

MEMO

To: Town Council
CC: Town Employees
From: Ryan J. Aylesworth, Town Manager
Date: November 11, 2024
Subject: **Town Manager's Report**

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

- *November Election*: Complete results for the November 2024 election in the Town of Mansfield were posted to the Town website this past week, and can be reviewed [here](#). A total of 506 electors voted via absentee ballot, inclusive of military and overseas voters. Our Registrars of Voters – Anne Greineder (D) and Vera Ward (R) – also subsequently issued the following statement.
As Mansfield's elected registrars, we take incredibly seriously our duty to ensure free, fair and secure elections that comply with Connecticut law.
In accordance with state election laws, all voter registration forms were accepted by the Registrars of Voters or their designees by 8:00 PM on Election Day. Per the Secretary of the State's (SOTS) office, acceptance is defined as the verification of identity and residency, and approval of admittance as an elector by the Town election staff.
All available results are required to be filed with SOTS by midnight on Election Day. Final results are due Friday of the same week, which was November 8th this year. The final election results for the Town of Mansfield were submitted within this timeframe.
We are confident the election results in Mansfield are accurate. Protecting everyone's right to vote is of the utmost importance.
Due to the crush of first-time voters at Town Hall on Election Day, processing all the registrations and votes was time-consuming. However, it must be emphasized that processing of registrations and tabulation of ballots was all completed within permissible timeframes.
We were in regular communication with SOTS to insure compliance with all aspects of the law, and we were assured our results were submitted on a timely basis.
- The Town Manager, Fire Chief, and Resident Trooper Supervisor met with senior staff at UConn – including the outgoing Vice President of Public Safety and Chief of the UConn Police Department – to open lines of communication about how the Town and UConn will work collaboratively in the years ahead to effectively promote public safety (both proactively and reactively) in light of anticipated significant growth in off-campus housing developments.
- The Town of Mansfield and UConn are teaming up to clean up litter and urging the public to help pick up along the roadsides at a Community Cleanup Day, Saturday, November 16. The Town-University Relations Committee coordinated the “Don't Mess with Mansfield” cleanup in response to residents expressed concern last spring about the litter along roads adjacent to campus and all around Town. On campus, the Office of Sustainability in the Institute of the Environment is coordinating the initiative with student clubs, organizations, fraternities, and sororities plus other UConn student volunteers. The university has set up eight different pickup spots where students can grab garbage bags and supplies from 12 noon to 4 PM and join with friends in litter pick-up and drop-off. Details are available

[online](#). Mansfield residents can report to one of these eight locations to potentially work alongside UConn students, or just concentrate on their own neighborhoods. For many years, the Town's Solid Waste Advisory Committee has coordinated a robust [Adopt-a-Road signup](#) so residents can commit to cleaning up on specific roadsides. These volunteers are being urged to use this day as an opportunity to fulfil that commitment to the community. Several UConn student organizations have signed up to monitor specific roads through this program as well.

- The Town Manager is once again participating on the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) Legislative Committee for the coming session. The Committee held its initial meeting to review preliminary legislative priorities on November 5, and several additional meetings will be held in November and December as the Committee moves forward with articulating the organization's stated legislative priorities prior to the start of the upcoming "long session" that will convene in January.
- The Town Manager, Chief of Shared Services and Administration, as well as certain other Town staff and members of the Town Council will be attending the CT Conference of Municipalities (CCM) annual convention being held at Mohegan Sun on December 3.
- As a reminder, in my capacity as Town Manager (who also serves as the Town's chief of public safety), I have begun serving on the search committee for UConn's next Vice President of Public Safety. The inaugural meeting of the committee took place this past week. The search committee is a large group of stakeholders with a diverse array of professional roles (the majority of which are of course associated with UConn) and backgrounds being represented. I look forward to continuing to provide input on the qualities and attributes of candidates that I believe will be most important in the context of cultivating effective collaboration between the Town and UConn.
- This past week, the Town Manager, Mayor Moran, and Chief of Shared Services and Administration took part in an in-person meeting with CT State Police (CSP) Colonel Loughman and other high-ranking officials with CSP and the CT Department of Emergency Services and Public Safety. The goal was to have an open discussion about why the Town's recent request for additional permanent staffing (one FT Trooper, as was budgeted for the FY2024/25 fiscal year) was declined and whether this denial is temporary in nature. As anticipated, CSP officials explained that it is experiencing significant challenges maintaining adequate staffing agency-wide/statewide, and that this was the principal reason the Town's request for an additional trooper was not being approved at this time. For its part, Town officials explained in considerable detail the basis of the growing need for additional law enforcement personnel, and the public safety implications of maintaining staffing at current levels as the Town continues to grow. CSP obtained a better understanding of why the Town Council had established a target of incrementally adding one more trooper per year over course of three fiscal years to achieve (13) uniformed personnel, including the Sergeant. CSP committed to reevaluating its ability to provide the additional trooper requested for FY2025, but, it is clear that the Town will likely need to explore alternatives to relying exclusively on Resident Trooper staffing in order to satisfy its own public safety needs in light of the sobering forecast that CSP provided.
- This past week, the 2024 Mansfield Local Government Academy convened Session #8 focusing on Parks and Recreation, as well as the Town's work promoting the arts and protecting/managing open space. The session was hosted at Lenard Hall, which is home to the Community School of the Arts. The session concluded with a tour of the facility so that participants would glean a greater understanding of the opportunities Lenard Hall offers with respect to performing arts in our community. Session #9 will take place at Mansfield Senior Center this week, and will focus on land use planning and economic development. Further details on this year's Local Government Academy 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. Additional information relative to the ongoing contract negotiations will be shared with members of the Council at such time as negotiated agreements are in place and ready for ratification.
- The new ownership of the Mansfield Center General Store property, which has recently completed extensive rehabilitation and renovation work on this historic local landmark, has invited Mayor Moran

