

MEMO

To: Town Council
CC: Town Employees
From: Ryan J. Aylesworth, Town Manager
Date: April 14, 2025
Subject: **Town Manager's Report**

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

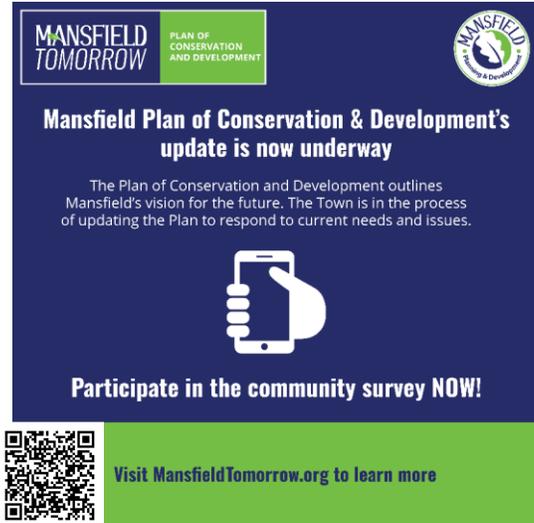
- As the Council is aware, after the Assessor certified the Grand List in late-February as part of the town-wide revaluation, final assessment notices for real property owners were mailed in early-March and – subsequent to the Mansfield Town Council voting to adopt a new state law (Public Act 25-02 sections 2 and 3) regarding an Alternative Motor Vehicle Depreciation Schedule – the deadline for appealing all assessments was set at April 2, 2025. Staff in the Assessor's office have been completing field visits and site inspections at the request of appellants prior to formal hearings, and the Board of Assessment Appeals (BAA) is currently in the process of conducting hearings. Residents can obtain more information about the Revaluation in Mansfield by viewing this [short presentation](#).
- Council review and discussion of the Town Manager's proposed FY 2025/26 operating and capital budget recommendations is well underway. Having completed a high-level overview as well as more detailed presentations on all components of the budget recommendations, the Town Council will open a public hearing on the proposed budget during its April 14 business meeting. The Council's next budget workshop is April 21, and will focus on "flagged items." The Council is tentatively scheduled to adopt a budget on April 24, and the adopted budget will then be acted on at the annual Town Meeting being held on May 13 at Mansfield Middle School. 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.
- At its April 14 business meeting, Chief Roache will provide the Council a detailed update regarding recent changes in the Fire Department's approach to station use/staffing, as well as associated modifications to apparatus and operations. Based on his evaluation of service needs, Chief Roache made the decision to begin staffing the Four Corners Fire Station (Fire Station 207) effective in April. The Eagleville Fire Station (Station 107) will remain in active service by the department, and, in addition to being used to store important equipment and apparatus, will frequently be staffed by department personnel to meet operational needs. This includes being staffed Thursday-Saturday during the spring and fall months when the Town routinely sees increased calls for service while UConn is in session. The Four Corners Fire Station was recently extensively renovated to better support staffing and is of course also where the Department houses the new grant-funded aerial ladder/pumper apparatus (Truck 207). Our Fire and Emergency Services team remains fully committed to providing the highest level of public safety to all residents and businesses. Department leadership will continuously evaluate the efficacy of the new station utilization plan on a going-forward basis, and will make modifications to how staff are deployed at each fire station based on the best available information and anticipated needs. The Department will diligently work to ensure the highest quality emergency service response along the Route 32 corridor and all areas of Town as we

continue to build the staffing capacity necessary to staff three fire stations and ultimately successfully meet current and future community needs.

