

MEMO

To: Town Council
CC: Town Employees
From: Ryan J. Aylesworth, Town Manager
Date: March 24, 2025
Subject: **Town Manager's Report**

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

- During its March 24 business meeting, the Town Council will receive a presentation from staff on the 2024 Town-wide Revaluation project. As was reported at the March 10 Council meeting, the Assessor finalized (before BAA changes) all property values as part of the ongoing revaluation process and signed the October 1, 2024 Grand List prior to February 28, 2025. The GIS website (<https://www.axisqis.com/mansfieldct/>) has been updated with the finalized (again, before BAA changes) Assessor Real Property Record cards. Final assessment notices for real property owners were mailed on March 10. Individual Property Notices provide gross assessment value, exemption value (as applicable), and net assessment value. Earlier this month, the Mansfield Town Council voted to adopt a new state law, Public Act 25-02 sections 2 and 3, regarding an Alternative Motor Vehicle Depreciation Schedule. As a result of this vote, Mansfield is EXTENDING THE DEADLINE (previously March 20, 2025, as prescribed by state law) for appealing all assessments, including real estate, to APRIL 2, 2025. Details regarding the formal appeals processes is available on the Town's website: <https://www.mansfieldct.gov/2126/Board-of-Assessment-Appeals>. Residents can obtain more information about the Revaluation in Mansfield by viewing this [short presentation](#).
- The Town Manager's proposed FY 2025/26 operating and capital budget recommendations have been finalized and will be presented to the Town Council at its March 24 business meeting. Additionally, the first of two public information sessions relative to the budget will be held on March 27 (Thursday) in Council Chamber at 6:00 PM. As in previous budget years, a primary goal for the FY 2025/26 budget is to sustain the high quality of Town services and projects (pursuing enhancements where fiscally prudent) while simultaneously promoting cost efficiencies, leveraging state and other "non-local" revenue sources, and minimizing—or avoiding—any increases in the property taxes owed by households. We want to ensure that Mansfield continues to be a welcoming and affordable community for residents of all economic means and life circumstances.
- As promised during the March 10 Council meeting, I want to provide additional explanation of the numerous factors and variables that collectively contributed to Chief Roache's developing a plan to move the staffing from the Eagleville Fire Station (Station 107) to the Four Corners Fire Station (Station 207) beginning in April. The Department has reviewed calls for service data based on existing development/population density that support this transition. Another key reason is that The Standard at the Four Corners, a large multi-family housing development, is scheduled to open its doors in summer 2025 and the Department anticipates that this will have a noteworthy impact on the volume of calls for service in that area of Town. As such, it makes sense to modify the staffing plan and station utilization accordingly in advance of the project being completed. The Eagleville Fire Station will remain in active service by the department (not closed), and will be frequently staffed by department personnel to meet operational needs. This transition has been anticipated for some time, which is why the Town recently completed a number of significant renovations to the Four Corners Fire Station that were featured as part of the community open house this past fall. This station is of

course also where we house Truck 207, the new aerial ladder/pumper apparatus. Additionally, it is our understanding that the church property adjacent to the Eagleville Fire Station (Station 107), for which Mansfield Fire and Emergency Services has historically used the parking lot, recently changed ownership. The new owner has indicated he intends to install water and septic service on site to enable the church building to be converted to multi-family housing (which would also require approval by the Planning and Zoning Commission based on current zoning), and the work associated with this would likely impact the Department from using the parking lot for a to-be-determined period of time. Town purchase of the church property has been contemplated. However, because Station 107 as a facility is in need of extensive renovations in order to meet present and future fire service needs, it was determined that purchasing the adjacent property at this time would be disadvantageous given that the potential of constructing a new station at a location further south on the Route 32 corridor. For instance, the former Vinton School property is a possible option given that the Town already owns it and that location would seemingly present a superior option with respect to meeting department and citizen needs. With respect to a longer-term lens, the Town continues to evaluate its public safety facility needs, and this includes analyzing call data as we work toward determining facility designs and locations that will provide optimal public safety response capability.

