated in a variety of events including hiking, canoeing, swimming, ropes courses all which cumulates to an overnight camping trip.

- September brings with it National Senior Center Month, and the 2024 theme is “Powering Connections.” Mansfield’s Senior Center facility and programs are integral in providing education, support and connections within our community. In the beginning of the month, we will highlight some of our offerings with free trial classes so seniors can test out a new class or program. For mid-September, we are planning a fun opportunity to make connections with others with a Mock-tails and Mingle event, featuring a classical pianist for entertainment. Later in the month we will celebrate 49 years as the Mansfield Senior Center with a variety show. Come join in the fun and show off your talents. For anyone that has been wondering what the Senior Center has to offer, this is a great opportunity to explore all that we do and make some lasting connections!
- Staff are in the process of reviewing and attempting to assimilate substantive comments provided by Town Boards and Committees that provided feedback on the draft Mansfield Parks and Recreation Master Plan. At this time, the goal is to present a proposed final/updated version of the draft plan to the Town Council for adoption in the month of September.
- The final week of parks and recreation summer camps ends this Friday, August 16. Approximately 900 campers participated in full and half-day camps. Approximately 700 attended Camp Mansfield and roughly 200 attended a variety of art, theater, dance, sports, and STEM specialty camps.
- Bicentennial Pond was closed a few days in early August due to an elevated E.coli level, likely due to high amounts of rain in late-July/early-August. This is the only temporary closure of Bicentennial Pond this season. Eastern Highland Health District continues to take water samples weekly, and daily when E.coli levels are above acceptable limits.
- The Mansfield Community Center will be closed to the public the week of August 19-25 for annual maintenance. Daily parks and recreation office hours will be available, Monday-Friday for phone calls, online registrations and communications. Annual maintenance will be performed by the Facilities Management Department, private contractors, and Parks and Recreation staff. Some work includes: stair tread replacement, gymnasium and studio floor refinishing and relining, new tiling, new carpeting, pool mechanical work, ceiling insulation replacement, plumbing and electrical repairs, and a comprehensive cleaning throughout the facility. More than \$80,000 in new fitness equipment is anticipated to be installed the same week. The gymnasium closure will continue into the week of August 26 as the gym refinishing work includes a complete sanding and repainting of floor lines prior to several layers of polyurethane being applied.
- The Parks and Recreation [Fall brochure](#) was mailed to Mansfield households the last week of July. Registration begins today, August 12.
- The Mansfield Downtown Partnership hosted a successful series of events this summer. Over 2,500 residents and visitors attended Summer Stroll, the John E. Jackman Tour de Mansfield, Summer Concerts on the Square, and the Summertime Saturday Puppet Shows. With the exception of the Tour, these events were all free and open to everyone (there is a modest participation fee for the Tour). These events help to showcase the many, diverse businesses and amenities here in Mansfield as well as contribute to strengthening the sense of community within town. Save the dates for the Partnership’s remaining 2024 events: Celebrate Mansfield Festival (Saturday, Sept. 28), Trick-or-Treat (Saturday, Oct. 26), and Winter Welcome (Saturday, Dec. 7).
- *Last call! Sign up today for our Celebrate Mansfield Festival:* Mansfield businesses, non-profit organizations, and clubs and UConn departments, programs, and student groups are invited to be a part of our 21st Annual Celebrate Mansfield Festival by hosting an [Activity Booth](#), [Craft Booth](#), or [Food Booth](#); by [volunteering](#) at the event; or by [sponsoring](#) the Festival. While volunteers can sign up at any time, the deadline to sign up for an Activity or Food Booth is this Friday (Aug. 16). Interested sponsors should contact the Partnership office as soon as possible to ensure they receive all of the applicable benefits (please call 860.429.2740 or email mdp@mansfieldct.org).
- Primary voting for voters registered with the Republican Party takes place in-person Tuesday, August 12 at four polling locations. Voters in District 2 are reminded that the poll has been moved from the Wilcox Hall at Fire Station 107 in Eagleville to the gymnasium at Mansfield Middle School. Residents may find their assigned polling place [through this link](#). Polls are open from 6:00 AM to 8:00 PM. Early

voting was conducted at the Town Hall August 5, 7, 9, 10, 11 from 10:00 AM – 6:00 PM and August 6 & 8 from 8:00 AM – 8:00 PM.