- In response to questions that were posed following a special meeting of the Mansfield Board of Education relative to Mansfield Elementary School's Net Zero designation and the Eversource solar energy rate program that the Town selected for the facility, staff have been actively compiling additional related information and conferring with the Town's independent energy consultant (Titan Energy) and its special legal counsel for alternative energy. We anticipate presenting additional information at either the April 28 or May 12 Town Council business meeting.
- This past week, the Town Manager joined with the Chief of Shared Services and Administration, Town Clerk, Director of Human Services, Library Director, and staff in the Human Resources Department, at the 30th Anniversary *In the Company of Women Luncheon* held at the Connecticut Convention Center and hosted by the YWCA Hartford Region. Since 1996, the YWCA has invited inspirational speakers to share their stories and uplift women, youth and families. This year's keynote speaker was Juju Chang, the Emmy award-winning co-anchor of ABC News' *Nightline*. The event brings together business and community leaders, public officials, and a wide range of other key stakeholders who are active in the greater Hartford Region.
- 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, Rep. Boyd, and Sen. Flexer.
- As a reminder, in my capacity as Town Manager (who also serves as the Town's chief of public safety), I have been serving on the search committee for UConn's next Vice President of Public Safety. Following a very robust multi-tiered screening process, the search committee recently reduced the candidate pool to a small number of finalists that are in the process of taking part in two-day interviews and meetings with a wide range of key stakeholders. It has been helpful 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, and I look forward to ensuring that this remains an area of emphasis during the remaining in-depth vetting of finalists.
- *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. The renovations include site work and drainage improvements, structural repairs, and accessibility improvements. The general contractor is Sarazin Construction. In recent weeks, work has focused on repairing rotted wood and installing new exterior trim on the north-facing wall of the Old Town Hall building.
- *Municipal Facilities Master Planning*: As was previously reported to Council, the Town recently 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) with a March 24 deadline for submissions. Staff has reviewed the proposals/materials submitted by responding firms and has scheduled interviews with qualified firms. 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,

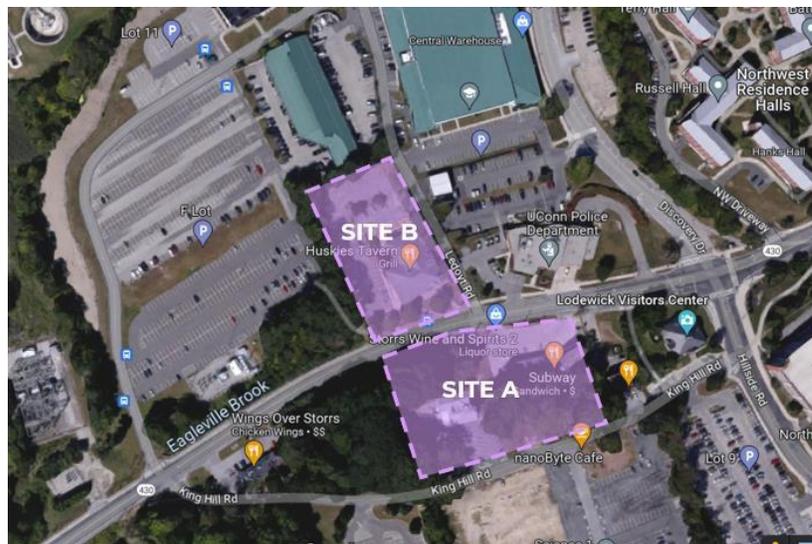
2025, at 6:00 PM at the Planning and Zoning Commission regular meeting (hybrid format). The *Plan Introduction*, which provides important context, is available for download [HERE](#). The *Goals, Actions, and Strategies* excerpted from each chapter can be downloaded [HERE](#). The *Full Plan* is available for download [HERE](#). Residents are encouraged to review the draft plan and provide feedback by submitting comments in writing. Please send your comments to MansfieldTomorrow@MansfieldCT.org with the subject line “NW Plan Comments.” The deadline to submit comments is Monday, April 28.

