

MEMO

To: Town Council
CC: Town Employees
From: Ryan J. Aylesworth, Town Manager
Date: April 28, 2025
Subject: **Town Manager's Report**

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

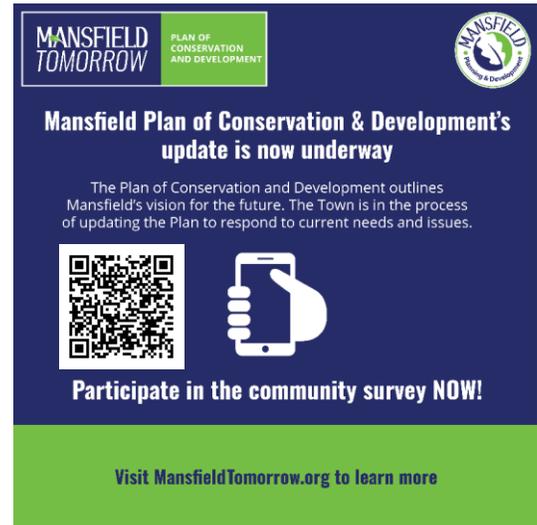
- On April 24, the Town Council voted to adopt the Town Manager's proposed FY 2025/26 budget. The adopted budget will be acted on at the annual Town Meeting being held on May 13 at Mansfield Middle School beginning at 7:00 PM. A complete digital version of the Town Council's adopted FY 2025/26 budget will soon be available on the Town's website. Staff are in the process of preparing/finalizing the A Citizen's Budget Guide document that contains detailed summary information on the adopted budget and is surface mailed to all Mansfield addresses so that residents/voters have an opportunity to review prior to Town Meeting. Additionally, prior to the annual Town Meeting, a public information session on the adopted budget will be held this coming Thursday, May 1, beginning 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. Town Council's adoption of the budget is a reflection of the hard work, careful planning, and thoughtful analysis all of our municipal departments independently performed in the weeks leading up to the Manager's budget recommendations being formally presented to the Council a little more than one month ago. Every budget season involves confronting tradeoffs and prioritizing needs as we strive to provide exceptional service. We have a wonderful team that delivers incredible value to the community.
- The Regional School District #19 Budget Referendum will be held on Tuesday, May 6, 2025 from 6:00 AM to 8:00 PM in Council Chamber at Mansfield's Town Hall/Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building.
- This past week the Town Manager attended the first annual Legislative Breakfast hosted by the Council Region Council of Government's (CRCOG) Legislative Committee. The gathering was convened in the General Assembly's Legislative Office Building and attended by members of the CRCOG and state legislators from across the region. The event gave CRCOG leaders an opportunity to have a dialog with legislators about the organization's formal [legislative agenda](#) and pending bills of interest during the current session. Many thanks to State Rep. Haddad for taking part and learning more about the legislative priorities of greatest interest to Mansfield and other CRCOG municipalities.
- As the Council is aware, the Four Corners Fire Station (Station 207) has been staffed since April 1 and the corresponding recent changes in staffing at the Eagleville Fire Station (Station 107) has impacted use of Reynolds Hall (the large community room inside the fire station) by external groups. Along these lines, representatives from the American Red Cross recently expressed concern about not being able to operate a longstanding monthly blood drive at this location. Town staff subsequently arranged for Red Cross volunteers to tour two alternative locations (the Senior Center dining room and Buchanan Auditorium) in-person to assess the suitability of these facilities. Both locations were found to be strong options, and the Red Cross ultimately elected to operate future monthly blood

drives at the Senior Center given is geographic proximity to the Eagleville station. We are very happy that the Town will continue to partner with the Red Cross and help support its important mission.