- State Rep. Haddad continues to be in regular communication with the Town Manager regarding legislation that might have particular impact on our community as well as priority Town projects that could potentially be strong candidates for state funding (State Bond Commission) with active support from Rep. Haddad and Sen. Flexer.
- *Mansfield Public Schools:* As the Council is aware, the Mansfield Board of Education (MBOE) is involved in the process of selecting a new superintendent of schools to replace Peter Dart who will be retiring in June. MBOE has selected Cooperative Executive Searches (CES) to assist in the search process to find the best candidate to be Mansfield's next superintendent of schools. To that end, an [online community survey](#) was developed to gather thoughts, ideas and input on what qualities and expertise that our residents feel are important for the next superintendent to possess. Resident input is critical and valuable, and will assist MBOE in its search process. The survey will close this Friday, March 28. There will also be a series of online "focus groups" for various stakeholders to provide input to CES about the next superintendent.
- *Kindergarten Registration.* For families with children who will be age 5 by September 1, 2025, Mansfield Elementary School has opened Kindergarten registration, [available online](#).
- *Historic Town Hall Project.* Progress continues on the much-needed repairs and renovations to our Old Town Hall and adjacent administrative building on Spring Hill (954 Storrs Road), currently leased by the Mansfield Historical Society, which commenced in early-January. The renovations will include site work and drainage improvements, structural repairs, and accessibility improvements. The general contractor is Sarazin Construction. Most recently, work has focused on preparing the Old Town Hall roof truss to accept columns to transfer roof load to the basement columns. Additionally, the building's rear door was removed to be reconstructed and painted for reinstallation. Preparations have been made for a footing to be poured for precast bulkhead installation. This past week, a temporary shoring was built to support raising of the north wall of the Old Town Hall to repair its damaged sill. The Mansfield Historical Society could use volunteer assistance in moving the final elements of its collection out of these buildings.
- *Municipal Facilities Master Planning:* As was previously reported to Council, immediately after the CT Department of Economic and Community Development completed its review, the Town reissued an updated request for qualifications (RFQ) for professional architectural services related to the next phase of municipal facilities master planning project work (focus on municipal campus at 4-10 South Eagleville Road, and the Mansfield Senior Center). The deadline for submissions was earlier today (March 24, 2025) and staff will now begin reviewing and evaluating the materials in anticipation of scheduling interviews with qualified firms in the near future. This project will be funded in large part via a \$250,000 planning grant from the State of Connecticut.

- **Northwest Mansfield Vision and Strategy Plan:** Town staff and the Town’s consultant FHI Studio (now IMEG) made a presentation of the Northwest Mansfield Vision and Strategy Plan to the Planning and Zoning Commission, Town Council, and the public on March 12. If you missed it or would like to review the information again, the PowerPoint presentation [here](#). The plan provides a framework for managing growth, investment, and conservation in the Northwest Mansfield area and will be incorporated into the updated Mansfield Tomorrow Plan of Conservation and Development. The meeting provided an opportunity for members of the public to pose questions and offer feedback on the draft plan. Many of the participants in attendance expressed continued concern over the pace of and demand for additional development in this area of Town. Written comments on the draft plan will be accepted until April 24, 2025. A Public Hearing on the plan will take place on Monday, May 19, 2025, at 6:00 PM at the Planning and Zoning Commission regular meeting (hybrid format). The plan is available for review at www.mansfieldtomorrow.org/nw-neighborhood-plan/.

- **Mansfield Tomorrow Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) Update:** The Ad Hoc Committee on the POCD will next meet on March 27, 2025. The second of three Working Group meetings for Boards and Committees will take place on March 25, and it focused on vision and goal-setting. The Town’s management team (department heads and senior staff) participated in a similar visioning and goal-setting exercise on March 18. Here are some ways the community can provide input in the POCD moving forward:

- Follow our progress and stay up to date at: www.MansfieldTomorrow.org
- Take the [online survey](#) that launched on March 13 and will remain open through May 31
- Attend the Public Workshop: Saturday, April 5, 9:30–11:30 AM @ Mansfield Middle School
- Visit Us at the Earth Day Event: Saturday, April 26, 2025, at the Mansfield Community Center
- Email Us at: MansfieldTomorrow@MansfieldCT.org



Visit MansfieldTomorrow.org to get involved in the POCD Update!