- Mansfield Tomorrow Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) Update:* Approximately 40 people attended the public workshop held on Saturday, April 5 at the Mansfield Middle School and we greatly appreciate the thoughtful perspectives and engagement offered by all the community stakeholders present. The community is encouraged to provide input through the [online survey](#) – which launched on March 13 and will remain open through May 31. By taking the survey you will be entered to win one of several \$25 gift cards to spend at a local business. At this time, more than 1,000 responses have been received. Planning and Development Staff and FHI Studio/IMEG will be at the Earth Day event – Saturday, April 26 at Mansfield Community Center. The next Ad Hoc Committee on the POCD is scheduled for April 24.



The poster features the Mansfield Tomorrow logo and the text: "Mansfield Plan of Conservation & Development's update is now underway". It includes a graphic of a hand holding a smartphone and the call to action "Participate in the community survey NOW!". A QR code is located at the bottom left, and the website "Visit MansfieldTomorrow.org to learn more" is at the bottom right.

- The Mark at Mansfield (formerly known as the 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, which was not transferred to Landmark, is 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. Once the developer has determined the means, methods, and location of the blasting, Town staff will 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.



- Tax Incentives for Affordable Housing:* The Affordable Housing Committee continues to support and encourage tax incentives for deed-restricted affordable units within mixed-income developments. The Committee specifically supports providing incentives for units that exceed the minimum requirements of Mansfield’s Zoning Regulations or the 30% minimum affordability threshold under CGS § 8-30g, which allows developers to bypass most local zoning regulations. According to the Town Attorney, it

appears that the enabling statutes identified to date specifically related to affordable housing (CGS § 8-215 and CGS § 12-81bb) do not provide the Town with the authority to offer tax abatements or tax credits for affordable units within mixed-income developments. However, mixed-income developments are widely considered best practice, as they integrate affordable housing into the broader housing market rather than concentrating it in isolated developments. Mixed-income models also tend to be more financially sustainable over the long term. Other municipalities have used a different tool: fixed assessments, authorized under CGS § 12-65b. This incentive allows municipalities to fix the assessment of real and personal property for certain development projects for up to 30 years. It effectively freezes the taxable value of improvements made—or to be made—to a property, thereby exempting the increased value from property taxes for the duration of the agreement. CGS § 12-65b provides a potential path for Mansfield to support mixed-income developments through negotiated property tax relief, without the need to adopt a local ordinance.

- Congratulations to Virginia “Ginny” Walton, Mansfield’s Recycling Coordinator who was recognized with the Superintendent’s Global Citizenship Award at Thursday’s Board of Education meeting. Superintendent Peter Dart created this award in recognition of community members who exemplify the District’s Core Belief of “Preparing Global Citizens” as stewards of our community, nation, and the larger world by contributing to a peaceful society and sustainable world. He acknowledged Ginny for “her leadership, advocacy, and being a role model for our students, staff, and community for sustainable practices. Ginny has developed, implemented and led many programs that have helped us reduce waste through composting, recycling, eliminating plastic waste, donating food, and reusing items such as food containers. She has brought in thousands of dollars through grants and programs to support our efforts to practice sustainability. Ginny has taught and organized various student “eco action or green thumbs” clubs and activities.”



- E.O. Smith High School students enrolled in civics will gain exposure to numerous aspects of local government next month over a two-day program that is being organized with the help of local officials and Town staff. As students have learned about federalism and the role of government entities at the federal and state level, educators have invited local officials to help inform student understanding of the critical importance of local government with respect to our democratic institutions.
- *Mansfield Community Center Main Pool Reopened*: Following an extended period where it was drained and out of operation while critically important upgrades could be completed, we were thrilled to reopen the Mansfield Community Center’s (MCC) main pool on March 29. The pool has already been enjoying a high volume of use. In the weeks leading up to reopening the following was performed: a new plaster coat was applied on the pool basin; the pool water was refilled with water trucked in from off-site; the new plaster was allowed to cure and then routinely brushed to ensure removal of loose particles; chemical rebalancing; water reheating; restarting all mechanical systems, and; installation and initiation of the UV light disinfection system. Signage and enforcement of new rules intended to minimize the potential for outside bacteria to be introduced to the pool is also being actively communicated to the public. We appreciate the patience and support that members of the community showed throughout this process, and we hope that residents and visitors will come enjoy the pool every opportunity they get.
- MCC is a host site for Earth Day activities on Saturday, April 26th. A variety of departments and community groups will be exhibiting from 9 AM to 12 noon. Mansfield’s Tag Sale Trail (8:00 AM – 1:00 PM) will be part of the event, taking place at MCC and throughout town at participating homes. Tag Sale maps will be available at www.mansfieldcc.com and at the Mansfield Community