- This past week, the Town Manager, Fire Chief, and Chief of Shared Services and Administration took part in a site visit with the new owner of the stone church property (887 Stafford Road) adjacent to the Eagleville Fire Station. As a reminder, the vast majority of the parking area that has historically been used by members of Mansfield Fire and Emergency Services, as well as outside groups using Reynolds Hall, is located on the church property. Similarly, the septic system that services the fire station is also located on the church property. The purpose of the on-site visit was to learn more about the new owner's goals for converting the structure into a single-family home and understand how the planned redevelopment of the site would interplay with Mansfield Fire and Emergency Services' use of the station. The new owner expressed great support for the Fire Department and his desire and intention to work collaboratively with the Town on a formal land use agreement that will meet the needs of all the stakeholders.
- In response to questions that were posed following a special meeting of the Mansfield Board of Education relative to Mansfield Elementary School's NetZero 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 the May 12 Town Council business meeting.
- 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. The most recent meeting with a finalist was held today. 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.
- *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 to take place this week. This project will be funded in large part via a \$250,000 planning grant from the State of Connecticut.
- *Four Corners Pedestrian Safety (The Standard and The Villages)*: With the developer (Landmark Properties) of The Standard at Four Corners expressing its commitment to open in August, and construction of another high-density multi-family housing project called The Villages set to begin soon after on an adjacent parcel, the Town Manager, Director of Public Works, Director of Planning and Development, and Assistant Director of Public Works have been meeting regularly with UConn staff and representatives from both developments to address pedestrian safety along a roughly 750-ft section of CT-195/Storrs Road. Key discussions have focused on ensuring safe pedestrian passage during the construction of the sidewalk along The Villages property. Items under consideration include: installation of a temporary path connecting to the existing sidewalk in front of Dunkin' Donuts to the Standard at Four Corners, and education and outreach to residents of The Standard regarding pedestrian safety. The Town continues to emphasize the importance of coordination between the two sites to minimize disruptions and ensure a safe, walkable environment for all.
- *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. As a final reminder, the deadline to submit written comments on the draft plan is today, April 28, 2025. Please email your comments to MansfieldTomorrow@MansfieldCT.org with the subject line “NW Plan Comments.” 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](#).

- **Mansfield Tomorrow Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) Update:** Community members are 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 attended the Earth Day event held this past weekend at Mansfield Community Center to share information on the POCD and receive informal public feedback. The most recent meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on the POCD took place on April 24 and the Committee will next meet on May 15. The Town’s consultant, FHI Studio/IMEG has begun drafting the plan. The Ad Hoc Committee will review chapters over the summer, with a public presentation anticipated in the fall. Residents can stay informed and follow the plan’s progress at www.mansfieldtomorrow.org.
- **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, which the Town Council has made clear it also supports in concept. 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. The Town Council will receive additional information and recommendations on this topic from the Town Attorney and staff during its April 28 business meeting.
- This past Saturday, April 26th, MCC served as the host site for Earth Day activities. A variety of departments and community groups exhibited from 9 AM to 12 noon. Mansfield’s Tag Sale Trail (8:00 AM – 1:00 PM) was part of the event, taking place at MCC and throughout town at 33 participating home locations. Mansfield Public Library and the staff from Youth Services in the Department of Human Services both hosted activities at MCC as well as at the Library. For MPL, this was through a special Earth Day-themed storytime at the library and through staffing a table at MCC where they had 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 invited everyone to stop by its booth at MCC to create a fun, eco-friendly pinecone bird feeder. The Solid Waste Advisory Committee hosted a Composting Workshop at 10 AM at Town Hall, and also tabled at MCC with a Teddy Bear Clinic and a recycling activity. SWAC also distributed litter clean-up items including vests, gloves, and trash bags. Taste of Mansfield was on hand promoting Taste of Mansfield Champion nominations and distributing pollinator seed kits. A poster showcasing EV Charging Stations at Town locations was displayed. Additionally, at Mansfield Elementary School, tours of the net-zero infrastructure were offered at 11:00 AM and 12:00 PM, introduced by the Grade 4 Eco-Action Team. We greatly appreciate all members of the community and visitors who took part in this year’s Earth Day celebration programming!
- **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 organized a Litter Cleanup on Saturday



and Sunday, April 26 and 27. The Solid Waste Advisory Committee provided litter pickup kits at the MCC Earth Day event for those willing to clean up along roadsides, and reminded Adopt a Road volunteers to tackle their designated streets. The UConn Office of Sustainability organized a service event on April 27 that was supported in large part by fraternity and sorority members, to tackle problem areas adjacent to campus and along key town roads. UConn coordinated eight stations to pick up supplies, each focusing on different parts of the campus and community. Final results are still being tabulated, but more than 280 students volunteered and collected approximately 215 bags of litter. In addition to the core campus, Mirror Lake, Storrs Road, student lots and pathways adjacent to North Campus and along Discovery Drive, cleanup teams targeted Hilltop, Charter Oak and Northwood Apartment complexes, and town roads including Eastwood, Westwood, North Eagleville, Separatist and Hillyndale Roads. *UConn Today* published an advance story about the collaboration. The partnership coordinated its first litter cleanup day last November.