Join us at the **public workshop!**
Saturday, April 5th at 9:30 AM
Mansfield Middle School
205 Spring Hill Road
Storrs, CT 06268



Take the survey for the chance to win a \$25 gift card to a local business!



Questions? Email MansfieldTomorrow@MansfieldCT.org or call 860-429-3330



Visit MansfieldTomorrow.org or scan the QR code to take the survey. Paper surveys are available.

Need a ride to the public workshop?
Contact us at 860-429-3330

- **The HUB “Site B” (134 North Eagleville Road) Update:** On March 13, 2025, the property formerly known as “The HUB: (Site B) was transferred to The Mark at Mansfield, LLC, a subsidiary of Landmark Properties—the same corporation that owns The Standard at Four Corners. The project will be developed in two phases. Site B, located at 134 North Eagleville Road, was approved for 593 bedrooms and 6,932 square feet of retail space and will be developed first. Site A, located at 22 and 28–32 King Hill Road and 125 North Eagleville Road, was approved for



572 bedrooms and 6,976 square feet of residential retail and will be developed at a later date. Staff is closely monitoring the progress of construction. To date, no blasting plan has yet been submitted to the Fire Marshal’s Office, as the developer is still finalizing the construction sequencing. The University of Connecticut has indicated that it anticipates requiring that groundwater monitoring be conducted by its environmental consultant before, during, and after blasting activities to ensure that

activities do not disturb contaminants associated with UConn's former chemical pit or the adjacent ash landfill. In accordance with regulatory requirements, the developer must test all excavated soil for the presence of hazardous materials. If any contaminants are identified, the affected soil will be transported to a certified hazardous waste disposal facility. Town staff continues to monitor the project closely and coordinate with the developer, UConn, and regulatory agencies to ensure public health and environmental safety are protected throughout the construction process.

- *Farmers Forum:* The Mansfield Agriculture Committee will hold its annual Farmers Forum on Thursday, March 27, 2025 at 6:30 PM in Lenard Hall (450 S. Eagleville Road). Community members involved in the production, distribution, and regulation of local agriculture are invited to attend and discuss ongoing issues, challenges, and solutions related to agriculture. This year's forum will feature a keynote address from Kimberly Stoner, Director of Advocacy for the CT Northeast Organic Farming Association, along with a discussion on the ongoing update to the Mansfield Plan of Conservation and Development. Those interested in attending can register at <https://mansfieldct.jotform.com/233394607987876>. Light refreshments will be provided.
- *Town Landfill Solar Project Update:* This past week the Town was contacted by Verogy (solar developer) who relayed that they officially received approval from the CT Siting Council to move forward with the planned large-scale solar farm at the Town's capped landfill. Verogy received one minor review comment from the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT-DEEP) regarding the Landfill Post-Closure Use Permit, which was promptly addressed with the agency. Verogy is requesting that CT-DEEP provide a projected date for issuance of that permit. Verogy also recently received confirmation from Eversource that they received ConnDOT approval of the proposed detailed engineering design of the proposed line extension to the project access road. Verogy is now coordinating with Eversource on the detailed engineering design for the on-site service. Our understanding is that the project is on track for construction to commence in late-summer or early-fall 2025 with an operational solar farm by spring 2026.
- *Vital Records Service Update:* The Town Clerk's Office is proud to announce its newest online service. Customers may now order Mansfield vital records online. Using the VitalChek service, customers may request birth, marriage, and death certificates online, upload the required identification, and pay for their order. The Town Clerk's Office processes the orders and mails them via surface mail or UPS per the customer's request. As always, customers may obtain vital records in person from the Office of the Town Clerk if they prefer.
- *Mansfield Community Center Main Pool Update:* The project continues to be on track to reopen the pool to the public between Saturday, March 29 and Monday, March 31. Over the past two weeks, the following work was completed: application of a new plaster coat on the pool basin; refilling of the pool water; curing, brushing, and removal of loose new plaster particles; chemical rebalancing; water reheating; restarting all mechanical systems, and; installation and initiation of the UV light disinfection system. We appreciate the community's continued patience and support as we look forward to reopening this valuable resource. A community-wide announcement will be made as soon as there is a definite reopen date.
- Promotion for Mansfield Parks and Recreation spring and summer programs and events is underway. The spring brochure is available [online](#) and was mailed to Mansfield households earlier this month.
- Mansfield Public Library (MPL) is partnering with the Town Clerk's Office this coming Saturday (March 29) at 11:00 AM for a program being led by travel and history author Martin "Marty" Podskoch. The presentation will share interesting information Mr. Podskoch has compiled for his CT travel guidebook on the 169 towns, cities and villages in the State of Connecticut. *The Connecticut 169 Club* is a collective effort among numerous Connecticut writers, historians and officials each contributing a passage about their town's histories, haunts, favorite food fixes, and historic landmarks in the hopes of encouraging residents to visit each town in our beautiful state. As an added bonus, for those who own or purchase the book at this presentation, receive your first Town Seal stamp from Mansfield Town Clerk, Sara-Ann Chaine, who will be in attendance at the program!

