

MEMO

To: Town Council
CC: Town Employees
From: Ryan J. Aylesworth, Town Manager
Date: September 9, 2024
Subject: **Town Manager's Report**

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

- The Town Manager and Chief of Shared Services and Administration (CoSSA) will be attending the 2024 ICMA annual conference being held in Pittsburgh, PA, from September 22-25. Mr. John Carrington, Director of Public Works will attend the Town Council's September 23 meeting in the absence of the Town Manager and CoSSA.
- The Town of Mansfield submitted three projects for consideration for the Connecticut Council of Municipalities (CCM) 2024 Municipal Excellence Awards which recognize innovative projects and individuals that have significantly improved the quality of life for citizens, established partnerships, and built community support. The competition applauds the achievements of leaders and municipalities and encourages others to strive for excellence. The Mansfield Local Government Academy and the Digital Navigators initiatives were submitted as General projects and will be judged against projects from other communities with population range 20,001-40,000. We also entered the Mansfield Farms to Families program for a Topic Award entry which is judged against all town. This year's topic was "Creative Use of Resources, Partnerships and Collaborations" featuring new ideas that have helped the town have greater control over their own destinies through innovative funding techniques, creative problem-solving, and working with outside entities and partners. We are proud of all three of these initiatives, and believe they tell a very positive story about Mansfield's priorities. The CCM annual convention, where winners will be announced, is in early December.
- In response to the recent electric rate hike and associated feedback received from local residents, we have created a News item on the Town's website home page which offers energy assistance resources and counseling through the Human Services Department. Energy assistance for qualifying families can be implemented starting October 1. The News post also includes links to PURA, Eversource, and other contacts for filing formal complaints or otherwise expressing individual viewpoints relative to electric rates.
- The Town's website has enhanced its Your Government section by adding direct links to state and federal legislators, Your Legislators.
- The monthly staff-to-staff meetings between Town and UConn officials continue to provide an effective means for exchanging highly beneficial information of mutual interest. Starting with the most recent meeting, these monthly discussions will now also include Mr. Phil Hunt who recently joined UConn as President Maric's Deputy Chief of Staff after serving in a similar role at North Dakota State University, in addition to the Nathan Fuerst (Vice President of Student Life and Enrollment) and Robert Corbett (Executive Director of Real Estate).
- Chief Roache will provide the Council with a brief update summarizing his initial impressions, assessment, and priorities emerging from his first 100 days as Chief of Mansfield Fire and Emergency Services during tonight's regular business meeting. Updates will touch on the

- services/operations, staffing, apparatus, facilities, and current projects being overseen by the Fire Department.
- The 2024 Mansfield Local Government Academy will officially begin this 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](#).
 - 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:
 - Kim Kowalyshyn began work today as the Executive Assistant in the Town Manager's Office. Kim has considerable experience as an executive assistant to retired Tolland Town Manager Steve Werbner. She has over 15 years of municipal experience and has served the Town of Tolland in a number of capacities over the years. We are excited to have Kim join the team. Welcome Kim!
 - Amy Garganese will begin work on September 23rd as our Outreach Coordinator at the Senior Center. Amy will replace Yamil Figueroa who was recently promoted to a Case Worker position with our Human Services Department. Amy has worked and volunteered for a Senior Center in Rhode Island. Her additional previous experience in the Human Services field has been as a family service coordinator and a visitation supervisor. Amy has a Bachelor's degree in speech, language and hearing science, and an Associate's degree in human services.
 - We have identified preferred candidates for the positions of Youth Services Supervisor, Senior Center Program Coordinator, and Deputy Fire Chief of Operations.
 - The Town of Mansfield/Mansfield Board of Education received an approximately \$15,000 members equity payment from our liability-automobile-property insurance and workers compensation insurance carrier, CIRMA. Due to the overall health of the CIRMA pool, and our positive claims experience, we were eligible to receive this payment.
 - *Mansfield Tomorrow/POCD*: In June, the Town released a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for a consultant to complete the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development. Five submittals were received and three firms were interviewed. After a rigorous evaluation of qualifications, the Town selected FHI Studio. The firm's understanding of the Town through their work on the NW Mansfield Vision and Strategy Plan, experience completing POCDs in the State of Connecticut, and firm capacity were the deciding factors. The plan is expected to take a year to complete and will include robust community engagement.
 - *New Regulations related to Multi-Family Development Proposed*. The PZC has been reviewing Planned Housing Design District Regulations to develop a revised draft regulation. The public hearing has been tabled until September 16, 2024, and will likely be tabled again until October 7, 2024, to allow for more revisions. Once a revised draft is complete the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) will resume the public hearing.
 - *Extension of the temporary and limited moratorium on new high-density housing developments*. On August 19th, the PZC extended the moratorium on new multi-family developments over five (5) total units or with an average density greater than three (3) units per acre to December 31, 2024.
 - *Northwest Mansfield Vision and Strategy Plan*. [A Neighborhood Inventory and Existing Conditions Report](#) is available for review. Follow the progress at www.mansfieldtomorrow.org/nw-neighborhood-plan.
 - Throughout the month of September, Mansfield Public Library (MPL) will be celebrating National Library Card Sign-up Month with a variety of fun and exciting programs and prizes. MPL will also

have fun library “swag” for those who show their library card or sign up for a new card and those who share a selfie with their library card will be entered into weekly prize drawings!