- *Mansfield Parks & Recreation Summer Brochure*: The summer brochure mail date to Mansfield homes is the second week of May. The spring edition of the parks and recreation program and services [brochure](#) is now available and also includes information for Camp Mansfield and numerous specialty camps.
- *Digital Navigators Celebrate Milestone*: Mansfield Public Library (MPL) is very excited to share that the Digital Navigators – which is a service the Town launched using a portion of its American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds beginning in January 2024 – just passed over 500 help sessions. This is a true testament to the leadership of Kaithlin Epling, MPL’s Assistant Director, as well as the friendliness, approachability, and knowledge that our Digital Navigators (Paul Velasquez, John Cropp, and Lauren Epperson) have brought to their roles. This program continues to be a huge success for MPL and for members of our community.
- *Human Services Updates*:
 - May is nationally recognized as *Mental Health Awareness Month*, a time dedicated to raising awareness, supporting mental well-being, and reducing the stigma often associated with mental health challenges. Just as we prioritize regular check-ups for our physical health, it’s equally important to monitor and care for our mental and emotional well-being. Mental health is a vital part of overall wellness, encompassing the mind, body, and emotions. The Human Services Department encourages residents to take time this month to engage in conversations, share resources, and promote a supportive community where seeking help is seen as a strength. Together, we can foster a culture of understanding and compassion. Along these lines, on Thursday, May 8th from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM, the Mansfield Senior Center is hosting a Mental Health Awareness Event to focus on ways to practice Self-care. Some of the activities that are being planned for the day include unveiling the “Path to Positivity”, information and activity tables, Free Yoga Class, and a group walk outside.
 - *May Meal Kits* from the Human Services Department food pantry are now available for sign-up. These kits are designed to provide nutritious, family-friendly meals to qualifying households. Space is limited, so we encourage eligible residents to sign up early. We are able to help with specific dietary needs or restrictions.
 - *Support Programs for Summer Camps*- Summer camp planning is underway and Mansfield Human Services has begun to promote the financial support programs available for families. We want to remind the community of the two valuable assistance programs available to help qualifying families cover the cost of these enriching experiences for children in their care.
 - ❖ Fee Waiver Program: This program supports access to a wide range of services and activities throughout the town including Mansfield Parks and Recreation Camps. It’s not limited to just summer; it also extends to other seasonal programs throughout the year. For more information or to apply, residents can visit our [website](#) or contact the Human Services Department directly at 860-429-3315.
 - ❖ Betsy Hamill Memorial Campership Scholarship: Applications are now open for summer 2025. This income-based scholarship provides financial assistance to both

town and private camps. Space is limited and determined by the funding available. We recommend that eligible families apply early, as support is provided on a first-come, first-served basis while funds last. For questions please reach out to the Human Services Department for more information at 860-429-3315 or via email at human.services@mansfieldct.org. The link to the application can be found [here](#).