- *November 2024 Election:* The Office of the Town Clerk has been busy with November 2024 Election preparation work. 90-Day Military ballots were issued last week. Nominating petitions for those petitioning to be on the November ballot have been coming in and a total of 246 petition signatures have been verified by the Clerks thus far with more expected soon.
- *August 13, 2024 Republican Primary:* Absentee balloting for the August 13, 2024 Republican Primary will come to a close tomorrow, August 13.
- *Public Works/Infrastructure Improvement Updates*
 - Steady progress continues on the Hunting Lodge Road culvert replacement project. Genovesi Construction has completed installation of the first phase of the headwall, completed the temporary water line to allow for installation of the endwall concrete footing, and began formwork for the end wall. This work allows installation of the new 48" pipe at which time the project will flip to the new box culvert. A date for a crane has not been set as weather has hampered projects' timelines.
 - The sanitary sewer extension on South Eagleville Road, which will serve the Eagleville Green affordable housing project, is complete with restoration of the off-road portions also complete and grass beginning to grow/establish. Final paving is not yet scheduled as VMS Construction is now scheduled to begin installation of a replacement water main on South Eagleville Road for the Connecticut Water Company. The water main replacement project is scheduled to begin this week of August 12 on South Eagleville Road. Final paving will follow.
 - The Town's paving contractor, All States Material Group, installed the first (binder) layer of pavement on Browns Road (Chatham Drive to Crane Hill Road), September Road, White Oak Road, and Pine Woods Lane. The top layer of pavement will be installed in the coming weeks, as well as curbing, where needed, and driveway aprons. When these steps are completed, the Department of Public Works will backfill road edges with topsoil and will apply grass seed to help further stabilize the adjacent impacted areas.
 - The Elizabeth Road drainage project has 7 of 8 catch basins completed as well as cross pipes completed. The Department's third drainage crew has been working on Brookside Lane with 7 basin complete and approximately 460' of pipe replaced.
 - The roadside mowing program is in full swing and will be ongoing throughout the summer.
 - Department personnel continue to replace missing signs, address miscellaneous citizen requests, patch potholes and pick up wood from downed/cut trees.
- Interviews for the vacant Resident Trooper position are upcoming and taking place on August 22. This process will also fill the requested additional spot requested by the town that should be filled by the end of October. The applicant pool has been strong and we are confident that the selected individual serve the town well. The Town has been informed by the Connecticut State Police that they anticipate filling the most recently authorized additional Resident Trooper position the Town's eleventh, which was funded as part of the FY 2024/25 budget, in October of this year.
- Resident Trooper personnel will be assisting The Oaks with move in this coming weekend, August 17-18. We will have two Troopers on duty from 9:00AM - 6:00PM.
- State Police is commencing with proactive party patrols beginning this Friday, August 16. Subsequent weekend patrols will also include Thursdays. Concurrently, efforts are being made to keep overtime costs under last year's actual expenditures.
- On Saturday, August 10, at approximately noon, personnel from CT State Police (CSP) Troop C responded to the Citgo Gas Station located at 9 Stafford Road for a reported robbery. The lone male suspect entered the gas station, displayed a long barrel-style revolver handgun, and demanded all the money. The clerk gave the suspect an undisclosed amount of cash. The suspect is believed to have fled on foot and later got into a gray pickup truck. The suspect is described as a fair skin male, approximately 5'8", slender build, 20 to 30 years old, wearing a royal blue hoodie with a Champion logo, a black gator style mask, black sweatpants, black sneakers, and white socks. CSP Major

Crimes responded to the scene and have assumed this investigation. Sergeant King will remain in contact with Major Crimes for any updates and share corresponding information with the Town Manager as it becomes available.

- Under the leadership of Chief Roache, the volunteer program for Mansfield Fire and Emergency Services is being updated to add additional structure with the goal of recruiting and retaining a more robust contingent of volunteers to support our combination department. The Town has been approached by multiple potentially interested volunteers who possess an EMT card.
- Production of the new Quint apparatus (aerial pumper) is moving along relatively quickly.. Work is anticipated to be completed at the manufacturing plant by the end of August. By the time final outfitting is performed by the dealer (who will accept delivery from the manufacturer), it is likely the apparatus will be delivered to the Town by late-October or early-November.
- 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.
- Refurbishment of Squad 107, which is largely being funded with insurance proceeds, is nearly complete and we expect delivery of the apparatus this week.
- The August/September edition of the Town's bimonthly electronic newsletter was published on August 2 and can be accessed online [here](#).
- The Town Manager's most recent monthly appearance on WILI-AM on the Wayne Norman Show took place on August 2 and can be accessed [here](#). The next Town Manager interview on WILI will be October 4.