and the Town Manager to participate in a formal grand opening and ribbon-cutting event scheduled for tomorrow (Wednesday, November 13). In addition to owner Andre Bennatan, the event will feature Mark Soucy of KBMS Enterprises, Lisa Schweitzer of Lisa's Chocolates and Gifts, and Jennifer Jeffreys, owner of Line Studio Drawing. Mr. Soucy oversaw the renovations of the building, while Ms. Schweitzer and Ms. Jeffreys are the new business tenants. The reopening of the Mansfield Center General Store is a moment of pride for our town, representing both a revival of our history and a vital step forward for local economic development. This beautifully restored building is not just a nod to our past; it's a cornerstone for future growth in Mansfield Center, enhancing our village center as a destination for both residents and visitors. We look forward to seeing the positive impact the store's reopening will have on the vibrancy of our community and the sense of connection it fosters.

- The Town Manager participated in his monthly WILI-AM session with show host Wayne Norman (1040 AM or 95.3 FM) on November 1, and the segment can be accessed [here](#).
- *Hiring/Appointment and Personnel Updates:*
 - Stephanie Fox has been appointed to our Accounting Manager/Treasurer position effective November 25th. Most recently, Stephanie has served as Town Accountant for the Town of Coventry. She has over 20 years of experience in accounting. She is also a certified school business administrator. She has an associate's degree in accounting from Manchester Community College, and a bachelor's degree in business and executive management from Bay Path University. Welcome Stephanie!
 - Ariel Blair will begin work with Mansfield Parks and Recreation on November 25th as their Administrative Services Specialist. Ariel previously worked for Parks and Recreation in a number of part-time positions from 2007 – 2021. We are excited to have Ariel re-join the team and wish her well in this new role. Ariel is replacing Lynda Lambert, who was recently promoted within our organization. Congratulations Ariel!
 - Danielle Caruso, Assessor's Assistant, passed her Certified CT Municipal Assessor (CCMA) exam on October 16. Based on this and her recently increased responsibilities in the office, Danielle will be reclassified to Property Appraiser. We are proud of Danielle's achievements - both in regards to her own professional development and her role within the Town.
- *Mansfield Tomorrow Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) Update:*
 - *POCD Update Underway-* The Ad Hoc Committee on the Plan of Conservation and Development Update has been established. This Committee's primary responsibility is to guide the POCD update, informed by a public engagement process, to meet the evolving needs of the community. The planning process will include an extensive public engagement effort, designed to gather diverse feedback through focus groups, a town-wide survey, online engagement, participation in community events, and a community-wide meeting. Since the plan serves as both the Town's POCD and Strategic Plan, the Ad Hoc Committee will include members of the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) and the Town Council, in addition to four non-voting ex officio staff members. For more details on the planning process and ways to get involved, visit www.mansfieldtomorrow.org.
 - *Northwest Mansfield Vision and Strategy Plan-* Work on the Northwest Mansfield Vision and Strategy Plan continues, with draft recommendations expected soon. To strengthen the plan's impact, the NW Plan will be incorporated into the Town's POCD once adopted, ensuring that its recommendations are part of the Town's overall vision. Follow the progress at www.mansfieldtomorrow.org/nw-neighborhood-plan.
- *Multi-Family Development Regulations:*
 - *PZC-Initiated Amendments to Article 4, Section 190-33 of the Zoning Regulations to Establish Planned Housing Design District Regulations (PZC File #907-62)*
The Public Hearing will resume for the proposed Planned Housing Design District (PHDD) regulations, which will apply to multi-family developments of more than six units. The PHDD is intended to replace the existing multi-family regulations.