- MPL will host an Artists' Reception on April 1 at 6:30 PM to kick off the month-long Art Wall Display from the Swift Waters Artisans' Cooperative!
- The Department of Human Services wants to ensure that residents know that Renter's Rebate applications will open April 1st and can be submitted until September 30th. This information is available [online](#). For those who don't have internet access, please call Human Services at 860-429-3315 or stop by our office for assistance.
- The Department of Human Services is partnering with other municipal departments in Town on a community survey designed to better understand the impacts of extreme weather on our residents.
- *Volunteer Drivers Needed:* The Town's Senior Services Transportation Program is looking for volunteer drivers to help seniors in Mansfield get to medical appointments. Interested parties should call the Senior Center at 860-429-0262 for more info.
- The Town recently learned that the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) will be consolidating several programs – School Readiness, Early Childhood, and Head start – into a unified program effective July 1st that will be known as Early Start CT. While this transition will alter the organizational structure and operations of the OEC, we currently anticipate that it will have little to no immediate impact on the work of Mansfield Advocates for Children (MAC) or the Town's Youth Services Bureau. Additional updates will be shared as needed.
- As previously reported to the Council, the installation of the water treatment system for Mansfield Elementary School has been confirmed for the week of April 14 to coincide with the school break. The installation will be performed by CT Water and their subcontractor, RH White. Interruption to the school's water service during this installation period would be limited to one day (anticipating April 17 interruption). Water bubblers will remain in the schools during and after the treatment system install.
- *Pickleball Facility Update:* After much delay, Eversource has finally placed the utility pole needed to provide illumination to the Michael Taylor & Family Pickleball Courts adjacent to the Mansfield Community Center and electrical service has also been strung to the pole. This week the electrical contractor will make the electrical connection to deliver power to the lights.
- Mansfield Schools are hosting a Local Maple French Toast Bake Breakfast Fundraiser event on Saturday, March 29 from 8:30 to 10 AM at E.O. Smith High School Cafeteria in coordination with the first day of the Eastern Connecticut Maple Festival. The goal of the fundraiser is to assist local families and the Food Services department in "boiling down" the debt at the three local schools for student breakfasts and lunches. Tickets can be purchased in advance or at the door, and additional donations from community members will be [accepted online](#).
- The April issue of the Town's bimonthly e-newsletter is currently in development with an anticipated publication date of Tuesday, April 1 (not an April Fools' Day joke!).
- The Town Manager's next monthly interview on WILI-AM with Wayne Norman will take place on April 4. His most recent appearance took place on Friday (March 7) and focused largely on the recently completed Northwest Mansfield Vision and Strategy Plan as well as the ongoing Plan of Conservation and Development update. The interview can be listened to [here](#). Additionally, the Town Manager will be interviewed on the Windham Chamber of Commerce's radio show on WILI on March 25.