- *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.
- On Tuesday May 27th, Youth Services will be hosting their 2nd annual Wellness Fair at Mansfield Middle School, in recognition of Mental Health Awareness Month. Activities will focus on self-care and calming strategies using the five senses. Registration information will be shared with school families through electronic messages home.
- *Appointment/Hiring Updates*
 - Ryan Luberto began work on April 21 as a Laborer with the Department of Public Works. Ryan has nine years of experience with a tree service, currently serving as a Foreman. He also has landscaping experience and completed some course work in landscape architecture. Welcome Ryan!
 - Ryan Winterberger began work today (April 28) as a Laborer with the Department of Public Works. Ryan has over five years of municipal experience in the Public Works field. He has completed the T2 certification program through UConn and holds a pesticide applicator license. Welcome Ryan!
 - Dylan Vincent will begin work May 5 as a Firefighter/EMT with Mansfield Fire & Emergency Services. Dylan has 5 years of experience as both a volunteer and career firefighter. Dylan holds numerous certifications in the fire service field. He holds a bachelor's degree in Fire Science from Anna Maria College and is nearing completion of his master's degree in public administration (MPA). Welcome Dylan!
- The Town will host the Pride Flag Raising Ceremony on June 2 at 4:30 PM at the Town Hall flagpole.
- *Memorial Day Ceremony 2025:* Planning is well underway for Mansfield's annual Memorial Day parade/ceremony, which will step off at 9:00 AM on Monday, May 26. Invitations have been sent to volunteer organizations, school bands, and special guests. Mansfield veterans are warmly encouraged to join the parade. For more information, please contact the Town Manager's Office.
- The Taste of Mansfield nomination period for the 2025 Champion Awards closes today, April 28. Taste of Mansfield, a collaboration of Town departments and committees along with partners UConn Extension, Mansfield Downtown Partnership, and the Storrs Farmers Market, wishes to recognize those individuals and organizations that are exemplary in advocating for local food and agriculture. Nominations can be submitted at the [Taste of Mansfield website](#).
- The Mansfield Resident Troopers' Office (RTO) continues its active "party patrol" efforts for the remainder of the spring semester and enforcement is being taken when appropriate. Approximately 60 nuisance ordinance violations have been issued thus far during the academic year. The RTO is also preparing for UConn commencement, which will entail handling traffic enforcement with assistance from other CT State Police personnel (paid for by UConn) for commencement activities.
- *Mansfield Elementary School Project Updates:* As planned to coincide with the school break, the installation of the water treatment system for Mansfield Elementary School was completed the week of April 14. Installation was performed by CT Water and their subcontractor, RH White. Bottled water bubblers will remain in the schools after the treatment system is installed as it will take a to-be-determined period of time for the desired biofilm to become established and "line" the piping.
- *Mansfield Middle School Project Updates:* The planned renovations/security improvements to the main entrance of Mansfield Middle School (MMS) commenced the week of April 14 to coincide with the scheduled school vacation/break. This included a full site mobilization of Sarazin Construction, the Town's general contractor on the project. Initial work has included 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. Some of the more noisy demolition work was completed while students were out of the building on break. Separately, solar panels were 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 worked 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.

- The Eastern Highlands Health District (EHHD) has been engaged with the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) on an ongoing basis relative to concerns that arose relative to potential polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) contamination stemming from the application of biosolids as part of farming practices in the Mansfield Hollow area. PFAS is a relatively new issue from our perspective. Appropriate environmental health responses are still evolving at the state, and local level for this type of concern. EHHD continues to field and respond to a number of questions from area residents regarding the PFAS concern. Many of these same residents, working with a UConn lab, obtained PFAS test results for their private drinking water wells. Due to recently passed confidentiality laws, EHHD is not yet in a position to share these results. Additionally, DEEP continues to urge the farmer to mitigate the potential risk associated with the PFAS to ground and surface water. DEEP has informed EHHD that the farmer has verbally agreed to export any remaining stockpiled product to outside of the watershed, and away from any residential wells.
- *Modified Transfer Station Operations:* As a reminder, beginning May 7th, the Transfer Station will pilot an alternative work schedule 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 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.
- *Deconstruction Pilot:* The Town of Mansfield will receive its first donation of building materials from a remodeling project on Tuesday, April 29 at the Transfer Station. The Town of Mansfield is partnering with The ReCONNstruction Center, a non-profit building reuse store in New Britain, CT, to salvage building materials from Mansfield construction projects that are in good, usable condition. Instead of these materials ending up in an out-of-state landfill, they will be offered for sale at The ReCONNstruction Center. The Mansfield Solid Waste Advisory Committee and Sustainability Committee have been working with Mansfield Recycling Coordinator to advance deconstruction, the dismantling of buildings that recovers usable materials. This pilot is the first step in moving the dial on vast amount of waste generated from renovations and demolition. Building contractors doing work in Mansfield now have a place where they can donate perfectly good building materials for free. By participating, contractors can reduce their waste disposal costs, receive a tax-deductible receipt, keep perfectly good materials out of the landfill and provide discounted goods that will be sold at the ReCONNstruction Center. Nick DeVito from the Center for EcoTechnology and Charlie Paonessa from The ReCONNstruction Center have been invited to attend.
- Roads drainage projects continue to be actively underway. One Public Works crew is presently working on Spring Hill Road, and that project is approximately 50% complete. A second crew replaced 14 catch basin tops on Kaya Lane and are now working on Bassetts Bridge Road performing minor basin repairs. The Department's third drainage crew is backfilling edges on Elizabeth Road and Brookside Lane that were not completed as part of this past fall's improvements.
- The April issue of the Town's e-newsletter was published on April 2nd and can be accessed [here](#).
- The Town Manager's next monthly appearance on WILI-AM with Wayne Norman is scheduled to take place on May 2. His most recent appearance (April 4) can be listened to [here](#).