- *PZC-Initiated Zoning Regulation Amendments to Repeal Certain Sections Related to Multi-Family Housing (PZC File #907-61)*
A separate public hearing will be held to receive comments on the proposed repeal of specific sections related to multi-family housing.
- *PZC initiated amendments to the Zoning Regulations to establish Multi-family Performance Standards (PZC File #907-63).* The PZC will hold a public hearing regarding performance standards for multi-family development to include requirements for Recycling and Refuse Management, Bicycle Parking and Storage Requirements, Snow and Ice Storage and Removal, Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plans, Special Requirements for properties served by CT Water Company, and Property Management Plans.
- *Downtown Partnership:*
 - Winter Welcome: The Partnership will host its 12th Annual [Winter Welcome](#) in Downtown Storrs on Saturday, December 7 from 4:00 PM to 6:30 PM. Enjoy winter-themed activities on Betsy Paterson Square and winter specials at participating downtown restaurants. Vote for your favorite creation in our Trim-A-Tree Contest and be on the lookout for a bear – a polar bear (puppet) that is! The free, frosty fun kicks off when Santa Claus arrives at 4:00 PM to visit with friends at Barnes & Noble UConn in Downtown Storrs. For more information, please visit downtownstorrs.org/winterwelcome.
- *Public Art Installation*
 - Mansfield Elementary School students will participate in the unveiling of a mural themed “Mansfield Magic” at the end of the school day Thursday, November 14. The mural is the first of three public art installations completed through the Arts Recovery Program and funded by Mansfield’s American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) allocation. This student-centered celebration will focus on the students who brainstormed about the project with Artist Eric Vincent of Black Ink Creative Partners, LLC and showing the elements that students asked be included in this representation of their school and community. A formal celebration of all three public art projects will be hosted in the spring.
- *Mansfield Public Library Updates:*
 - As a reminder, the Library has two new ways to communicate with residents- a new e-newsletter to share information about upcoming events and spotlight different collections and resources AND NextReads newsletters which deliver reading recommendations on popular genres and topics sent directly to patrons’ inboxes. People can sign up for any or all of these on the Town’s website under the [Sign Up for Notifications](#) button.
 - Tellabration Singalong w/ Sally Rogers
Saturday, November 16th at 10:30 am in MPL’s Buchanan Auditorium
Sing along with Sally Rogers at MPL’s annual Tellabration Celebration in partnership with the CT Storytelling Center. Widely known for her crystal clear voice, Sally accompanies herself with guitar, banjo and mountain dulcimer and will be welcoming families with young children to join her in singing along to classic children’s songs, folk songs & more. Best for ages 3-7 but all families are welcome.
 - Celebrate DINOvember at the Mansfield Public Library! Every November, dinosaurs come out to play, read, and stomp around the library! Look for dino-themed programs, activities, and book displays all month long! In addition to an ongoing scavenger hunt, we’ll have dino-mite programs like:
 - Fossil Frenzy Wonder Workshop
Thursday, November 21 from 4-6PM
Calling all future paleontologists! Drop-in for a special Wonder Workshop featuring Excavating Activities, Fossil Crafts, & Bone Building Lego Challenges. This program is best for preschool and elementary-school age children, but all families are welcome.
 - Dinosaur Storytime
Saturday, November 30 at 10:30 AM

Dance, sing, read, and ROAR in this dino-riffic storytime. You might even encounter a t-rexcellent special guest!