- MPL is inviting all local families to a fun, free “Back to School Family Fun Night” on Friday, September 13th from 5:00-8:00PM. Learn about the library’s many helpful services, cool collections, and diverse programs while having fun and enjoying free pizza. The library will be open extra hours for this special event and families will be able to explore the library, compete in a Library Scavenger Hunt, enjoy fun crafts and learn about local resources from community partners, including Mansfield’s Youth Services and Human Services Departments, which can support students and their families on their path to educational success.
- A ribbon-cutting event for the new Toy Library at MPL is being held on Tuesday, September 17 at 11:00 AM. All are welcome to join in the fun!
- As a reminder, Mansfield Public Library recently launched 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, and reserving museum passes.
More information, including how to download and link your library card found here:
<https://mansfieldpubliclibraryct.org/2605/MPLs-Mobile-App>
- Mansfield Farms to Families is still in full swing with eight weeks remaining in the program this season. We have served the most families yet with a total of 125 families this growing season.
- With colder weather coming up, the Human Services Department will start our Energy Assistance Program applications in October. The Town works in collaboration with the Access Agency to complete and submit applications for energy assistance for the colder months. Exact dates will be shared by the end of September.
- Medicare open enrollment period is 10/15 to 12/1/24. Our Adult Services Case worker will be coordinating information sessions and individual sessions to help residents pick the best plan to meet their needs. Interested individuals should reach out to Human Services to set up a time during this open enrollment period to hear more about the program options.
- The Youth Services Bureau has started collaborating on programming for the Teen Center located in the Mansfield Community Center and released its once monthly Friday programming activities for middle school youth to sign up for. This includes activities such as pumpkin carving, making clay bowls, and warm fleece blankets. We have just started to promote these activities, and have had a lot of student interest.
- Staff are wrapping up their efforts assimilating substantive comments provided by Town Boards and Committees relative to the draft Mansfield Parks and Recreation Master Plan that was presented to the Town Council earlier this summer. At this time, we anticipate that the final/updated version of the draft plan will be presented to the Council within the next few weeks with the intention of formal adoption taking place during the Council’s first meeting in October.
- Mansfield Parks and Recreation collaborated with the Department of Facilities Management during the Community Center annual maintenance/shutdown week on a number of projects, including: gymnasium and studio floor refinishing and relining, new tilling, new carpeting, pool mechanical work, therapy pool cleaning and fresh water, ceiling insulation replacement and duct work, plumbing and electrical repairs, and a comprehensive cleaning throughout the facility. Additionally, the back stairs landing and steps will receive new flooring in the month of September. A reporter with *The Chronicle* toured the recent facility improvements for an upcoming article.
- Over \$80,000 in new fitness equipment for the Mansfield Community Center will be installed on September 12th. This will leave approximately 20% of original strength equipment remaining, plus 12 spins bikes to be replaced in the near future to complete a full replacement of cardio and strength equipment.
- The Parks and Recreation fall program registration is now in progress and many fall programs began the first week of September.