Center beginning on April 21st. Mansfield Public Library and the staff from Youth Services in the Department of Human Services will both be hosting activities at MCC that day as well as at the Library. For MPL, this will be through a special Earth Day-themed storytime at the library and through staffing a table at MCC where they will have everything from Tech Trivia to promote the Digital Navigator program to handing out native plant seeds and promoting MPL's seed library and gardening tools available to check out. Youth Services invites everyone to stop by its booth at MCC to create a fun, eco-friendly pinecone bird feeder. The Solid Waste Advisory Committee will host a Composting Workshop at 10 AM at Town Hall, and will be tabling at MCC with a Teddy Bear Clinic and a recycling activity. Taste of Mansfield will also be promoting Mansfield agriculture. At Mansfield Elementary School, tours of the net-zero infrastructure will be offered at 11:00 AM and 12:30 PM, and the Grade 4 Eco-Action Team will also be exhibiting from 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM.

- *Don't Mess with Mansfield Litter Cleanup.* In association with the Town's Earth Day activities, the Town-University Relations Committee's Litter Working Group is organizing a Litter Cleanup on Saturday and Sunday, April 26 and 27. The Solid Waste Advisory Committee will provide litter pickup kits at the MCC Earth Day event for those willing to clean up along roadsides, and will remind Adopt a Road volunteers to tackle their designated streets. The UConn Sustainability Department is organizing 300 students, fraternity and sorority members, to tackle problem areas adjacent to campus and along key town roads. [See the special web page](#) for details on how to join in. The partnership coordinated its first litter cleanup day last November.
- Mansfield Community Garden space (20' X 20' plots) is available off route 195, just north of Mansfield Supply. For more information, see page 59 of the [Spring Parks and Recreation brochure](#).
- As Mansfield Public Library regularly strives to provide enhanced programming during school breaks to support out of school learning and screen-free engagement, the Library is offering an abundance of special programs during the current spring break (week of April 14) including a Pete the Cat music program, a family hike through Buchanan Woods in collaboration with Mansfield's Youth Services Bureau, a Farm Friends petting zoo for children, and a separate session for its monthly teen night.
- The Library recently added 30 Launchpads to its collection and at the time of these updates, over half have already been checked out. Launchpads are tablets that are preloaded with games, puzzles, and interactive learning tools that focus on early learning concepts and support kindergarten readiness. One parent checking out a Launchpad for a spring break road trip told Youth Services librarian, Emily Webson, that one of his children learned their ABC's through one of the learning activities that they checked out from the MPL Toy Library.
- The Department of Human Services wants to ensure that residents know that Renter's Rebate applications opened April 1st and can be submitted until September 30th. This information is available [online](#). You can also call Human Services at 860-429-3315 or stop by our office for assistance.
- In March, the Department of Human Services launched a meal kit program aimed at assisting families who qualify for food assistance. This initiative is designed to offer nutritious meal options to households that regularly utilize our food pantry, while also introducing new meal ideas made from the typical items available at the pantry. This past month, the Department successfully served 48 households, and present, the program has expanded to 63 registered households. We have been able to also provide delivery to homebound residents or those households with transportation issues.
- The Mansfield Senior Center would like to extend a huge thank you to the AARP volunteers who provided over 110 people with free tax preparation. We are proud to partner with AARP for the past 50 years and look forward to continuing to provide this service for years to come.
- *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.
- Youth Services clinicians in the Department of Human Services will be attending the Sixth Annual "Teaching Cannabis and Other Drug Awareness and Prevention" Conference this April. This two-day event will provide valuable insights and strategies which we are eager to apply as we work to expand our prevention programs for youth and families in the community.