- In partnership with the Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry, MPL will host a Feel Your Best Self Storytime & Puppet Making Workshop on Saturday, November 23!
 - Storytime @ 10:30AM in MPL's Program Room
Let's learn about our feelings! Join Librarian Emily for a special storytime featuring Feel Your Best Self books and songs that will help us explore emotions. No registration needed for storytime.
 - Puppet-Making Workshop @ 11AM in the Buchanan Auditorium
Stick around after storytime to explore how your family can incorporate simple, emotion-coping strategies in a joyful and fun way into your daily routine. Learn about the free online FYBS toolkit, which includes fun puppet videos, strategy cards, discussion tip sheets and more! Caregivers and kids will then make their very own hand puppet friend to practice the strategies and explore big feelings. Registration recommended for this workshop: <https://bimp.ticketleap.com/fybs-workshop-2/>
- *Mansfield Human Services Department Updates:*
 - The Human Services Department hosted the annual Veterans Day Luncheon/Celebration at the Mansfield Senior Center this past Friday, November 8. The room capacity was almost reached, which was great to see. There was a special presentation by the E.O. Smith High School students who graciously attended to share their appreciation to all the veterans on hand. The Senior Center team did a fantastic job putting this all together to celebrate our local veterans. We want to extend our thanks to the Coventry/Mansfield American Legion 52 to helping to pull the last-minute details together. Finally, many thanks to Town Manager Aylesworth, Mayor Moran, and Councilors Cotton, Litrico, and Tomecko for attending the event and helping to honor the service of our veterans.
 - There was a multi-town event honoring veterans in Ashford this past Saturday, November 9. This event honored all veterans with special acknowledgement to Korean War Era veterans. It was a lovely event that was well attended by the local communities of Ashford, Eastford, Union, Willington and Mansfield. Thank you to Ashford for hosting and putting together this special event, and thank you to Mayor Moran for her speaking role in the ceremony.
 - The Teen Center is hosting its monthly events on a pair of upcoming Fridays - November 18th and December 20th. In November, they will be making Autumn Clay pots. In December, they will be making their own DIY fleece blankets. Any middle school students interested in attending, should please reach out to the Youth Services Bureau at 860-429-3319 or by email at ysb@mansfieldct.org to request further information.
- The popular Taste of Mansfield Community Dinner, prepared by the Food Services Department of Mansfield Public Schools, returns on Wednesday, November 13. The free dinner will feature locally grown products and produce, and will be created by Chef Maraiah Popeleski-Tilley RDN, and her staff. It will be held at Mansfield Middle School from 5:30 to 7:00 PM. This event quickly reached capacity and additional reservations are not being taken at this time. The 2024 Taste of Mansfield Champions will also be acknowledged. The Taste of Mansfield is an initiative to connect the community through local food through a partnership of five Town of Mansfield departments, three commissions and committees, Mansfield Downtown Partnership, UConn Extension, and the Storrs Farmers Market.
- *Mansfield Parks and Recreation Updates*
 - Following the most recent discussion with the Town Council on October 15 regarding the Mansfield Parks and Recreation Master Plan and associated policy documents, which included sharing with the Council changes that had been made to the Plan as a result of advisory committee feedback provided over the summer, Town staff have prepared a set of related proposed policy objectives/statements for the Council to act on during the November

12 business meeting and ultimately accept the final version of the plan as presented. The Master Plan, and corresponding financial sustainability strategy and associated supplemental plans, will ultimately be living documents that are subject to periodic review and updates as warranted to meet evolving community needs.

- The main pool at the Mansfield Community Center (MCC) is currently experiencing some algae growth in a few isolated areas of the pool basin floors and walls. Recently (October 23), the main pool was closed and super-chlorinated primarily due to algae in the main pool surge tank. There was no detectable algae in the main pool swimming area or surge tank after reopening the pool on October 25. On November 3, some algae was noticed on the floor of the pool as well as certain pool walls. During this time, staff have been working with Eastern Highlands Health District (EHHD), the CT Department of Public Health, as well as the Town's external pool contractors to ensure public safety and discuss options for removing the algae. In collaboration with local, state and private entities, staff is actively assessing options that range from another round of scrubbing algae off surfaces and super-chlorination treatment or potentially emptying the pool, disinfecting, and refilling the pool. Water chemistry in both pools are closely monitored daily to ensure that our pool water is within acceptable state health code standards. Per health officials and other resources, there is currently not a need to close the pool for health reasons. However, MCC members, guests, and staff have been provided general information about the issue. There have not been any issues with the therapy pool and the two pools do not share a surge tank or a water filter system.
- The Parks and Recreation winter brochure was mailed to Mansfield households last week.
- Tickets are on sale for the annual performance of the Nutcracker, with shows planned for December 14th (Saturday) and 15th (Sunday).
- The next Free Mansfield Day at MCC is November 22nd.
- Grades 3-8 of the K-8 Recreation Basketball program is in full swing. The K-2 program will begin in December.
- *Election Day Education:* The Town hosted six Civics classes from E.O. Smith High School in an endeavor to deepen students' understanding of Election Day and the voting process. Town Clerk Sara-Ann Chaine joined each class on Election Day to discuss the absentee ballot program, the Constitutional question on this year's ballot, and to provide observational access to the District 1 polling location. Students were able to observe the inner workings of a polling location from a distance that protected voter privacy and ask questions of those campaigning and those entering and leaving the polling place. It was a rewarding experience for all and we hope to continue this practice for students each year.
- *Resident Trooper Office Updates*
 - The Mansfield Resident Troopers Office has concluded its proactive party patrols for the remainder of the semester as the need to respond to gatherings becomes far more limited during colder weather months.
 - Personnel issued 36 nuisance tickets this fall season for Party Patrol totaling roughly \$9,000.
 - The office has begun distributing flyers for Stuff-a-Cruiser. We look forward to working with Human Services on completing this mission.
 - The office is exploring the possibility of hosting a coin drive to benefit the Special Olympics.
- A "wet down" ceremony and Open House to celebrate the arrival of the new aerial pumper apparatus/ladder truck ("Truck 207") is being held at the newly renovated Four Corners Station (207) this coming Sunday, November 17th, from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM. This is open to members of Mansfield Fire and Emergency Services, Town officials, and the general public. As parking on site is quite limited, we encourage participants to park behind neighboring Hops 44.
- Personnel are now being actively trained in the operation of the new aerial pumper apparatus, and the mounting of equipment and tools in the apparatus is also proceeding gradually.
- During this ongoing period of heightened fire danger due to persistent drought, Mansfield Fire and Emergency Services continues to frequently respond to calls involving brush/outdoor fires. A very