- There will be a celebration of “The Michael Taylor & Family Pickleball Courts” at 9:00am on September 19th at the courts behind the Community Center. The public is welcome to attend and help us convey our collection appreciation for the enormous generosity and support that Mr. Taylor and other key stakeholders in the community lent to making this exciting recreational asset come to fruition.
- Women’s Friendship Day will be celebrated at the Community Center on Sunday, September 15th.
- The next Free Mansfield Day at the Community Center is September 14.
- *Mansfield Downtown Partnership updates:*
 - *Summer Promotional Efforts:* Together with the Town’s Communications Specialist, Partnership staff created and executed a months-long, multi-media campaign to promote the Town of Mansfield as a destination for summer fun. The campaign kicked off with the cover feature of CT News Media’s Inc 2024 *Summer Fun and Dining Guide*, which was published in late May with 10,000 copies printed and distributed in eastern and central CT. The printed publicity was supported by [a page](#) on the Town’s website and social media posts highlighting local summer attractions and activities, as well as a 30-second television ad which aired during the Paris Olympics on NBC-CT and streaming on Peacock (for CT viewers). NBC also visited town and filmed a segment promoting summer fun in Mansfield which aired on their local magazine program *CT Live* and featured Town Manager Ryan Aylesworth and Parks & Recreation Director Jay O’Keefe. The goals of the campaign were to elevate the Town’s profile and promote Mansfield as a fun destination in the summertime. One mark of its success is a recent e-blast from the Connecticut Office of Tourism entitled “Summer’s not over yet” which highlighted ways to enjoy the last few weeks of summer, including visits to The Adventure Park at Storrs, Mansfield Drive-in Theatre & Marketplace, and the UConn Dairy Bar – all of which were highlighted in our TV spot. The spot can be viewed on the Town’s website for a few more days and is available on the [Town’s YouTube page](#).
 - *21st Annual Celebrate Mansfield Festival: Saturday, Sept. 28:* Celebrate the best of Mansfield with music, food, and fun at our 21st Annual Celebrate Mansfield on Saturday, September 28! The Festival will take place from 2:00 PM to 8:00 PM around Downtown Storrs. There will be a variety [activities](#) for all ages, and visitors can indulge in [tasty treats](#) from local businesses, support local creatives in our [juried craft show](#), and enjoy performances of puppetry, dance, magic, and music. At 6:00 PM, visitors will be able to pick up some dinner from one of our food booths or your favorite Downtown Storrs restaurant and join us on Betsy Paterson Square for our closing concert by award-winning blues and rock artist [Jake Kulak and the Modern Vandals](#) (concert is 6:30-8:00 PM)! Thanks to the generous support of our [sponsors](#), the Celebrate Mansfield Festival is free and open to everyone to attend. Learn more at [downtownstorrsfestival.org](#).
- *November 2024 Election:* Although the Town has not received confirmation that the Secretary of the State’s office has formally approved the second early-voting location (UConn Bookstore) that the Town Council authorized during a special meeting held on August 26, we anticipate approval. Additionally, the Office of the Town Clerk prepared a detailed [list of answers to frequently asked questions \(FAQs\) regarding voting options](#) for the November 5, 2024 Election (both early voting and Election Day voting).
- *Facilities Management Updates*
 - A request for proposals (RFP) was issued on 8/26 for restoration work to be performed on the Old Town Hall & Historical Society. As a reminder, this project is being primarily funded via a state grant administered by the CT Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD). Work will consist of: site regrading, paving, ADA access ramps and sidewalk, roof truss repairs, window replacement, siding replacement, door replacement, dehumidification system, and ADA accessible restrooms. Bids are due 9/12
 - Mansfield Middle School: A tremendous amount of work to repaint classrooms, and lockers was completed prior to the start of the new school year. The design and engineering work

- continues to progress on the Main Entrance Security project. We are expecting construction drawings that will be submitted with a request for proposals in the coming weeks.
- Mansfield Elementary School: CT Water continues to work on a pricing proposal for the water pipe lining work. This proposal will complete our overall understanding of cost and timing of the project to permanently correct elevated copper levels in the elementary school water.
 - Additionally, installation of two large playground shades at the elementary school has begun with the placement of the engineered footings, the structure and shade panel installation will continue after school hours over the next couple of weeks.
 - Town Hall: The main entrance sidewalk was replaced at the Town Hall this week. The former brick sidewalk was heaving in some areas and had several trip hazards.
 - Mansfield Senior Center: The senior center will be closed this week (9/9-9/13) for wall repairs and painting, as well as a deep cleaning and sanitization of the entire facility.
- *Public Works/Infrastructure Improvement Updates*
 - Steady progress continues on the Hunting Lodge Road culvert replacement project. Genovesi is preparing the footings for the new concrete box culvert and completing installation of the new water main. The stream was routed through the newly installed 48" Concrete Pipe last week with the weekend rains providing new streambed material within the pipe. The crane needed for the box culvert installation is scheduled for the first week in October.
 - Public Works crews have been performing drainage improvements on Brookside Lane, Juniper Lane, and Elizabeth Road. In total 28 catch basins will be installed/replaced. 17 basins are completed with 11 remaining to be reconstructed/installed. Resurfacing is scheduled this month.
 - The resurfacing project on Browns Road (from Chatham Drive to Crane Hill Road) and September Road continued with the top and final course of pavement being applied this past week. Over the next weeks, driveway aprons and curbing will be installed.
 - The resurfacing project on Pinewoods Lane and White Oak are complete.
 - Department personnel has begun preparation of the Spring Hill Road resurfacing project between Route 195 (Storrs Road) and Maple Road which is estimated to be complete in the spring 2025.
 - The roadside mowing program continues for the second cutting of many roads and intersections.
 - Department personnel continue to replace missing signs, address miscellaneous citizen requests, patch potholes and pick up wood from downed/cut trees.
 - The Resident Trooper's Office has been actively conducting "party patrols" on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays over the last two weeks following the return of UConn students for the fall semester. Multiple large volume parties have thus far been broken up in the northwestern portion of Town. The Council will continue to be provided summaries of noteworthy calls/responses as appropriate. Concurrently, efforts are being made to keep overtime costs under last year's actual expenditures.
 - The volume of psych-related medical calls and serious car accidents that Mansfield Fire and Emergency Services is responding to has increased substantially in recent weeks following the return of UConn students to the Storrs campus and surrounding residential neighborhoods.
 - Production of the new Quint apparatus (aerial pumper) is largely complete as the apparatus left the manufacturing plant (Ocala, FL) in late-August after being examined by Department personnel and is now receiving final outfitting by the dealer (North Attleborough, MA). It is likely the apparatus will be delivered to the Town by late-October or early-November.
 - Planned interior renovations to Fire Station 207 are now largely complete, and the Department is now operating an ambulance out of this location.
 - Refurbishment of Squad 107 is now complete after a 10-month period in which the Department was without the apparatus.