- Recently, Youth Services has experienced a notable increase in both counseling and truancy referrals, reflecting the growing demand for the support services being provided by the Department
- The Town will host the Pride Flag Raising Ceremony on June 2 at 4:30 PM at the Town Hall flagpole.
- *Mansfield Elementary School Project Updates:* The installation of the water treatment system for Mansfield Elementary School has commenced this week (week of April 14) as planned to coincide with the school break and should be completed by the time school resumes next week. Installation is being performed by CT Water and their subcontractor, RH White. Interruption to the school's water service during this installation period will be limited to one day (anticipating April 17 interruption). Water bubblers will remain in the schools during and after the treatment system install. Additionally, a large volume of trees on Town-owned property are being removed from the former ropes course area and nearby property line at Mansfield Elementary School (MES) as part of a recently initiated project to extend the solid fencing that presently runs parallel to the property line that the MES parcel shared with abutting private landowners on Pinewoods Lane. The Town will also use the opportunity to remove several damaged trees in the same area.
- *Mansfield Middle School Project Updates:* The planned renovations/security improvements to the main entrance of Mansfield Middle School (MMS) is commencing this week. During the first week we expect to see a full site mobilization of Sarazin Construction, the Town's general contractor on the project. Initial work will include fencing off of exterior construction areas, along with the construction of interior containment walls to keep the construction area secure and prevent noise and dust from traveling outside of the construction zone. Once containment barriers are in place, the intent is to complete some of the more noisy demolition work while students are on April break. Separately, solar panels are being anchored to the MMS roof this week. It was noted that a few panels had previously slid slightly down the pitched roof as a result of severe wind events, and the Town has been working with the solar panel manufacturer and roofing contractor to implement a plan and method for attaching all the solar panels at MMS to the roof structure to prevent any future movement.
- *Taste of Mansfield Champion Award Nominations Open:* The Taste of Mansfield is accepting nominations through April 28 for its fourth annual Taste of Mansfield Champions Awards, initiated to recognize Mansfield area producers, sellers, and communicators/educators who are leaders in connecting the community through local food and have a demonstrated record of promoting the Taste of Mansfield mission. The public is invited to nominate those people or organizations who make a positive impact on Mansfield's local food community. Details and the nomination form can be found at the [Taste of Mansfield website](#)
- Beginning May 7th, the Transfer Station will pilot a 4-day work week for employees during the upcoming construction/growing season. This pilot will result in the Transfer Station expanding hours to the public three days per week (including two week days and a weekend end). The new seasonal public hours beginning May 7th will be Wednesday 7:00 AM to 4:00 PM, Thursday 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM, and Saturday 7:00 AM to 4:00 PM The Swap Shop will be open during public hours of operation when volunteers are available. We have begun communicating the change in hours/operations through a variety of media, and will continue to do so in the coming weeks. The Transfer Station will return to its normal public hours beginning November 2, 2025 which are Tuesdays and Saturdays 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM, and Thursdays 12:00 PM to 4:00 PM.
- Roads drainage projects have officially started. One Public Works crew is presently working on Spring Hill Road and a second crew is working on Bassetts Bridge Road and Kaya Lane replacing catch basin tops and doing minor basin repairs. The Department's third drainage crew is cleaning out the swales and culverts on Wormwood Hill Road to improve water flow.
- The semi-final design for the Downtown Pedestrian Loop Closure Project was submitted to the CT Department of Transportation (ConnDOT) on April 3 for review.
- The April issue of the Town's e-newsletter was published on April 2nd and can be accessed [here](#).
- The Town Manager's most recent monthly interview on WILI-AM with Wayne Norman took place on April 4. The interview can be listened to [here](#).