prominent example of this came this past Thursday evening, when the Department (and neighboring mutual aid agencies) responded to a large brush fire at the Mansfield Hollow Field Trial and Wildlife Management Area. Crews responded swiftly in a highly effective collaborative effort, and the Department wishes to extend its sincere thanks to the Groveland Interagency Hotshot Crew (Groveland, CA), which had been pre-staged by CT DEEP so that they could rapidly respond to any noteworthy brush fires during this period of dangerous conditions.

- One noteworthy recent accident entailing Fire/EMS response involved a car that lost control on the southern portion of Warrenton Road (CT-89) and subsequently rolled over causing damage to staff vehicles parked at Mansfield Elementary School (fortunately school was not in session). Extrication equipment was used to safely extract the driver, and the driver was subsequently evacuated by Lifestar for medical attention.
- The Fire Marshal’s Office, in concert with the Department of Building and Housing, continues to provide ongoing inspections associated with The Standard at Four Corners (roughly 400-unit multi-family housing development) and Eagleville Green (42-unit multi-family housing development that contains 34 affordable housing units).
- Below is a breakdown of the calls for service that Mansfield Fire and Emergency Services responded during 10/25/24 to 11/7/24.

Call Type	# of calls	# of calls which were responded as Mutual Aid
ALS Medical	31	8
BLS Medical	63	18
Total medical	94	26
Fire Alarm	8	1
Structure Fire	2	2
Outside/Brush Fire	13	
CO Alarm	2	
Natural Gas Leak	2	
Smoke/Odor Investigation	3	1
Vehicle Fire	1	
Vehicle Accident	11	5
Tree/Wires Down	1	
Officer Call	4	
Service Call	5	
Standby	1	
Total Non-medical	53	9
Total	147	35

- *Public Works/Infrastructure Improvement Updates*

- Hunting Lodge Road Culvert: Genovesi Construction completed tying rebar and is forming the three parapet walls, which protect the traveling public. A subcontractor for Genovesi reclaimed the roadway and has begun grading the roadway. Once the concrete for the parapets are poured, a waterproofing material will be applied and the roadway can then be paved.
- Coventry Road: Work on Coventry Road to improve the stability of two areas on the unpaved portion of the road continues. The road crew completed the geogrid and base layer of gravel on the smaller 400 foot area on eastern end of the road and has completed the geogrid and base layer of gravel on 1200 feet of the 1800 foot section on the western end of the unpaved section.
- The Department's in-house tree crew and the Town's contracted tree company removed 35 trees since the last report. The vast majority of these trees (28 of the 35) were on Codfish Falls Road.
- We are still waiting on the contractor to finish the two large driveway aprons and finish the curb on Browns Road. Town crews are still backfilling the road edges and restoring the lawns.
- We are still waiting on the contractor to install the curbing Brookside Lane and Elizabeth Road. Town crews are installing the numerous (32/51) driveway aprons on Brookside and Elizabeth.
- Preparation work commenced on Knowlton Hill Road and the northern section of Wormwood Hill Road for the paving next week.
- VMS Construction is actively installing the replacement water main for the CT Water Company on South Eagleville Road.